MOBILE JOURNALISM AND THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TELEVISION NEWS WORK

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the work habits of and news products produced by local television news journalists, specifically comparing the habits and products of collapsed-task “mobile journalists” and the non-collapsed task journalists who work within the traditional television news crew. The study used the case study format to make this comparison. Through direct observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews and an informal content analysis it applied the theoretical frameworks of professional control and organization structure to collapsed-task and non-collapsed task television news journalists. The variables under study and derived from that literature were expert knowledge, professional autonomy, routinization, technical quality and encroachment from outside professional groups. Findings suggest that the non-collapsed task journalists had a higher degree of expert knowledge and generated news products of higher technical quality. While the collapsed-task journalists believed they had a greater amount of professional control by personally performing more aspects of their occupation, routines and organizational limitations may remove much of that control. While a difference in encroachment could not be found in the news products themselves, observation suggests it may play a greater part in the origination of news products for collapsed-task journalists.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is a typical workday in the life of two local television news journalists. They arrive at their respective stations. They sit down at their desks, check e-mails and the local newspaper’s website to catch-up on the news of the day.

Then it is off to the morning editorial meeting. The news director, producers, assignment editors and other reporters join them to plan the today’s newscasts. After small talk, it is down to business. The news director goes around the room, asking each journalist, “What do you have today?”

Journalists pitch a variety of stories. Some are based on articles they saw in the newspaper that morning, some are follow-ups to stories they worked on yesterday, and others are based on tips from people in the community. There is some debate about each story. Is it something that can be done today? Will the story have a compelling video element? Will viewers be interested in watching?

After this debate, the news director and producers decide what stories will be pursued. Then the assignment editor figures out the logistics of who will work on each story, or stories, and the reporters are dismissed. This is where the similarities end for our two TV reporters.

For the first reporter, the day continues as it has for most local TV journalists in the last few decades. The assignment editor tells her which photographer she will be working with. (In local TV news, it is common practice to refer to them as photographers, though they are technically videographers.) After making a few phone calls and looking up directions, the news crew leaves the station. The reporter will most likely continue to
make calls while the photographer drives. Ideally, they discuss the story on the way, each offering ideas and opinions on how to approach it.

The crew visits multiple locations. The reporter conducts interviews and the photographer records them. The photographer also captures additional relevant video and audio elements. Again, ideally, they work as a team, with the photographer making suggestions regarding interview questions and the reporter having input on the video and audio elements recorded. Hopefully they have time to grab lunch in between locations. Once shooting is completed, they either return to the station or remain out in the field if they have a “live truck,” a large van with equipment that allows the crew to report from a remote location. The reporter looks over the footage that has been shot and writes the script for the story. After the script is completed, and generally approved by news management, the photographer edits a news “package” using the script as a guide, combining parts of the recorded interviews, narration from the reporter and other audio elements. If the crew is “going live”, the photographer operates the equipment in the truck while the reporter introduces their pre-produced news package on-camera. The day is finally done, assuming the reporter has already converted the script into a print-style article to post on the stations website.

Returning to our second reporter, even if her story is similar, her workday is much different. She leaves the station alone. Once she arrives at a location, she carries all the necessary equipment to record a professional-looking video new story (professional-grade camera, tripod, microphone, etc). She conducts and records interviews simultaneously. She captures the necessary additional audio/video elements. She then returns to the station to write her script and edit the package. She is a part of a growing
trend in television news, even in the country’s largest markets. She is a mobile journalist (also knows as a multimedia journalist, backpack journalist, video journalist solo journalist or one-man band), which means instead of being assigned to work with a photographer, she is expected to report, write, shoot and edit the story on her own.

The trend dates back in the United States to the 1960s (Roman, 2005). The cable network New York 1 was the first station to hire all mobile journalists in 1991 (NY1.com). Internationally, mobile journalism has proven popular. Starting in 2001, the BBC began utilizing mobile journalists at its regional news stations, the equivalent of local television news in the United States (Hemmingway, 2008). Mobile journalism has also been prevalent in Switzerland (Dickinson & Bibi, 2009), Spain (Aviles et al, 2004) and Romania (Medina, 2011).

In the United States, mobile journalism has been a mainstay in small market television station for years and has been a steadily growing trend overall, increasing by 3 to 4 percent for the last four years (Papper, 2011). The modern wave of mobile journalism has been attributed to the work of Michael Rosenbaum, who taught a class on it at Columbia University in the 1980s and has consulted with many media companies on how to properly utilize mobile journalists (Bock, 2011). Currently, this trend is beginning to gain traction in top 50 markets in the United States, with two-thirds of these stations employing mobile journalists and 15 percent of top 25 markets claiming they rely mostly on mobile journalists (Potter, Matsa & Mitchell, 2012).

Many in the industry have not welcomed this transition. Kumar (2010) quotes a former CNN Pentagon correspondent, Jamie McIntyre, who describes transitioning from using 12-person crews to broadcast live during the first Gulf War in 1991 to using a
Macbook Pro and a satellite Internet transmitter to do the same job in 2008: “When you’re a TV reporter and you’re doing everything yourself, it changes the way you tell a story” (p 26). On the local level, Malone (2008) reports that “Many TV reporters, especially older ones, object to being distracted from researching and reporting functions by having to drive themselves to a story, shoot the video and then edit the story which was traditionally done by editors at the station” (p. 9).

In light of these concerns, this research study seeks to examine the work habits of mobile journalists, specifically at local television news stations. Using established theories of professional control and organizational structure as a framework, the research will present a case study of two television newsrooms, one that mostly utilizes mobile journalists and another that mostly utilizes traditional news crews.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of multi-skilling, or collapsing tasks, is a key aspect to mobile journalism. In the literature related to organizational structure, the relevant concept is “horizontal complexity” or “horizontal differentiation,” and many scholars have studied its consequences. Horizontal complexity is defined as the degree to which work tasks are spread out among different groups and individuals in an organization (Tolbert & Hall, 2009). In occupations that tend to be considered more professional, this complexity is characterized by more specialized, highly trained and knowledgeable workers (Hage & Aiken, 1967a).

There are both positive and negative consequences of this horizontal differentiation. Tolbert and Hall (2009) outlined the positive effects that are most relevant to mobile journalism when they said “when people specialize in different tasks, they are able to hone relevant skills and knowledge and, thus, able to perform those tasks at a higher level of reliability, quality and speed” (p. 29). Other studies have found that organizations with the type of increased horizontal complexity associated with professionals tended to be more innovative and creative (Baldridge & Burnheim, 1975; Hage & Aiken, 1967b; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969). By implication, less horizontal complexity, e.g., from collapsing tasks, would likely lead to less quality, speed and creativity.

On the other hand, these same studies have found some negative consequences of increased horizontal complexity. Most of these arise from conflict between varying professionals within the same organization. It was found that these employees often had
different ideas of the goals of their organizations, the nature of the problems they were
tackling and whether or not their jobs were more task-oriented or relationship-oriented
(Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969).

Two studies from the UK attempted to investigate how mobile journalism
affected news practices. Cottle (1999) looked at the implementation of new technologies
at the BBC and did not find evidence of “technological determinism” in the sense that the
new technology itself was affecting news production -- but he did find a concern among
new multimedia journalists of the “increasingly pressurized and superficial nature of
multi-skilled, multi-media news production” (p. 22). A study of regional UK newsrooms
some years later found both positive and negative effects of mobile journalism on news
quality (although the author acknowledges the difficulty of defining news “quality”) and
the traditional “watchdog” function of news (Wallace, 2009).

In the journalism literature Aviles, Leon, Sanders and Harrison (2004)
investigated this phenomenon specifically in British and Spanish television newsrooms.
While they found that younger news practitioners could adapt to their news roles
relatively quickly, there was a genuine concern over the effect on the news product.
“Multi-skilling leaves journalists less time to fulfill traditional journalistic practices, such
as double-checking of sources and finding contextual information. The newly established
routines tend to emphasise [sic] concern about the quality of output” (p. 99).

Martyn (2009) gives an overview of the impact of mobile journalism on news
products. By examining the phenomenon on a macro and micro level, the author finds
some causes for concern but also reasons for promise. One thing Martyn is sure of is that
the “the technological Pandora’s box is open” (p. 207) and that multimedia journalism
and multi-skilling should be used carefully by journalists who have both sufficient training and experience to ensure journalistic standards are maintained.

By perhaps making a television reporter a “jack of all trades, but a master of none,” (Stone, 2002) how does this affect journalism’s already loose grip on its standing as a profession? In order to answer that question, it is important to understand what previous scholars have said in relation to the idea of professionalism.

First Era: “The Golden Age”

In the middle of the twentieth century, an area of scholarship began to emerge that became known as the sociology of professions. These scholars devoted a great deal of time to conceptualizing the idea of “professionalism.” Gorman & Sandefur (2011) called these early theories the “golden age” of sociology of professions research. Drawing from a functionalist tradition, these scholars tended to see the “professions as one of the institutions that sustain social order” (p. 278). The early research was highly conceptual in nature and looked at how the established professions (medicine, law) could be described. Four main attributes of professionalism emerged from this research: expert knowledge, technical autonomy, a normative orientation toward the service of others and a high status, income or other kind of reward (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011).

According to these early researchers, the most important of these attributes is expert knowledge. Professionals apply a body of knowledge to the specific set of problems they are tasked with solving. That knowledge may be more formalized, as in law or accounting, or more abstract. Abstract knowledge is required of professionals whose fields include vague cause-and-effect relationships and whose decisions require more experiential expertise (Abbot, 1988; Freidson, 1970). In his seminal work “The
Wilensky (1964) noted that there was an optimal level of technicality when it comes to this expert knowledge. Knowledge that is too vague will be ineffective at consistently solving the problems that face a certain profession but knowledge that is too narrow and easily codified can be appropriated by those outside the profession.

Maintaining control of that knowledge, which is known as technical autonomy, is another aspect of this early research. For a profession to remain secure and exclusive, its members must be able to determine what is right or true in their field. This authority is derived from society and assures that even if others are able to draw upon a profession’s body of knowledge, without control, they will remain inferior. This autonomy generally rests within the individual members of a profession or in a professional organization (Friedson, 1970). Gorman and Sandefur (2011) note that at the time of this early research most professionals were self-employed entrepreneurs, but today they are usually employed by “large complex organizations such as professional service firms, group practices, corporations, government agencies or hospitals” (p 284). Most contemporary work on technical autonomy has focused on how these organizations have attempted to exert control over their workers and the workers acceptance or resistance of that control.

Another aspect of sociology of professions research involves the notion of “service to others.” Goode (1969) called this a “service orientation” and explained that it requires that professionals put the interest of their clients ahead of their own instead of using their knowledge for the public good. This concept implies the existence of a professional community that will enforce a set of ethical codes, but some researchers have found this self-regulation to be weak at best (Friedson, 1970).
The last category may be one that least applies to journalism. Davis and Moore (1945) believed that, because professionals provided necessary functions for society and are required to undergo difficult training to acquire their specialized knowledge, professionals should be highly rewarded. This reward could be financial, societal, or something else. Some also believed that these rewards are used as an incentive for professionals to regulate themselves (Goode, 1957).

**The Second Era: Deprofessionalization**

Just as the sociology of professions was becoming the dominant research tradition when it came to studying professional work, changes were occurring in the world that tested these theories and the idea of professionalism in general. In contrast to the notion that professionalization is the future of knowledge work, Haug (1975) suggested that a number of factors, including an increased reliance on technology, will lead to a **deprofessionalization** of these jobs. Leicht and Fennell (1997) illustrated how professional work was no longer the sole province of self-employed entrepreneurs like the country doctor or accountant. Large organizations have imposed external control over professionals as both employers and as clients. Hall (1968) investigated what he felt was the contentious relationship between professionalization and bureaucratization. While results varied by each profession, he noted “generally, an inverse relationship exists between the levels of bureaucratization and professionalization.” (p 103.)

In addition to conflict on the individual level, professional organizations themselves saw a reduction in the ability to internally control their own members -- through government regulation, for example (Friedson, 1983). For example, in the past, state bar associations (and eventually the American Bar Association) did not allow law
offices to directly advertise their services to the public. Any attempt to solicit clients or to commercialize a law practice was seen as detrimental to the profession. However, in the 1970s, the Supreme Court ruled that advertising made by law offices was protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution and could not be regulated by any bar organization (Calvani, Langenfield & Shuford, 1988).

Larson (1977) wrote of how occupations wrap themselves in the cloak of “professionalization” as a way to maintain power and control over themselves. With non-traditional occupations like engineers, teacher and accountants now considering themselves professionals, this may have a “diluting” effect on the notion of professionals being a specialized group.

By the 1980s, the changing characteristics of many professions were becoming abundantly clear to many scholars. With a specific focus on the medical profession, these scholars began to question whether or not this profession was even a “profession” (in the classical sense) anymore. Because they were losing control of both their expert knowledge and the everyday operation of their business, they seemed to be experiencing the effects of “deprofessionalization” (Haug 1988, Ritzer & Walczak 1988). Taking this logic one step further, Derber (1983) described, what he called, a “proletarianization” of the professions. He pointed to the loss of specialized knowledge (“technical proletarianization”) and moral purpose (ideological proletarianization) as evidence that professionals are undergoing a loss of autonomy at the hands of capitalists, similar to factory workers during the industrial revolution.

**Contemporary Research**
While research into a generalized sociology of professions subsided in the 1990s, scholars have continued the same lines of inquiry inside the literature of specific areas of sociology (organizational sociology, sociology of medicine and law). But even though they are not working within a common research thread, the same themes from the original sociology of professions literature (expert knowledge, technical autonomy, service orientation, high rewards) still pervade (Gorman & Sandefur, 2011).

**Expert Knowledge**

The rationalization and codification of expert knowledge has been an area of significant research by scholars of many professions, but especially medicine. Timmermans and Kolker (2004) pointed to “evidence-based medicine” and clinical practice guidelines as phenomena that narrow a physicians’ discretion and undermine their authority by specifying how healthcare should be performed. The spread of medical knowledge through the Internet and television advertising also presents a new issue when it comes to the medical professional’s knowledge base. This information may not be held to the same standards as that of medical practitioners and can lead to patients “lobbying” their doctors for certain treatments or medicine (Briggs, Burford, De Angeli, & Lynch, 2002; Lowrey & Anderson, 2006). Kritzer (1999) was concerned that the codification of legal knowledge coupled with computer database technology has made it possible for web sites to provide clients with a surprisingly sophisticated level of legal services.

Organizational studies scholarship has looked at how expert knowledge is created and distributed across workplace environments. Kellogg, Orlikowski, and Yates (2006) have looked at how “epistemic communities” form within complex work environments and how groups use varying strategies to facilitate collaboration among these
communities. Depending on how formalized a particular organization is, there are a few methods that may facilitate knowledge distribution including eliminating certain managerial constraints (Barley, 1996) or instituting protocols that actually make knowledge sharing easier (Carlile, 2004).

**Technical Autonomy**

Within the four main tenants of sociology of profession’s research, technical autonomy has remained a popular focus for contemporary scholars, particularly in the field of medicine. Most of the work in this field deals with the relationship between professionals and the organizational structures that they must now work within. Hoff and McCaffrey (1996) argue that physicians’ autonomy has been constrained on two levels; First by their employers (hospitals, staff-model HMOs) and second by third-party payers such as private or public insurance companies. Both of these organizations have practices that constrain the way medical professionals provide their care such as lists of approved drugs (formularies) or service reviews. This trend can also be seen in the law profession. Van Hoy (1995) wrote about the rise of “franchise” law firms that offer standardized services to low-income clients. These firms have adopted a very routinized way to organize the work of these professionals.

One of the more interesting facets of this research into organizational control over knowledge workers is the fact that this control is generally implemented by members of the same occupation. Hafferty and Light (1995) point out that in medicine, the academics that determine “best practices” and even those in the administrative level are actually physicians themselves. This leads to a differentiation of autonomy at the occupational and individual level, with individual practitioners enjoying significantly less autonomy.
Another aspect of autonomy research involves the degree to which these professionals respond or resist this outside influence. As one would assume, there is evidence of both. In the medical community, some self-employed physicians acquiesce to the increased involvement of third-party organizations while others use “creative billing” to circumvent them (Hoff & McCaffrey, 1996). In the law field, Nielsen and Nielsen (2000) studied lawyers employed by corporations. Some accepted and embraced their employer’s profit-motive and used their expertise to further it while others looked for ways to circumvent this and remain an internal “cop.”

**Service Orientation**

Gorman and Sandefur (2011) explain that in the “classical” sociology of professions literature, a service orientation was derived from a sense of community among professionals. Common experiences and lifelong affiliation to their chosen profession created a sense of shared identity and ethical norms. However, they point to “specialization by groups of workers, growing diversity of organizational forms and employment statuses, the globalization of markets for expert services, and the sociodemographic integration of historically homogenous occupations” as undermining that sense of community.

The consumers and clients of professionals also have an enormous influence on the traditional service orientation. In the past, the perceived knowledge gap between professionals and their clients was a justification for special ethical responsibilities for the professional and source of power in their dealings with the client. The client could assume that all the members of a given profession were equally competent. But current research shows that assumption is being challenged by both large organizations and
individual clients. Barley and Kunda (2004) have shown that large organizations often employ “in-house knowledge experts” who manage their purchase of outside professional work and are able to be more discerning with whom they will do business. On the individual level, ratings services provide any potential customer or client with access to reviews of particular professionals, usually emphasizing client satisfaction and price (Hornsby, 2011).

**High Rewards**

One aspect of professional work that created a shared sense of community and long-term affiliation was the enjoyment of high rewards, which usually include income and status. Most of the literature in this area deals with the methods that professionals have implemented to maintain this social and financial status in the face of certain challenges. Lounsbury (2002) explored how professional organizations have been created (specifically in the financial field) to ensure continuity of status and income as the underlying logic of professional field changes. Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinnings (2002) theorized that professional organizations could help an occupation redefine its role and jurisdiction when that same institutional logic undergoes change.

Some scholarship has focused on the inequality of professional status and compensation when compared to the rest of the labor market. Grusky and Sorensen (1998) point to the different ways professionals use licensing requirements and educational certification to maintain their economic superiority.

**Competition**

A final area of professionalization research involves competition among various occupations for jurisdiction over certain “work tasks” (Abbot, 1988). These work tasks
are the very problems that members of professional occupations attempt to solve using
the expert knowledge that they claim to hold. Abbot’s (1988) “systems” framework
posits that these professions do not exist in a vacuum and are part of a network that
includes other occupations (some professional, some not) that are attempting to encroach
into their jurisdictional areas.

The key element to this framework involves linking certain occupations with
certain work tasks. Abbot (1988) called this a “jurisdictional claim.” These links may be
determined by external or internal forces. External, or environmental, forces can be
technological, economic or regulatory in nature while internal, or subjective, forces
include relationships with clients and how an occupation defines a work task, the solution
to that task and how successful their solutions actually are (Abbot, 1998; Child & Fulk,

**Journalism and Professionalism**

Among the seminal and contemporary literature dealing with professionalism in
sociology, there is little discussion of journalism. This may be due to the fact that
journalism does not have specific barriers and boundaries to the extent that medicine and
law do. Whatever the reason, this section will look at the literature that has been written
dealing with journalistic professionalism. A great deal of this literature asks if journalists
even consider journalism to be a profession and what ways journalism resembles or
attempts to resemble one (McLeod & Hawley, 1964).

One of the earliest works on professionalism in journalism was concerned with
what professional values were held by both elite and rank-and-file “newsmen.” Johnston,
Slawski and Bowman (1972) identified a rift among most journalists and placed them in
either “neutral” or “participant” press categories. The “neutral” journalists felt the news came from a truthful relaying of facts while “participant” journalists believed in a more personal and creative style of reporting in which the journalist must imbue events with meaning and context in order for them to become news. Their research suggested that education and size of community were likely predictors of which camp journalists would fall in, with more urban and educated journalists tending to agree with “participant” journalistic values.

Apropos of this particular discussion, Coldwell (1974) combined a survey of newspaper photographers and a content analysis of photographs in order to determine their professional orientation and how that corresponded to higher photographic “quality.” Not surprisingly, he found that newspaper photographers that identified with professional standards worked at newspapers that were judged to “be superior in photographic performance” (p. 80). Also, Weinthal and O’Keefe (1974) conducted a survey of broadcast journalists and found professional values consistent with most newspaper journalists (accuracy, objectivity) and a general feeling that news should be considered a profession and journalists should form their own professional organizations.

There seems to be a dip in professionalization research in journalism after the mid-1970s. It may be that Watergate and other journalistic coups of the time firmly cemented journalists’ place as an important professional in modern society, a notion those early studies seemed to be trying to determine. But after about 25 years of relative comfort, the journalism industry faced a new wave of challenges to its status, as the digital age made publishing and broadcasting available to everyone with an Internet connection. A new wave of research on professional values and orientations of journalists
began, and this scholarship looks at how the news industry continues to adapt to a changing information landscape.

Aldridge and Evetts (2004) qualitatively analyzed journalists in the United Kingdom and their relationship with professionalism. They note that historically, UK journalists have been reluctant to embrace the structures of a profession such as licensure and membership in professional organizations. But when faced with radical changes in their organizations, British journalists could use the values of professionalism as a sort of “self-discipline” to maintain some level of control and normalization.

Back in the United States, Cassidy (2005) directly examined the differences in professional role conceptions between newspaper and online journalists. Using a survey method similar to Weaver and Wilhoit (1996), the author looked at what particular role conceptions were deemed most important by journalists at both online and print publications. Most importantly, while both groups deemed the “Interpretive/Investigative” important, the newspaper journalists found it significantly more important than online journalists who though that getting information to the public as quickly as possible was most important. In trying to explain this difference, the author refers to Boczkowski’s (2005) theory that because the audience, advertising and design personnel have held a greater role in developing online newspapers, the goals and values of these groups have a greater influence.

Alternatively, Deuze (2005) saw multimedia and multiculturalism as inevitable trends that should not be seen as contrary to any notion of professional journalism. In fact, Deuze believes that the “modernist bias” that many have equated with professionalism in journalism is counterproductive. “Any definition of journalism as a
profession working truthfully, operating as a watchdog for the good of society as a whole and enabling citizens to be self-governing is not only naïve, but also one-dimensional and sometimes nostalgic for perhaps the wrong reasons” (p. 458).

In a 2007 panel study of U.S. journalists, Beam, Weaver and Brownlee (2009) noted several changes in the first several years of the twentieth century regarding ideas of professionalism. The authors found membership in professional organizations dropping and a feeling of a lack of autonomy (especially among print journalists). But the study also found a more positive attitude toward the notions of analyzing complex issues and being an adversary to government claims. Journalists who wrote blogs also embraced these ideas, in addition to “pointing out social problems and setting the political agenda” (p. 291).

Becker and Vlad (2011) consider the deprofessionalization of journalism in terms of how journalism and mass communication programs at colleges and universities should prepare their students for work in a 21st century media landscape. They recommend both specialization and generalization in certain aspects of journalism education. Certifications in data analysis, graphic design, or open records searching may help students hone their skills similar to how public relations and advertising programs allow for a certain degree of flexibility in their coursework.

Approaching journalistic professionalism from a systems perspective, Lowrey and Anderson (2006) examined the ongoing jurisdictional competition among traditional new outlets and news blogs. He found while certain external factors such as economic capital, professional norms and the ability to divide labor and specialize supported traditional journalism, traditional journalism is also hindered by its need to attract a larger audience,
to let certain stories slip though the “news net” and its need for predictability among its stories and production.

**Mobile Journalism and Professionalization**

According to both the organizational structures literature on horizontal complexity and the sociology of professions literature on deprofessionalization in professional work settings, the more widespread, less “exclusive” and less specialized that knowledge is among members of a workforce, the less professional that workforce becomes (Hage & Aiken, 1967a; Haug, 1975; Tolbert & Hall, 2009). The concept of mobile journalism, or “mojos”, inherently calls for journalists to be less specialized in their knowledge. Mobile journalists are expected to be able to identify the newsworthiness of a story, identify and interview the relevant sources, capably operate video and audio gathering equipment, write a clear and concise news story, and edit a news package using video and audio gathered from the field with their own narration. Since the beginning of television news, this has been a job carried out by at least two (sometimes several) workers specialized in one or more of those tasks. To compare this to an occupation more readily considered a “profession,” imagine a single doctor who must diagnose a patient, perform the operation, complete all necessary billing and insurance paperwork, and then personally fill the prescribed medication.

For the purposes of this study, collapsing news tasks (or decreased horizontal complexity) will be defined as one news worker doing one or more tasks that were, until recently, carried out by multiple news workers. This concept will be the independent variable. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:
**RQ1**: Will collapsing news tasks lead to a deprofessionalization of television journalists?

Professionalization is a complex issue and directly measuring such a variable may prove impossible. But as the sociology of professions literature has shown, there are many aspects of professionalization that can be measured and will be the dependent variables in this study. Some of these variables will have a direct effect on the news products that journalists produce, while some may have a moderating effect on the day-to-day work habits of these journalists.

The first variable, expert knowledge, involves the specialized body of knowledge that professionals apply to the problem they are tasked with solving. (Abbot, 1988; Freidson, 1970) In the case of mobile journalists, this would be the knowledge generally associated with a capable journalist (good news judgment, good interviewing skills, the ability to tell a complex story concisely including all relevant points of view) and a capable technician (the ability to operate, monitor and troubleshoot all necessary equipment, knowing which tools work best in certain situations). Until recently, this knowledge has been held by multiple news crew members. It is quite possible that one worker asked to maintain these disparate forms of knowledge will not be able to apply them all as well as the aggregated efforts of the news crew. Knowledge required to accomplish the merged tasks will be necessity become less specialized, and decreased specialization will lead to less expert knowledge; therefore, this second research question is proposed:

**RQ2**: Will collapsing news task lead to decreased expert knowledge?

Another aspect of professionalization is technical autonomy which involves the control a professional or association of professionals has over their specific body of knowledge and work decisions and practices (Friedson, 1970; Friedson, 1983; Haug,
1975; Leicht & Fennell, 1997). Because of the increased burdens placed on mobile journalists, both from a technological standpoint and a logistical standpoint, it is possible that they are forced to give up a certain amount of control over part of their professional duties. This may involve getting story ideas from public relations professionals or following certain generic storylines in their news product. Therefore, the third research question proposed is:

**RQ3:** *Will collapsing news tasks lead to a reduction in technical autonomy?*

Related to the concept of autonomy, routinization is a process that has many definitions. Generally, routines are tied strongly to the concept of rule-following, and as a negotiated process for completing similar work tasks in a similar manner to streamline those tasks (Bucher, 1970). Routinization has been heavily studied in journalism and in generally regarded as contrary to the professional ethics of modern journalism, specifically the idea of journalists as arbiters of truth, but an inevitability of large and complex news organizations (Epstein, 1979; Feighery, 2011; Powers, Meyers & Babbili, 2004; Tuchman, 1972). However, as with technical autonomy, as tasks are collapsed and horizontal complexity reduced, it is possible that mobile journalists are going to become more susceptible to this effect because their limited focus will be on merely accomplishing work – i.e., completing their varied tasks by the deadline. There will be little time for individual arbitration, and time only for following rules and prescribed paths. Therefore, this following research question is proposed:

**RQ4:** *Will collapsing news tasks lead to more routinization of news work by mobile journalists?*

The deprofessionalization effect, moderated through the previously stated variables, may have a direct impact on the news products that mobile journalists produced. The most obvious impact may be on the technical quality of these products.
Wallace (2013) reported that many in BBC regional newsrooms that had been converted to multi-skilled (or collapsed task) newsrooms felt the overall technical quality had diminished. The technical standards of professional broadcast news outlets have been in place since the earliest days of the medium and evolved from film production techniques (Zettle, 2005). These standards were established to ensure that little attention would be paid to the artifice of an edited television news story, which should include steady camera shots, smooth audio transitions, video edits that avoid making subjects appear to suddenly move (jump cuts) and the photographic “rule of thirds.” Mobile journalists who are attempting to complete both the more abstract reporting tasks and these technical tasks may be prone to make more mistakes. It is also possible that these mobile journalists were not originally trained in the standards of news video production and are unfamiliar with the established norms. Therefore the following research question is proposed:

*RQs: Are news products rendered by journalists performing collapsed tasks of lower technical quality than those rendered by multiple-person news crews?*

A final dependent variable is encroachment by outside occupations, such as public relations workers or powerful local institutions (politicians, police). Abbot’s (1988) systems perspective on professions predicts that decreased specialized knowledge and autonomy may make an occupation vulnerable to encroachment by other occupations that vie for control over the same area of work. Such encroachment may be a way that “mojos” harm journalism’s commitment to public service or its “service orientation.” As Martyn (2009) explains, there is a concern that mojos will “become a mere pipeline for a public relations feed rather than a critical analysis with the time to pause, reflect and add layers of context to the story” (p. 201). It is proposed that the reduced expertise, autonomy and professionalism resulting from less horizontal complexity (collapsed tasks)
will erode journalists’ abilities to serve as independent and objective mediators of information. And this may reduce journalists’ societal role as “watchdogs” for the public in general. Therefore, this final research question is proposed:

*RQ₆: Are news products rendered by collapsed tasks more likely to be encroached on by outside occupational groups?*

The following theoretical model illustrates the relationship that these variables may have. Lower technical quality and encroachment by other professional groups are the dependent variables because they can be directly observed in the news products transmitted to the general audience. However, decreased expert knowledge, loss of professional autonomy and increased routinization are believed to be moderating variables that derive from collapsing tasks and lead to these dependent variables.

*Figure 1:* How collapsing news tasks may lead to deprofessionalization among television news journalists.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

In measuring the variables as described and their effect on the work practices and news products of mobile journalists, a case study method has been chosen. According to Yin (2009), there are three conditions to consider when trying to determine if a case study method is best. If the hypothesis or research question relates to how or why a phenomenon takes place, if the focus is on contemporary events, and if the study does not require controlled behavioral events, then a case study is appropriate. While other methods can provide more generalizable results, such as a randomly sampled large-scale survey or randomly sampled content analysis, they involve logistical issues that the resources and time allowed for this study cannot undertake. Also, a simple survey may make it difficult to measure the effects that collapsing tasks are having on the moderating variables described in the model. Even in an in-person qualitative interview, journalists may be reluctant to fully describe how “deprofessionalized” they have become, and why. Case studies have often been used to examine the evolving nature of newsrooms in the United States (Dupange & Garrison, 2006; Huang, et al., 2004; Singer, 2004) and internationally (Aviles & Carvajal, 2008).

Sampling

This study analyzed two different television news stations, in the same media market. One station in gathered their news by using mostly mobile journalists and the other used mostly news crews. Thus, the sampling of stations will serve to operationalize the independent variable “Degree of collapsed tasks.” Ideally, the stations would have employed all mobile journalists on one hand, or all news crews on the other, but this was
not practical. Even stations that have fully embraced the mobile journalism trend still have one or two news crews or still use crews in certain situations and it is not uncommon to find a station that still utilized news crews to have a few mobile journalists on the payroll. This study attempted to find stations that fall the furthest on either side of this spectrum as possible, in order to increase the chances of assessing the effect of collapsed tasks.

Additionally, individual stations and particular media markets can take on unique characteristics. Television journalists consider some markets more competitive than others. Also, because the size of a market has a great deal of influence over the culture and business decisions of stations, as well as over the types of stories that are covered, it is important to control for this potential confounding variable. This makes it possible for the researcher to attribute the differences in newsroom operation and news story quality under study to the effects of the independent variable “collapsed tasks.” With this in mind, it was determined that the two stations under study should be from the same media market (as determined by Nielsen Media Research). Very small and very large markets will also be avoided in sampling stations, as small markets tend to rely on “mojos” to a greater degree and higher markets tend to rely on news crews because of financial resources.

Once these criteria were determined and the research methodology was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Alabama, a convenience sample of stations in medium sized markets with stations that fall into the two categories described above was created and a recruitment email was sent to station management. Two stations responded to this email and asked for a more detailed description of the study. It was
determined that one of these stations employed mostly collapsed-task mobile journalist and the other employed non-collapsed-task news crews. The stations were contacted again and informed of the study and their role in greater detail. Once permission was granted, a time frame was established for the researcher to visit for five days at each station, spending each day with a different journalist.

Data Collection

The parameters of the case to be studied are the work processes involved in news gathering, rather than all work processes at the station. In order to reach valid conclusions about the theory and variables discussed above, while avoiding bias from the researcher and the subjects, this case study will triangulate three sources of evidence as described by Yin (2009); direct observation, documentation, and interviews.

The first source, direct observation, involved the researcher accompanying the television journalists during their workday. As is typical of most local television news station, this day began at a morning editorial meeting at the station, where different stories are pitched by journalist and then assigned. Then, the journalists went out into the field to gather information, interviews and video for their story. Finally, the journalists began crafting a news piece (or ”package”) based on the information they gathered throughout the day. This sometimes took place back at the station or at remote locations. Sometimes the journalist was asked to report their story from a remote location live during the newscast. After completing their story, the journalist would generally write a print version for the station website. The researcher accompanied the journalist throughout this process and took extensive notes to document as carefully as possible.
The second source of information came from interviews with the journalists that were observed. These will be semi-structured in-depth interviews that took place after their workday was completed. The researcher prepared a list of questions that assessed the moderating and dependent variables named by this study. Many of the questions were both closed-ended and open-ended. For example, a subject was asked “how much control do you have over the selection of the stories you work on?” and to respond with a numerical score between one and five, with one representing “no control” and five representing “total control.” Then, the subject was asked to explain their answer (reasons for control, consequences of control), allowing the researcher to gather quantitative and qualitative data. However, the interviews themselves were also open-ended, allowing the researcher to ask about events that transpired during the observation or any other ideas that the subject and research thinks are relevant. Interview length varied between approximately 30 minutes to just over one hour. The goal was to ask questions until the interview reaches a point of redundancy, where the preselected list of questions has been exhausted and other extemporaneous questioning would not cover new ground.

The researcher also conducted interviews with the news directors at each station. Even though they are not directly involved in daily newsgathering practices, they presumably have a great deal of influence over them. The news director is the highest authority in a local television newsroom. He or she is often involved in assigning stories to different reporters and has a hand in the hiring of the journalists being observed. These interviews provided insight into how management thinks mobile journalists and news crews differ, which stories they feel mobile journalists should or should not be covering and the work that their “mojos” and news crews are producing. These interviews also
included a prepared list of questions that pertain to the hypothesis and variables of this study but remained open-ended enough to allow additional, relevant opinions or comments from the subjects.

The third and final source of information for the case study was documentation, primarily, in this case, the news stories produced by the journalists that were observed and, additionally, other documents the station made available to the researcher such as newscast rundowns (a list of what stories appear in a newscast) and documents prepared by assignment editors of stories pitched during editorial meetings. It was anticipated that written documentation regarding work practices and guidelines would also be gathered, but the stations either would not make them available or did not have such documents.

The researcher obtained copies of the 10 reporter packages (pre-taped and edited news stories produced by a television news reporter) that were produced during the time of observation by the journalist under observation and performed an informal analysis of the content, separately. This analysis was conducted to triangulate the interview and observation data, and it helped especially to provide insight into the last two research questions of this study regarding technical quality and encroachment.

Variables

Questions were written that relate to each dependent variable, and to each dependent variable’s relationship to the independent variable “collapsed tasks.” In addition, news stories produced by the journalists were assessed in an informal content analysis, and findings shed light on the two dependent variables described in the model – encroachment and quality.
The following questions correspond to the second hypothesis (the dependent variable in this hypothesis as well as to the perceived relationship between collapsed tasks and the dependent variable): H2: Will collapsed tasks lead to a decrease in expert knowledge?

1. Did you study journalism in college?

2. If so, did your journalism program concentrate more on writing, video production or both equally?

3. If your program concentrated on one of those aspects, did you seek any further training or learn on the job?

4. How knowledgeable do you feel you are at your job? (1 = not knowledgeable at all, 5 = completely knowledgeable) What leads you to feel this way?

5. How knowledgeable do you feel at reporting aspects of your job? (1 = not at all competent, 5 = completely competent) What leads you to feel this way?

6. How knowledgeable do you feel at the video and audio gathering aspects of your job? (1 = not at all competent, 5 = completely competent) What leads you to feel this way?

7. Do you feel more competent at certain aspects of your job than others? (1 = competent at no aspects, 5 = completely competent with all aspects) Why? What leads you to feel this way?

8. Statement: I would be better at my job if I didn’t have to concentrate on multiple tasks. (1 = Completely disagree, 5 = Completely agree) What leads you to feel this way?
The next set of questions corresponds to the third research question (the dependent variable technical autonomy and the perceived relationship with the independent variable): \textit{Will collapsing news tasks lead to a reduction in technical autonomy?}

9. \textit{How much control do you feel like you have over the stories you work on?} (1 = no control, 5 = total control) What leads you to feel this way?

10. \textit{How much control do you feel you have over the selection of stories you work on?} (1 = no control, 5 = total control) What leads you to feel this way?

11. \textit{How much control do you feel you have over the reporting and writing of the stories you cover?} (1 = no control, 5 = total control) What leads you to feel this way?

12. \textit{How much control do you feel you have over the shooting of the stories you cover?} (1 = no control, 5 = total control) What leads you to feel this way?

13. \textit{How much control do you feel you have over the editing of the stories you cover?} (1 = no control, 5 = total control) What leads you to feel this way?

14. \textit{What would you tell people who might say, “Anyone can do your job?”}

15. \textit{How much control do you have over the selection of enterprise stories?} (1 = no control, 5 = total control) What leads you to feel this way?

16. \textit{Do you feel that being a mobile journalist makes you more or less suited to cover an enterprise story?} (1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree) What leads you to feel this way?

The next set of questions corresponds to the dependent variable routinization and its relationship with “collapsed tasks” as described in the fourth research question: \textit{Will collapsing news tasks will lead to more routinization of news work by mobile journalists?}
*17. Do you feel like you have adequate time to work on the stories assigned to you? (1 = never enough time, 5 = always enough time) What leads you to feel this way? 

*18. How “formulaic” would you describe most of the stories you work on? (1 = very formulaic, 5 = not formulaic) What leads you to feel this way? 

*19. If something unexpected happens while you are working on a story, how well do you think you handle that change? (1 = not well at all, 5 = very well) What leads you to feel this way? 

*20. How often do you feel like you already know how a story will turn out before you have left the station? (1 = not often at all, 5 = very often) What leads you to feel this way? 

21. Are there any written procedures for how to complete certain aspects of your job? If so, how often do you follow those procedures? (1 = not often at all, 5 = very often) Why? 

22. Are there any unwritten guidelines or rules you were taught or developed on your own to be more efficient at your job? If so, what aspects of your job (reporting, shooting/editing video) do they pertain to? How and why did you develop them? 

23. How automated are the technological aspects (shooting and editing audio and video) of your job? (1 = not automated at all, 5 = very automated) 

All of the preceding questions will be supplemented by data gathered from field observations that took place prior to the interview. 

The next set of questions corresponds to the fifth research question: Will news products rendered by collapsed tasks have lower technical quality than those rendered by multiple-person news crews?
24. How often are mistakes made in television news? In your local market? At your station? (1= rarely, 5= very often) What leads you to believe that?

25. In your experience, do journalists who both report and shoot/edit their own stories make more mistakes that those who work in crews? Why?

26. How often does your reporting fall below your personal standards? (1=never, 5=always)

27. How often do you have technical problems with the equipment you use to produce your stories? (1=never, 5=always)

28. How often do technical problems affect the overall quality of the stories you product? (1= never, 5= always)

29. If you could concentrate on one task, do you think your stories would look or sound better? Would they be as well reported?(1= strongly disagree, 5- strongly agree) What makes you feel this way?

30. If there are technical mistakes in a story, do you think it diminished the credibility of the journalist? (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) What makes you feel this way?

The final set of questions corresponds to the sixth research question: Are news products rendered by collapsed tasks more likely to “encroached” on by outside occupational groups?.

31. Typically, how many sources do you consult before you begin putting your story together?
32. Do you feel like you have enough time to consult all the necessary sources and gather all the necessary information for a typical story? (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) What makes you feel this way?

*33. How often are story ideas you are assigned generated from public relations professionals or news releases? (1 = rarely, 5 = very often) Why do you think that is the case?

*34. If you are give information from one source, how often are you able to verify that information with another source? (1 = rarely, 5 = very often) Why do you think that is the case?

The questions corresponding to the fifth and sixth research question are supplemented by data gathered from an analysis of news stories that the reporters produced. This involves an analysis of technical mistakes and of the attributed informational sources in these products.

To analyze the products for technical quality, eight measures were specified based on traditional television news aesthetics derived from educational literature for broadcast journalism (Hilliard, 2004; Kalbfeld, 2001; Shook, 2005). This method is consistent with other academic research into technical quality of short-form video news pieces (Peer & Ksiazek, 2011). A key criteria of television news aesthetics is to bring as little attention as possible to the artifice of an edited news product (Zettle, 2008).

The first measure is “image quality”. This involves the color and sharpness of all images presented in the product. The goal of a news story is to present as realistic an image as possible. News photographers take several steps to insure that their image is “white balanced” (thus insuring the image in the correct color) and in focus.
The second measure is “stability”. A viewer is likely to notice if a camera frame is not stable. A frame that moves or shakes in an unnatural way will distract from the information being conveyed in the story. Stability is generally attained through the proper use of a tripod to stabilize the camera.

The third measure is framing. While not as obvious as image quality or stability, a poorly framed shot can be distracting to a viewer. An image is framed correctly if the subject of the shot (the object or person the camera shot is attempting to show) is either fully in view with no part cropped out of the frame or an there is not an unusual amount of space around the subject. Also, if the shot is part of an interview, it must follows the “rule-of-thirds,” a visual technique where a frame is divided into nine equal sections by two equally spaced vertical and horizontal lines, and important compositional elements (i.e. the face of an interview subject) are placed along those lines.

The forth measure is lighting. Incorrect lighting is defined as any of the following: an interview subject whose face is not completely visible (unless the subject is attempting to hide his/her identity), a shadow from an artificial light source is visible in the frame, or a subject is lighted so strongly that they do not appear as they would under normal circumstances.

The fifth measure is jump cuts. A jump cut is defined as an edit which involves two non-sequential shots of the same subject that vary in a way that gives the impression that the subject has “jumped” around the frame. For example, one image shows a medium shot of a man sitting at a bench and the next image is a medium shot of the man walking away, making it appear he jumped from one part of the frame to the other.
The sixth measure is audio editing. This category is designed to note any poorly edited audio tracks within a news product. This would include an audio edit that takes place in the middle of a word or an audio edit that joins audio tracks that are of disparate volume levels which would be noticeable and unusual to the average viewer.

The seventh measure is audio recording. This category is meant to determine if the audio portion of the news product was recorded properly. Example of improperly recorded audio tracks include: a track that is quiet or loud to a degree that it is uncomfortable or difficult to hear, a track that includes a buzzing or ringing sound that does not appear to be naturally caused by something in the environment or an interview that sounds hollow or has an echo that would suggest it was recorded by the camera’s internal microphone as opposed to an external microphone attached or held closer to the subject.

The eighth and final measure is “shot length”. This is used to note if a continuous image is shown for too long or not long enough. Shots are considered too short if they do not allow the viewer enough time to understand what is happening or being displayed in the image. A shot is too long if the viewer becomes bored with a particular image. The typical shot in a television news story lasts 3-5 seconds.

To analyze the news product for encroachment, each source of information shown or mentioned within the product will be placed into one or more measures. The first measure is “total sources,” and every source in the news product will be placed in this category. It will be used to compare the total number of sources in each product.

The next measure will be labeled “PR sources.” Classification as a PR source will rely on information gathered during observation. For the purposes of this study, a PR
source is an individual whose job description involves communication with professional media. Examples would include a traditional public relation practitioner, a police spokesperson or a city school board’s spokesperson.

Two additional measures will indicate if any of these sources visually appear during an interview within the product. First, the total number of sources who visually appear in the story will be placed into the “On-cam source” category. Then, those sources previously placed categorized as “PR sources” that visually appear in the story will be placed in the “On-cam PR source” category.

Encroachment was assessed using two methods. The mean of each measure was calculated in order to determine which station’s products tend to have more sources, PR sources, on-camera sources and on-camera PR sources respectively. Also, for each product, the percentage of PR sources to total sources and on-camera PR sources to on-camera total sources was calculated. This was intended to determine if either station relies on a PR sources to a greater degree.

The stories will be coded for these variables using the protocol found in Appendix I.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This study measured two types of variables relating to deprofessionalization among television journalists, two dependent variables and three moderating variables. The dependent variables are measured partially through a quantitative method that involves analyzing news products produced by both traditional television news crews and mobile journalists. The moderating variables, however, cannot be coded via content analysis as they relate to work processes rather than the final news product. They will only be discernable through the qualitative methods as described in the previous chapter. Because the theoretical model for this study assumes that the moderating variables precipitate the more measurable direct variables, this chapter will first discuss the findings made during the qualitative portion of the study, which analyzed all variables, moderating and dependent.

Also, for the purposes of expediency, the rest of this report will refer to the station that employs mostly traditional news crews as “Station Crew” and the station that employs mostly mobile journalists as “Station Mobile”.

In-depth interviews and observation

RQ1: Will collapsing news tasks lead to a deprofessionalization of television journalists?

The first research question is broad and represents the overall goal of this study as a whole. Therefore, it will be addressed in the bulk of the conclusions chapter.

RQ2: Will collapsing news tasks lead to a decreased expert knowledge among television journalists?
As noted in the methods section, there were several pre-selected questions that dealt with expert knowledge. The first question respondents were asked involved their education. All of the ten journalists interviewed, except one, graduated from journalism or broadcast journalism programs at the undergraduate level. The exception was one of the journalists from Station Mobile who graduated with a general communications degree. One of the journalists from Station Crew also held a master’s degree in journalism from a top-ranked program. She was the only journalist interviewed with a graduate degree.

The question about education was followed up with a question about what their specific college programs concentrated on: writing, video/audio production or both equally. It would appear that journalism programs are doing their best to prepare students for the new multimedia environment as most subjects stated their programs were a mix of both writing and video production. Three of the journalists, two from Station Crew and one from Station Mobile, felt their programs concentrated more on writing. Three more journalists from Station Mobile felt the programs concentrated more on video production. The rest felt it was an equitable mix. One journalist at Station Crew stated:

I went to school at a time when things were changing. [In undergrad] we rotated. So I would say the emphasis was on writing, but in the background they knew some of these student may want to shoot so let’s teach them. I took lighting classes. So it was whatever you wanted it to be. It operated like a newsroom, one day I was a photographer, one day I was an anchor, and one day I was weather.

One of the journalists from Station Mobile was grateful that his program gave him the opportunity to learn all aspects of news production early on: “They put cameras in our hands right away freshman year. It gave us a jump-start. I had friends at other schools
that weren’t able to get their hands on equipment until their junior year. It was a benefit having hands-on experience form the day I walked in.”

The last question dealing with education asked if the journalist ever sought any further training outside the classroom. Most said they did not. Two journalists from Station Mobile cited internships worked while in college as ways to supplement their classroom education. Only one journalist, from Station Mobile, said he had attended a professional development workshop, in his specific case, one that focused on writing. It should be noted that this particular journalist is a unique case among those interviewed. He is the only one to have made the transition from photographer to mobile journalist. All the other journalists studied had either started their professional career as a mobile journalist/reporter and remained as such, or in the case of several at the traditional news crew station, made the transition from mobile journalist to reporter.

The journalists were then asked how knowledgeable they felt they were at their jobs. For this question, and most of the questions that follow, they were asked to give their answers a numerical value ranging from one to five and then asked to elaborate on their answer. In this instance, an answer of 1 meant they felt “not knowledgeable at all” while an answer of 5 meant they felt they were “completely knowledgeable” at their job. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the journalists felt they were very knowledgeable at their jobs, with numerical responses only ranging from 4 to 5. Looking at the explanation they gave in justifying their responses, most of the journalists seem to equate expert knowledge with experience. Both of the reporters who scored themselves as a 5 worked at Station Crew and cited their years of experience as the main factor. One justified her answer by saying:
I have been doing this since I was 21. I’m 28 now. So that is seven years of reporting. I count grad school with that because we were out doing stories every day. I think that knowledge comes with experience in this field. Would I put someone who is 22 years old in this market? Absolutely not. I think that is where you gain that level of professionalism. You credentials are based on experience.

The other reporter who scored herself as a 5 also believed her experience was key to her level of knowledge: “Basically, I have been in the business since 2000. I have worn pretty much every hat, as far as anchoring and reporting. I’ve produced. I’ve worked all shifts. I’ve seen a lot in the last twelve years.”

While two of the reporters from Station Mobile who gave themselves a 4 cited a lack of experience as a main reason for his answer:

I haven’t been doing this that long. I’ve been doing this for about 3 years now, going on four. I know what to do. I know about pitching ideas but there are always things you can learn. I would like to be a better, stronger writer. There’s always something you can do better, whether it’s you’re writing, appearance, or just how you interact with people before and after your interviews. I always think there is more to learn, at my craft. I would like more experience though I feel I have gotten better in the past year.

Looking for discernable differences between the two stations, the traditional news crew station journalists tended to believe they had more expert knowledge. The two reporters who gave themselves a five both worked at Station Crew while all the journalists at Station Mobile gave themselves a 4.

Following the broad question about expert knowledge, the journalists were asked more specifically about their knowledge of certain aspects of their job. First, they were asked how knowledgeable they were at the writing/reporting aspects of their job. The journalists at Station Crew, again, scored themselves as a 4 or 5. This is not surprising, given, this is their sole job responsibility. However, one reporter, who had previously been a mobile journalist at another station, credited having a photographer as a reason for his success as a reporter:
I liked shooting but doing both at the same time can be difficult. [Not shooting my own stories] was one of the perks of working here. It definitely makes me focus more on the writing of my story. Today, for instance, in the truck, when [my photographer] was driving to next location, I’m already writing in my head. I’m already jotting things down. I actually wrote a skeleton of what the story was going to be. It helps.

The journalists at Station Mobile were more varied in their responses. The mobile journalist who began his career as a photographer only gave himself a 3 on his writing/reporting skills. He admits that his shooting skills are better than his reporting skills. Another gave herself a 5 for writing/reporting even though she gave herself a four for her overall knowledge.

Next the journalists were asked about video/audio gathering aspects of their job. The reporters at Station Crew could not provide an answer for this question because it is not part of their job. The mobile journalists of Station Mobile generally graded themselves fairly high, between 4 and 5. One of the mobile journalists – though she scored herself a 4 on video/audio – explained that she considers the writing portion of her job more important:

I don’t think about shooting as much. It’s not as much my focus. I feel it’s secondary to writing and planning on how to tell the story. Shooting is easy to me. Shooting is more of a skill. Reporting is a different type of thinking, more of an art. I guess I consider myself a writer at heart.

The journalists were then asked if they felt more competent at certain aspects of their job than others. The reporters at Station Crew spoke mostly to aspects of their writing and reporting tasks that they feel they excel at (making strong connections with sources, being a good storyteller, etc.) while the mobile journalists at Station Mobile either said they felt equally competent at all aspects of their job or that they have covered this area in previous questions. This may illustrate that the reporters at Station Crew are focusing more on the intricacies of their tasks and addressing areas that may need
improvement while the mobile journalists at Station Mobile are, in general, satisfied that they are able to successfully execute their multiple tasks and have little time to concentrate on the more minute details.

The final interview question that dealt with expert knowledge was directed only at the journalists at Station Mobile. It asked them if they agree with the statement “I would be better at my job if I didn’t have to concentrate on multiple tasks.” All of the mobile journalists agreed with this statement, some emphatically so. Two of the reporters gave a 5 as their numerical answer, indicating the highest level of agreement. They both stated that splitting their attention among multiple tasks takes away from their overall competence:

Doing two people’s jobs simultaneously takes away from both aspects. I can’t spend the time, the effort, and the creativity equally on both sides because I am balancing the two together. Any time you’re concentrating on multiple things, something is always going to suffer. When you’re interviewing, shooting is going to suffer because you are more worried about the writing aspect. It goes both ways. It’s hard to concentrate on putting everything together when you’re shooting. Even the mobile journalists who did not completely agree with the statement still acknowledged that having another professional there to concentrate on certain tasks would be helpful at least some of the time. One of these mobile journalists spoke about how being part of a news crew would free her to better concentrate on the more subtle aspects of being a television journalist.

There are times when having another person can be extremely helpful. Like when I am driving to a story and I need to be calling sources or looking up things. Or if I have to lug the gear around instead of chasing down someone to talk to. People may have to wait in line to talk to you. You have to be both the friendly face, making them comfortable, and also setting up the equipment. Observation of both stations would seem to back this claim up. The researcher noted how reporters at Station Crew were able to spend the time the photographers were
setting up equipment to prepare interview subjects by either explaining what the process will be like, easing the nervousness that comes from being on television. They were also able to continue speaking to sources before and after the formal recorded interview while their photographers gathered other video and audio elements. Some even obtained ideas and information for other stories during these conversations.

At Station Mobile the researcher observed that some mobile journalists did seem to have difficulty setting up video and audio equipment while talking to interview subjects at the same time. Most of them opted to perform these tasks separately. It was also observed that the mobile journalists would spend less time setting up equipment, possibly for fear of creating long, awkward, silences during this time that would make the interview subject less comfortable. Only one mobile journalist was observed actively engaging with sources at their stories in an attempt to foster a better relationship and secure further story ideas.

In addition to the individual journalists, the news directors of Station Crew and Station Mobile were interviewed. In regards to expert knowledge, they both believed it difficult to judge someone’s knowledge based solely on whether or not they worked within a crew or on their own. The news director at Station Crew did admit that he believed working in a crew is better:

Overall, I guess I would say having crews is better. I think having a crew as opposed to a one-man band is a better situation. You can concentrate more on your particular focus of that job instead of trying to do it all. Anytime you can reduce the breadth of your workload and focus on one particular aspect you’re going to be better at it.

While the new director at Station Mobile believed his journalists were just as knowledgeable as a typical new crew, he expressed some concerned about the inexperiance of those willing to work as a mobile journalist. He believes younger
journalists are more intellectually prepared with the skill sets required of mobile
journalism because of curriculum changes in journalism schools. He also believes
younger journalists are more prepared for the physical challenges of mobile journalism:

In this market, [mobile journalists] do the same stories. I think the biggest
disadvantage is that I am forced to hire very young. Some of them are good but
some of them are inexperienced. Another factor is that [journalism] schools are 60
percent female. Lighter cameras would be more appropriate for them because
there is a physical challenge that you can’t really take into account. It keeps some
reporters from coming here.

Information gathered during observation backs up this claim. At Station Crew, all of the
reporters had worked in other, sometimes larger, markets for at least a few years. This
requirement of a certain amount of professional experience is a common practice for top
50 markets. However, while one of journalists from Station Mobile had at least 10 years
of professional experience, most had significantly less. One journalist had no professional
experience when hired and another had only worked for a short time at a commercially
owned station operated at a local University, where she had recently graduated.

**RQ3:** Will collapsing news tasks lead to a reduction in professional autonomy?

In order to explore the moderating variable “professional autonomy”, which deals
with how much control practitioners of a certain profession have over the norms and
standards of that profession, the journalists were asked a series of questions regarding
how much control they have over various aspects of their job. The first question was
broad, asking how much control they had over their stories. There was not much
difference numerically in each station’s response, the journalists answered with scores of
4 or 5 generally, indicating a high level of control. Most of the reporters at Station Crew
cited a lack of management oversight as the reason they possessed so much control over
their stories but also admitted that time limitations and the need for a “strong lead” story sometimes resulted in less control. Two reporters said:

If you pitch a story that is going to lead the newscast and that you enterprise, you have a good chance of doing it. But if it’s a story that I get put on at 2 p.m., then I don’t think I have as much control because of the time constraints. It’s a case-by-case basis. This station doesn’t constantly check on us because they trust us. I have control over how I write and put it together my stories 90 percent of time. The other 10 percent is arguable more important than the 90 because it is a harder story. Sometimes stories get rewritten and chopped up because of time.

The journalists at Station Mobile saw their personal hand in every aspect of the story (writing, shooting and editing) as the reason they thought they maintained strong control over their stories. This idea is actually best explained by one of the reporters at Station Crew who describes the difference between working on one’s own and working with a photographer:

When I was shooting I knew exactly what video I had without having to go into an edit bay [to look at it] and at certain times I would know to get a certain shot to go with a certain line because once you see it, it’s a lot easier to shoot it yourself than go and tell a photographer to get that shot. The problem is that photographers sometime feel like you are stepping on their toes. They think “my job is to be the eyes; your job is to write the story.” It has to be a partnership. But there are some photographers here who will say on the way back to the station, “I don’t know how you’re planning on writing this but I got a really good shot of this, this or this.” So, it’s a love-hate relationship.

Following the generic question regarding control, the journalists were asked about their control over specific aspects of their job; story selection, writing, shooting and editing. Journalists at both stations, though less so at Station Mobile, complained of a lack of input in the stories they are assigned. Many felt that even if they were to come to editorial meetings with strong enterprise story ideas they would be given other stories because they are considered more timely or have more “hard news”.

Most journalists at both stations felt they had a substantial amount of control over the writing of their stories. They commonly attributed this to less “micromanagement and
oversight” by producers and news directors with the content of their stories. When it came to the shooting and editing of stories, there was some distinction between the stations. Unsurprisingly, the journalists of Station Mobile generally felt they had a great deal of control over these aspects of their stories. The general workflow witnessed during observation, at both stations, involved reporters needing to get scripts approved by management before the editing process began, meaning the writing could be changed if necessary. However, during no part of the observation did management ever view an edited version of the story before it went on the air. One mobile journalist did admit that her limited knowledge of video production may lead to a lack of control, but she quickly dismissed the knowledge she did not possess as unnecessary:

My lighting could be better, but there’s no time for lighting. Sure [there are] some tricks of the trade that I might not know but I don’t need them.

For the reporters at Station Crew, maintaining control over the production aspects of their job is more complicated. The reporters have final approval over the edited version of the story, but because they are not actually recording the video and audio, their control is limited. Again, the professional relationship between reporters and photographers becomes relevant, as two reporters from Station Crew described:

You get used to the photographers after a while. You learn how they shoot and what they do. If I’m working with someone I don’t know or someone who’s shooting I don’t like, that’s when I know to step in and say “Hey listen, make sure you get x, y and z because I’m going to talk about them.” Others you don’t have to guide.

I love having my own photographer, if the trust is there -- if I know they aren’t going to half-ass something and do a good job. If they are willing to work with you, it’s awesome.

A final question regarding professional autonomy aimed to address what many scholars believe the purpose of professional autonomy to be: exclusion of outsiders from a profession. The journalists were asked what they would tell someone who said,
“Anyone can do your job.” While this question provoked very different answers, most of the reporters at Station Crew saw it as the researcher intended, as a challenge to their professional status. Some even mentioned it specifically and compared their jobs to more widely recognized professions:

This is a day and age where more and more people have blogs and websites. Where the professionalism comes in is stations like this. These ABC, CBS, NBC stations have to be reckoned with. These new directors take pride in who they hire. So, it’s me versus some blogger who writes whatever he/she wants. Hand-down, I believe it’s a profession. You can’t go out there and say what you want or do what you want. You will get fired. There’s a long line of accountability that you have to live up to everyday.

The number one thing is you have to have a passion with the hours that we put into it. You can be called in at any given time. It’s like how doctors live at the hospital; this is kind of my second home. Even on your off days, they ask you to stay at least an hour away from the station. Even if you’re off, you have to be able to communicate with people, which can be difficult for some.

The journalists at Station Mobile reacted similarly but tended to focus their answers more on the knowledge gained from experience. A few even accepted that barrier for entry is low, but held that only a few can excel:

Anybody can do it, but not well. There is a skill to everything I do. There’s a skill to artistic shot that captures attention, to getting people to talk to you. You always have to be ‘on’. Not everybody can do that. It’s not second nature, it’s another language.

A lot of people can get their foot in the door, but to have any success you have to be decent or good at what you do to move up.

RQ4: Collapsing news tasks will lead to more routinization of news work by mobile journalists.

In order to analyze how bound the journalists at Station Crew and Mobile are to work routines, they were first asked if they felt they had enough time to complete their assigned stories, as lack of time generally leads to increased routinization. The reporters at Station Crew were generally more positive about the time they are given to do a story, but they also admit to having to adapt to constraining deadlines:
As a reporter you always want more time. I don’t think my news director would want me to work on something I don’t have time to turn. So that’s why we always choose something that I know I can turn.

I almost always have enough time. I think it’s because we have adapted to that time. I have learned how fast I can write if I have to. This issue is when I get something on paper I tend to stick with it, even though it’s still in draft form.

The mobile journalists were generally more concerned about the limitations of time. While no one felt that it prevented them from doing good work, they seem to believe it may be preventing the from doing their best work. Two of the mobile journalists said:

More often than not, I don’t [have enough time]. More often than not, it’s get here and work until it hits the air and always looking back and wishing I would have time to do this or that.

They always get done, not always to satisfaction most of the time. If I was not a one-man band I might have more time. It would depend on the photog. If I have someone lazy it would be tough. I don’t want to be a babysitter.

However, during the time spent observing the journalists, no one at Station Mobile even seemed rushed or in danger of missing their deadline, but on two occasions at Station Crew, the news crews got their stories in just under deadline and appeared to be under a great deal of stress to complete their stories on time. One crew had their story changed around noon, which involved going to another location and shooting several “man on the street” interviews. They were also asked to produce a shorter version of the story they were originally assigned. The other crew got a late start on their story because the photographer originally assigned to work with the reporter was unavailable after the editorial meeting. Both crews were also required to report live from a remote location during the newscast. It was observed that both crews had issues with miscommunication.
One photographer complained that the story was longer than the reporter had led him to believe and he did not have enough video and another was not aware of a last minute change to the script.

It may be that the mobile journalists have better adapted their work routines to make sure this does not occur or, as one journalist from Station Crew believes, stations may expect more from news crews than mobile journalists:

People may save money, but management is not going to make them do as much because they are shooting their own stuff. More is expected of news crews. To say one-man bands are two for one might be misleading.

In fact, only one of the journalists at Station Mobile was asked to report live from a remote location, while two from Station Crew were required to do so. Also, the researcher observed on multiple occasions during editorial meetings at Station Crew (which employs a small number of mobile journalists) that station management treated mobile journalists differently from crews, making sure their stories were not changed late in the day and not assigning them to “breaking news” stories.

Next, to see the degree to which routinization is found in the stories themselves, the journalists were asked how “formulaic” they felt their stories were. There was no discernible pattern between the two stations, some journalists felt they successfully avoided formulaic stories while others did not, such as this reporter from Station Crew:

The stories I get assigned are very routine. If it bleeds, it leads. I hate that philosophy. First, because it’s true. Second, because you lose so many stories in the mix. We continuously go on this cookie cutter pattern of destruction and financial issues. God only knows how good this station could be if we had enough time everyday to do stories exactly the way we wanted them.

The journalists were next asked how well they handle unexpected changes while they are working on a story. This scenario is one where most, even though they were
confident in their ability to adapt, felt news crews had a significant advantage over mobile journalists. A reporter at Station Crew said:

I was on a story where it got changed at 2:00 and it had to air at 5:00. There’s no way I would have been able to successfully turn in a good enough story for 5:00 if I was a one-man band. I’m not saying I can’t do it, but the quality of the story would not be as good.

And one of the mobile journalists at Station Mobile agreed:

Being MMJ makes it more difficult because you are already by yourself doing two people’s jobs. If you’ve got to completely change directions, depending on how far along you are, you are starting over and now you’ve got to do two-people’s jobs in half the time.

Unfortunately, observation of the stations could not provide much corroboration.

There was only one instance where a story was significantly altered during the reporting process, at Station Crew as described earlier. No journalist from Station Mobile was asked to change their story, so comparison of how journalists at each station respond to unexpected change is not possible.

Journalists were also asked how often they felt they knew how a story would turn out before they actually left the station to report it. Most did think not this was often the case and there was no significant difference among the stations. Also, none of the journalists reported having any kind of written procedures they followed on a daily basis.

There were also asked for any unwritten rules of guidelines they had been taught or had developed on their own. Answers from Station Crew varied a great deal without any real consensus or insight. Most of the mobile journalists from Station Mobile spoke of the importance of time management, making sure they were done shooting at a certain time, making sure interviews didn’t go too long to avoid excessive video to look through. Two journalists at Station Mobile said:

Learning time management is huge when you are a [mobile journalist]. You have to learn the unwritten code of time management and using your down time
effectively. Getting people to sit down for interviews so they won’t move around too much helps. That way you can concentrate on what they are saying and not worry about the shot. I try to jot notes during interviews. It’s a trade off between concentrating on the visuals of an interview and what they are saying. I have a very acute awareness of time and time passing. I use drive time for what I can, to go over interview. Being a [mobile journalist] helps you because you know exactly what shots you have and where they are, where the sound bites are. Editing without shooting would take a lot longer.

**RQ5:** Will news products rendered by journalists performing collapsing tasks have lower technical quality than those rendered by multiple person news crews?

In addition to the quantitative measurement of this variable, this study also qualitatively analyzes the journalist’s attitudes toward technical quality: how important it is and if mistakes diminish journalistic credibility. Almost all agreed that technical mistakes are a problem at their station. One journalist at Station Mobile felt his station was the worst in the market regarding technical mistakes. Journalist at both stations also agreed that technical mistakes can diminish the quality of an otherwise well-reported news story. There was some disagreement, at both stations, when asked if being a mobile journalist would make someone more likely to make technical mistakes. Some felt it had more to do with the individual journalist but others felt simply being mobile journalists puts one at a disadvantage. A reporter from Station Crew said:

There are times when I’m writing a story and I’ll lean over to the photographer and say, “Hey, how does this sound?” Sometimes you want that reassurance and to ask “what’s another word for collapse?” That collaboration helps and two minds are always better than one. Also, I always ask (the photographer) if they have any questions because there could be something that I’m completely missing. Journalists at Station Mobile agreed that performing multiple tasks can put them at a disadvantage.

Yeah, I think we are more likely to make mistakes because we are doing 2 or 3 different job descriptions. Some details are going to get missed. One-man bands probably make more mistakes. There are a lot of factors; the time factor, having time to go back and check [the video]. Having two sets of eyes and
having more time to do your own job would help. When you’re doing two jobs things can slip through the cracks. During observation, the only significant technical mistake noted was at Station Mobile. A recorded interview could not be used because the shoulder strap of the camera was visible at the edge of the frame. While that was the only actual mistake noted, the habits of the news crews and the mobile journalists were different in some respects that may affect technical quality. Most of the photographers working at Station Crew used some form of lighting equipment for interior shoots while the journalist at Station Mobile did not. Also, the photographers at Station Crew were able to consistently monitor the video and audio during the recording of interviews and on multiple occasions stopped an interview to address a technical problem. At Station Mobile, some journalists would occasionally monitor the video and audio during interview and a few never did.

**RQ6:** Are news products rendered by journalists performing collapsed tasks more likely to be encroached on by outside occupational groups?

Finally, the study supplemented its quantitative analysis of encroachment by asking the journalists questions regarding the sourcing of their stories. All the journalists felt that they were able to consult multiple sources and verify information through multiple channels as required. They also felt that stories derived from press releases, while common, did not detract from their station’s journalistic credibility because the releases were used as a “jumping off point” for a story as opposed to the only source. One journalist from Station Mobile spoke of the allure of news events set up by public relations practitioners in making her job a little easier:

*When you’re turning out that much and there’s the opportunity to go somewhere and not have to jump through so many hoops. That’s desirable, sure. But I will say if my producers or I don’t have an interest and it doesn’t seem to be a*
newsworthy thing, we won’t cover it. Just because we get a press release doesn’t mean I’m going to be there.
Observation shows both stations used press releases and consulted public relations practitioners often for stories. One reporter and photographer from Station Crew even used elements from a video press release as the primary video source for a story and one journalist at Station Mobile used a PR practitioner to help secure interviews at an event.
There does appear to be a difference between the two stations involving stories pitched and assigned to journalists at editorial meetings. The reporters from Station Crew pitched more enterprise stories based on sources or contacts while journalists from Station Mobile often pitched stories based on press releases or previously published newspaper stories. However, reporters are not always assigned the stories that they pitch. Here is how each news product created by journalists at both stations was originated:

**Crew 1**: Information from contact
**Mobile 1**: Follow-up on previous story
**Crew 2**: Press release
**Mobile 2**: Press release
**Crew 3**: Information from competing news outlet
**Mobile 3**: Enterprise
**Crew 4**: Information from contact
**Mobile 4**: Station management
**Crew 5**: Press release
**Mobile 5**: Press release

The researcher noted at Station Crew, two of the stories were “enterprised” based on information reporters received from existing contacts while this was not true of any stories from Station Mobile. One story from station Mobile was enterprise, but based on an annual event in the local area, not information from any source or contact and also based on a story formula (“what has changed over the years”). Both Station Crew and
Station Mobile pursued two stories originating from press releases, but only Station Mobile had one originating from station management.

During the morning editorial meeting at Station Mobile, the news director entered the room after a separate meeting of station department heads. He told the staff that a local expo the station was sponsoring needed to receive more coverage in the newscast. The journalist under observation is then assigned to produce a story at this expo. This type of story origination did not occur at Station Crew during observation. During the meeting and throughout the day, the journalist expressed displeasure with the story she was assigned, both because she was not personally interested in the theme of the expo and because she saw it as a violation of the traditional journalistic professional norm of the separation between the news gathering and business departments of a news organization. Additionally, during an editorial meeting earlier in the week, a bureau reporter was assigned a story with the purpose of promoting a different station-sponsored event.

**News Package Analysis**

To address the dependent variables that the theoretical model posits may result from the deprofessionalizing effect of mobile journalism, the researcher analyzed the news products created by the 10 journalists being observed. This document analysis was quantitative but informal, and was intended to supplement and triangulate with observations and interviews as is common in case study methodology (Yin, 2009). The researcher is a former professional videographer, with six years working for two different local TV stations, and so is qualified to make these judgments.
RQ5: Will news products rendered by journalists performing collapsing tasks have lower technical quality than those rendered by multiple person news crews?

In order to analyze the technical quality of the news products provided by the stations under study, the researcher identified eight categories that, if not met, would reduce the visual and aural quality of the product. These categories are image (correct color, focus, etc.), stability (image does not shake or move in a fashion that does not seem purposeful), framing (subjects of individual shots are framed correctly, avoiding excess space around objects, interview footage follows the “rule of thirds”), lighting (shots are properly lighted, avoiding an excess or absence of illumination), jump cuts (objects in images do not appear to move from one space to another due to two non-sequential images being edited together), shot length (shots are long enough for a viewer to properly note what is being seen and not excessively long without movement within the frame, also shots that purposefully include camera movement do not begin or end during movement), audio editing (dialogue is edited in a manner that does not noticeably interrupt a normal speech pattern or a word), and audio recording (the quality of the audio is not distracting to the viewer, either through improper volume level, buzzing or ringing produced by malfunctioning equipment, improper placement of the audio recording device).

As described in the methods chapter, if the story did not include any mistakes regarding one of the identified categories it was coded “0”, if the story included one mistake regarding one of the identified categories it was coded “1” and if the story included more than one mistake regarding the categories it was coded “2”. These scores were averaged for each category and for each individual product. These averages will
range between 0 and 2, with a higher score reflecting a greater number of technical mistakes.

The analysis of the products from Station Crew provided the following results:

*Table 4.1: Analysis of technical quality of news products from Station Crew*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>Jump Cuts</th>
<th>Shot Length</th>
<th>Audio Editing</th>
<th>Audio recording</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crew 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The products from Station Crew showed no apparent mistakes in several categories: image, framing, lighting, jump cuts and audio recording. One news crew produced a story with a single stability mistake and a single shot-length mistake, while all but one of the news crews produced a story with one audio editing mistake. The result is an average score of 0.2 for stability and shot length, an average score of 0.8 for audio editing and an average score of 0 for all other categories.

Analyzing the results by news product, one crew produced a news story without any apparent mistakes, an average score of 0. Three crews produced stories with only one mistake, an average score of 0.143. Finally, one crew produced a story with three mistakes, an average score 0.429. This resulted in an average score of 0.171 for the journalists at Station Crew.
The analysis of the news products from Station Mobile provided the following results:

**Table 4.2: Analysis of technical quality of news products from Station Mobile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>Jump Cuts</th>
<th>Shot length</th>
<th>Audio Editing</th>
<th>Audio recording</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the products from Station Mobile had more technical mistakes in the predetermined categories than the products from Station Crew. No mobile journalists produced a story with a mistake in the image category. This may be due to the fact that all the mobile journalists had cameras with full color screens, allowing them to note if the image was the proper color or sharpness. Also, the editing equipment used by all the journalists from both stations included image manipulation features allowing them to correct the color of a shot. They also produced no stories with jump cuts.

The journalists from station mobile scored highest for most mistakes in the lighting category (average 0.8), with two separate journalists committing more than one lighting mistake in their news products. This is not surprising, given that during observation no mobile journalists used additional lighting equipment apart from the small lights mounted on their cameras.
Stability and audio editing were the categories with the next highest scores for mistakes (average 0.6). For stability, one journalist had one mistake while another had multiple mistakes. Three separate journalists had an audio editing mistake, making it the most frequently occurring mistake for Station Mobile and Station Crew. Framing, shot length and audio recording mistakes were committed by two separate journalists each (average 0.4).

According to results based on the news products, one product from Station Mobile had no mistakes across the named categories. This story was produced by the only mobile journalist in the study who began his career as a dedicated news photographer. According to his interview, he was very confident in his production skills and this analysis would appear corroborate this assertion. Two products had an average score of 0.429, another an average score of 0.571 and the product with the most mistakes had an average score of 0.857. This product included multiple mistakes in the stability and lighting categories as well as one mistake in the framing and audio editing categories each. This was also the highest score among all the news products analyzed from both Station Mobile and Station Crew.

Comparing the scores from the two stations, Station Crew committed fewer mistakes in regards to the individual categories and products. While journalists at Station Crew had mistakes in only three categories (stability, shot length and audio editing) the journalists at Station Mobile had mistakes in all but two categories (image and jump cuts). However, the highest average mistake score for an individual category (0.8) was found in the data for both stations: audio editing for Station Crew and lighting for Station Mobile. In fact, Station Crew’s high score was the result of four products including one
audio editing mistake, the most frequently occurring mistake among all products analyzed. Station Mobile’s high score resulted from only two products having multiple lighting mistakes.

Station Crew also fared better when looking at the individual products. Both stations had one product with no mistakes in any category. However, Station Crew had three products with only one mistake and an average score of 0.143, a score lower than all the products from Station Mobile, excluding the product with a score of 0. The highest score from Station Crew (0.429) was also the second lowest score for products from Station Mobile. The two highest scores from Station Mobile (0.571 and 0.857) were greater than any individual score from Station Crew. Finally, calculating an average of the scores for each product, products from Station Crew had an average score of 0.171 while the products from Station Mobile had an average score of 0.457.

**RQ6:** Are news products rendered by collapsed tasks more likely to be encroached on by outside occupational groups?

Another informal content analysis was conducted in order to determine the amount of encroachment by outside occupation groups, specifically public relations professionals, on the news products rendered during the study. The number of attributed sources in each news product was counted as well as sources that appeared on camera. If the source was a professional who specializes in media relations or public relations, they were counted in a separate category (PR source), this would include traditional public relations practitioners as well as spokespeople for large private or public organizations, such as a city police department. Information gathered during the observation period was
used to determine if a source belonged in the PR source category. Finally, if sources the media/public relation category appeared on-camera, it was noted.

The analysis of the news products from Station Crew produced the following results.

*Table 4.3: Analysis of encroachment in news products from Station Crew*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Total PR sources</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>On-cam Sources</th>
<th>On-cam PR Sources</th>
<th>On-cam Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crew 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The products from Station Crew attributed an average of 3.4 sources, 0.8 of these sources were determined to be PR or official sources. This means that 24 percent of the attributed sources in Station Crew’s news products were PR sources. Looking at the products individually, one crew did not consult any PR sources in their story. The rest of the products from Station Crew only attributed information to one PR source, this was generally the an “official” source such as a police or city spokesperson. Three products attributed to PR or official sources 33 percent of the time and a final product only attributed to them 20 percent of the time.

Looking at on-camera sourcing, the results are similar. The products from Station Crew included an average of 2.8 on-camera sources and only 0.2 of those were PR
sources. Only one product from Station Crew included an on-camera PR source (33%). The rest of the products had none. This resulted in seven percent of on-camera sources being considered PR of official sources, a lower number than the overall sources. In most cases, the reporters from Station Crew would consult a PR source, but not put them on camera.

The analysis of the news products from Station Mobile produced the following results:

\textit{Table 4.4: Analysis of encroachment in news products from Station Mobile}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>PR sources</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>On-cam sources</th>
<th>On-cam PR sources</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to Station Crew, the products from Station Mobile had an average of 3.2 attributed sources with 0.8 of those sources being a PR source (25%). This number is slightly higher than the results from Station Crew (24%) but is likely due to the fact that Station Crew had an slightly higher number of total sources (3.4) and the same amount of total PR source. Looking at each individual product, the total source/PR source percentage matches that from Station Crew exactly: 0 percent for one product, 20 percent for another and 33 percent for the other three.
For on-camera sources, again, the results were identical to the data gathered from Station Crew. The products from Station Mobile included an average of 2.8 on-camera sources, the same as Station Crew, and only 0.2 percent of these sources were considered PR sources. Similarly, the average percentage of on-camera PR sources is 7 percent at Station Mobile, identical to the numbers from Station Crew.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

During the very first day of observation conducted for this research project, a reporter from Station Crew said that to successfully accomplish her job she needed a “photographer brain and a reporter brain.” When asked to elaborate during the formal interview, she said

The photographer is focused on how everything looks and sounds. That allows me to be focused on my story, on getting everything right. Also, I love getting feedback from my photographer. It’s made me a much better reporter. This idea expressed by this reporter is also the central question behind this research study. Does being able to concentrate one’s effort on a more limited number of tasks (only needing a reporter brain) make one more of a professional? Conversely, does having to concentrate on a greater number of tasks (needing to have a reporter and a photographer brain) make one less of a professional? This study attempted to make this determination by examining a variety of factors and using a variety of methods. While the limited scope of the research makes definitive answers difficult, themes and comparisons from the data shed light on these questions.

The first way to make this determination is to look at the fruits of these journalists’ labor, the news product. The findings of this research suggest that technical video and audio quality, a sign of a more professional product (Peer & Ksiack, 2011, Shook, 2005), is measurably higher among journalists working in crews. This was perhaps the least surprising finding and the one that directly speaks to the physical difficulties of collapsing television journalists’ tasks. In order to create a “professional” looking news product, several pieces of equipment are required and many of them are large and cumbersome (professional-grade camera, tripod, lighting equipment). It is
physically more challenging for one person to carry and successfully operate that equipment than a multi-person crew.

This is illustrated by the fact that, during observation, none of the journalists from Station Mobile even attempted to use lighting equipment other than the small light attached to their camera, while most photographers from Station Crew did. The journalists at Station Mobile simply don’t have enough hands to carry a camera, a tripod and lighting equipment. When asked about this, one journalist and the news director from Station Mobile both noted that if someone felt they needed an extra hand with a story, they could always request help, either from the two dedicated photographers on staff, or from another mobile journalist. This seems inapplicable to most situations. Assuming a journalist arrives at a location and finds the lighting inadequate, considering the time constraints and the limited number of staff at most television stations, it is unlikely that they will call their station and wait for another person to arrive. They are more likely to simply shoot the story as best they can.

While technical quality may be the most apparent distinction between the collapsed-task journalists and non-collapsed-task journalists, it may be the least enduring. Technological advancement has already helped perpetuate mobile journalism and will almost undoubtedly continue to level the playing field. Increasingly smaller cameras are able to shoot professional quality video and there will most likely come a time when lighting equipment is portable enough that a mobile journalist can carry everything they need to shot a news story.

In addition to technical quality, the study also analyzed the sources consulted in the reporting of these news products. Abbot (1988) and Martyn (2009) believed with a
decrease in specialized knowledge comes the threat of encroachment from outside occupational groups. For journalists, that would most likely come in the form of media relations professionals who are often relied upon for information and access. On the surface though, there appears to be little distinction between Station Crew and Station Mobile. The total number of sources and the percentage of which were media/public relations professionals was nearly identical. However, a more significant difference was found in the origination of these news products.

More stories from Station Crew were derived from contacts with which the reporters had previous relationships. And while both stations had a similar number of stories that originated from press releases, only Station Mobile had a story directly originating from its own sales department, a different kind of encroachment than was anticipated. It is difficult to say if this is due in any part to the station’s use of mobile journalists or the unique power structure of this particular station. However, there was evidence that journalists who work with crews may have more time to seek out and maintain relationships with sources, thus making them less dependent on organization structures, both inside and outside the station, to develop story ideas. A reporter at Station Mobile spoke of the difficulty operating complicated equipment and “being the friendly face.”

But this research focuses on professionalization, and while analysis of the final product is important, the work processes that create those products are ultimately most relevant. One aspect of professionalization, according to sociology of professions literature, is expert knowledge. Professionals must hold occupational knowledge that distinguishes them from everyone else. And while none of the journalists in this study
admitted to having insufficient knowledge, some differences presented themselves in how they defined this knowledge. Most of the conclusions drawn about expert knowledge must be derived from the answers to interview questions, as knowledge is a difficult concept to observe.

First, the journalists at Station Crew tended to rate themselves slightly higher in terms of overall knowledge and one of those journalists possessed the only post-graduate degree of anyone in the study. Also, Station Crew journalists were able to point to more specialized facets of their profession at which they excel, such as maintaining strong relationships with contacts, storytelling, and knowledge of a particular news “beat.” This suggests a higher level of professional self-reflection and focus among the non-collapsed task journalists. One journalist from Station Crew specifically attributed to working within a crew.

If journalists working within a crew have a better “reporter brain”, what about the “photographer brain” of mobile journalists? While most journalists from Station Mobile felt they were very knowledgeable at the video and audio gathering aspects of their job, some admitted to focusing more on the writing and reporting aspects of their jobs because they felt it was more important. This finding is consistent with the quantitative analysis of technical quality.

Also, many of the journalists equated expert knowledge with amount of professional experience, justifying their level of knowledge by noting how long they have been a reporter or the number of stations they have worked at in the past. Indeed, journalism as a whole has generally tended to focus on professional development through on-the-job experience as opposed to workshops or trade publications. If experience is a
measure of knowledge, Station Crew once again has the advantage. As noted in the
findings, the journalists at Station Crew all had some amount of previous experience,
ranging from three years to 12 years, with an average of 5.8 years of experience. And
while one of the journalists at Station Mobile had more than 15 years of experience, most
had significantly less. Two had been hired directly out of school. The journalist at Station
Mobile had an average of 3.6 years of experience. Even the news director of Station
Mobile was concerned that the nature of work at his station was preventing him from
hiring and retaining more experienced journalists.

Another aspect of professionalization is maintaining control over the norms and
standards of a profession, sometimes known as professional autonomy. While it seems
clear that collapsed-task journalists are at a disadvantage when it comes to expert
knowledge, the distinction is not as clear in regards to autonomy.

As with expert knowledge, most of the journalists in the study felt they had a
substantial amount of occupational control, especially the writing and reporting parts of
their jobs. However, notions of control over the video/audio production aspects provided
some differences. Journalists at Station Mobile felt they had a great amount of control
over this area since they are, in fact, shooting and editing their stories. Only one journalist
admitted their limited ability at shooting might lead to less control. However, the
journalists from Station Crew noted that control over this aspect of their job was more
complicated because relying on another professional (the photographer) meant they could
not be completely autonomous, but many felt the advantages outweighed the
disadvantages.
Again and again, the relationship between the reporter and the photographer in television news production was brought up in interviews at both stations. Reporters from Station Crew spoke often of the advantages of working with a photographer if they felt they had a good relationship and could communicate effectively with them. The reporter must trust the photographer to effectively capture video and audio and, on some level, share the same vision for the story. If that trust is not there, the news product will suffer. While there was some concern over this possible miscommunication, most reporters from Station Crew felt their work was improved by having another professional involved, not only in terms of allowing them to concentrate on more specialized tasks, but also because they offered the opportunity to collaborate in thinking through problems encountered on the job, or in offering novel approaches to stories.

And while the journalists at Station Mobile admitted that having a second set of hands during their work day would be advantageous, most claimed to enjoy having a more direct level of control over all aspects of creating their news products. This greater amount of control would seem to place them in a more professional category. However, the notion of control is more complex than just who is holding the camera, which is why this research study also looked at levels of routinization among journalists, which takes autonomy away from the professional and places it at a more organizational level.

While all the journalists under study worked under the same time constraints (generally about nine hours between the time they arrive at the station to the time their stories are broadcast), the journalists at Station Mobile were often and too a large degree, concerned about time management. At some point during the interview, all of them made
mention of time management being a critical factor in their work, and many believed they don’t have enough time to do their best work.

What may be more telling is that managers treat mobile journalists differently than news crews. During observation, no journalist from Station Mobile ever had his or her story changed during the day. And while that only happened once at Station Crew, it was also noted that during editorial meetings the news director at station crew seemed to regard the few mobile journalists that worked for him differently. He spoke about making sure they had stories they could complete under deadline and not moving them away from their assigned stories unless absolutely necessary. This would suggest that news crews are more trusted to apply their professional knowledge in the field and deal with evolving circumstances in ways that mobile journalists may not be. Additionally, mobile journalist work is more controlled at the organizational level (e.g., managers assigning them certain stories and not changing their stories) than news crews.

Some mobile journalist admitted that their work processes make it harder to deal with the unexpected. Many spoke of having unwritten rules and guidelines (routines) to help them deal with the pressure of the additional workload. Most of these guidelines dealt with time management and making sure they were as efficient as possible, thus removing a degree of uncertainty from the work, but also control at the professional level.

On the other hand, the journalists from Station Crew seem more confident in their ability to tackle uncertainty in their work environment. When the reporter from station crew learned that her story had changed about halfway through her workday, she was neither panicked nor concerned that the story would not make air. When asked later, she openly admitted that she would not have been able to complete the story if she was
working alone. The reporter and photographer from Station Crew were observed in professional collaboration, deciding where to go to get the most number of interviews in the least amount of time. And the photographer was able to shoot additional video elements while the reporter was writing her story. These examples show that while a mobile journalist may possess more control over the physical aspects of their job, a news crew, when taken as a whole, possesses more control over the totality of their work. By being able to combine professional knowledge (the “reporter brain” and the “photographer brain”) and avoid the use of constricting routines or organizational limitations, they demonstrate greater control.

**Limits and Further Research**

This study is exploratory in nature. The limited sample itself is a hindrance to any sort of wide-scale applicability. In order to get an idea of the broader scope of this growing trend, the sample would need to be expanded to include news stations in varying geographic markets, while making sure the size of each station is consistent to give validity to comparison. Additionally, more time could be spent at each station. The unpredictable nature of new work makes any sort of generalization difficult, but a five-day period at each station does not offer as much insight as could be acquired from a longer observation.

A longer observation would offer opportunities for more interviews and a larger sampling of news products. The narrow, and sometimes absent, differences between the news products from each station may be due in some part to the very limited range of products. If a formal content analysis of these products is warranted, and I believe it is, it may be necessary to expand the sample period beyond what may be feasible in terms of
observation. There need not be a direct connection between time spent observing journalists and the analysis of the products that station produces; however, this method of content sampling made sense in the present study, as the products were essentially considered additional “documentation” from the case-study observation periods.

Also, a few improvements could be made to the interview questionnaire. Increasing the range of numerical answers the respondents are asked to give from 1-5 to 1-10 may result in more nuanced answers. It was found that almost all of the journalists interviewed scored themselves in the 4-5 range of most questions. It may also be helpful to reword some questions so that they apply to a mobile journalist or news crew members specifically instead of trying to make them as broad as possible. Additionally, it may be enlightening to interview the photographers since they are relevant to research on collapsed tasks of this research.

Also, during the research, the findings suggested additional areas of study involving mobile journalists. The interview with the news director from Station Mobile included discussion of “burn out” among mobile journalist. He believes that the physically and mentally demanding nature of mobile journalism will prevent journalists from maintaining the level of professional commitment that television journalists have in the past. He spoke about the difficulty of hiring and retaining experienced journalists, which is troubling in a market of this size.

Additionally, the news director spoke of the difficulty that women face in a profession that is increasingly physically demanding. He was worried that the added requirement to carry heavy equipment would be inequitably detrimental for women while at the same time, the majority of journalism school graduates are women. In the same
vain, a few of the female reporters from Station Crew spoke about safety concerns from working alone. They believed they would not feel as comfortable going to certain areas and stories by themselves. This suggests that perhaps stations may be reluctant to send mobile journalist to these areas or stories, which would have a detrimental effect on the range and depth of stories that are produced and could mean some segments of the community’s population are ignored.

While the conclusions in this research should only be considered exploratory and the model and methodology may require some adjustment, the findings indicate that, in this case at least, there is some difference between news crews and mobile journalist in terms of professionalization. Hopefully further research will develop stronger and more definitive conclusions because, as news budgets and equipment continue to shrink, the trend of collapsing tasks for television journalist is sure to continue and may, sooner rather than later, become the norm.

Perhaps journalism educators should take away from this research the need to emphasis the true multimedia nature of mobile journalism. They should guide and educate journalists who feel that certain parts of their occupation (eg. shooting video) are not as important as others (eg. writing) to consider that they are not simply reporters or photographers anymore, but rather that they are newly converged professionals. Also, news directors and station general managers who feel that mobile journalism is essentially getting “two professionals for the price of one” should be aware of the potential downfalls such as a less professional looking product, fewer enterprise story ideas and a reduced ability to adapt to changing situations.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

1. *Image*
   Code as follows:
   0= all images are naturalistic in color and clarity
   1= There is one instance where an image is not the correct color or clarity
   2= There are multiple instances where the image is not the correct color or clarity

   Coding instructions: Watch the news package and note any instances where an image does not appear to have a naturalistic color, the image is out of focus or distracting in some other way that does not appear purposeful.

2. *Stability*
   Code as follows:
   0= all camera shots are stable or move “fluidly”
   1= There is one instance of a camera shot that is not stable or movement that is not fluid
   2= There is more than one instance of a camera shot that is not stable or movement that is not fluid

   Coding instructions: Watch the news package and count any instances of “non-stable” camera shot or “non-fluid movement” camera movement.
   
   A “non-stable” camera shot is defined as a camera shot that moves for no apparent reason. A “non-fluid” camera movement is defined as a camera movement (pan, tilt) that included additional movement that does not seem to have an apparent purpose. For example, a camera shakes vertically while performing a horizontal pan.

3. *Framing*
   Code as follows:
   0= All camera shots frame the subject correctly.
   1= There is one instance of a camera shot that does not frame its subject correctly.
   2= There is more than one instance of a camera shot that does not frame its subject correctly.

   Coding instructions: Watch the news package and count any instances of incorrect visual framing.

   A shot is framed correctly if the subject of the shot (the object or person the camera shot is attempting to show) is either 1) fully in view with no part cropped out of the frame or 2) shot in a way that follows the “rule-of-thirds,” a visual technique where a frame is divided into nine equal sections by two equally spaced vertical and horizontal lines, and important compositional elements (i.e. the face of an interview subject) are placed along those lines.
4. **Lighting**
Code as follows:
0= All camera shots are lighted correctly
1= There is one instance of a camera shot that is not lighted correctly
2= There is more than one instance of a camera shot that is not lighted correctly

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and record any instance of incorrect lighting.

Incorrect lighting is defined as any of the following: an interview subject whose face is not completely visible (unless the subject is attempting to hide his/her identity), a shadow from an artificial light source is visible in the frame or a subject is lighted so strongly that they do not appear as they would under normal circumstances.

5. **Jump Cuts**
Code as follows:
0= The story includes no jump cuts.
1= The story has one jump cut.
2= The story has multiple jump cuts.

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and record any “jump cuts” that occur.

A jump cut is defined as an edit which involves two sequential shots of the same subject that vary in a way that and gives the impression that the subject has “jumped” around the frame. (Ex: one shot shows a medium shot of a man sitting at a bench and the next shot is a medium shot of the man walking away, making it appear he jumped from one part of the frame to the other)

6. **Audio editing**
Code as follows:
0= The story included no bad audio edits.
1= The story includes one bad audio edit.
2= The story includes more than one bad audio edit.

Coding instructions: Listen to the audio track of the news package and record any “bad audio edits.”

A bad audio edit is defined as 1) an audio edit that end of begins in the middle of a word or 2) an audio edit that joins a sequence of audio tracks that are of disparate volume levels which would be noticeable and unusual to the average viewer.

6. **Audio recording**
Code as follows:
0= All the audio in the story is recorded properly
1= One audio track was not recorded properly
2= More than one audio track was not recorded properly.

Coding instructions: Listen to the audio tracks of the news package and record any instances of an improperly recorded audio track.

An audio track is improperly recorded if it 1) is quiet or loud to a degree that it is uncomfortable or difficult to hear, 2) includes a buzzing or ringing sound that does not appear to be naturally caused by something in the environment or 3) is an interview that sounds hollow or has an echo that would suggest it was recorded by the camera’s internal microphone as opposed to an external microphone attached or held up to the subject.

7. Shot length
Code as follows:
0= All camera shots are the proper length.
1= All but one of the camera shots are the proper length.
2= More than one camera shot is not the proper length

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and record any instances of camera shots that are not the proper length.

A camera shot should be no less than 2 seconds (unless it is part of a sequence of rapid cuts to create a specific effect) and no more than 10 seconds (unless it is following some sort of action or moving).

8. Number of sources
Code as follows:
Count the number of informational sources that are mentioned in the news package.

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and count the number of informational sources that are mentioned.

An informational source is any person or organization that is recognized as providing information about the subject matter of the story. These sources can be mentioned in the audio track (“according to police…”) or shown visually (an interview subject, a news graphic that cites the National Institutes of Health). Each source should only be counted once even though they may be cited more than once.

9. Number of sources interviewed on camera
Code as follows:
Count the number of different sources interviewed on-camera during the news package.

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and count the number of different sources interviewed “on-camera.” This would exclude sources who are simply mentioned as giving information but are not visually shown in the story or personally identified. Only count a source once, even though he/she may appear on-camera multiple times.
10. PR professionals as sources
Code as follows:
Count the number of public relations of public information professionals that are cited as sources of information.

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and count the number of public relations of public information professionals that are cited as sources.

A public relations or public information professional is defined as someone whose job at that moment, it can be reasonable assumed, is to give information to the media. This can include a public relations representative for a corporation or the public information officer for a police department.

11. PR professionals on-camera
Code as follows:
Count the number of a public relations or public information professionals interviewed on camera.

Coding instructions: Watch the news package and count the number of public relations or public information professionals that are interviewed on-camera. Use the “on-camera” definition from unit 9 and the “public relations or public information professional” definition from unit 10. Only count each PR professional once even though they may appear on-camera more than once.