RITUALS OF TRANSPARENCY

Evaluating online news outlets' uses of transparency rituals in the United States, United Kingdom and Sweden

Michael Karlsson

Published online: 08 Jul 2010.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

Article views: 3291

View related articles ↗

Citing articles: 47 View citing articles ↗

RITUALS OF TRANSPARENCY
Evaluating online news outlets' uses of transparency rituals in the United States, United Kingdom and Sweden

Michael Karlsson

Transparency has been suggested as a new norm in journalism. However, few studies have investigated how the overarching notion of transparency is utilized in everyday news. The purpose of this study is to identify and compare how leading mainstream online news media in the United States, United Kingdom and Sweden make use of transparency techniques in news items. The results show that transparency has begun to affect online news but that current journalism practice is a long way from a fully fledged transparency norm.

Introduction

There is no doubt that journalism has moved online and that this movement has significance for journalism's core function—to gather, select and verify information in order to provide people with the information they need to be informed and self-governing.

In this context, the notion of journalistic objectivity has been central in the western hemisphere during the twentieth century. Although an abstract concept, it has been made operational by news professionals performing what Tuchman (1972) labels "rituals of objectivity". Through various "rituals of objectivity", journalism was supposed to be able to carry out its informative function and simultaneously win legitimacy. In an online environment, the traditional understandings of journalism have, however, been challenged and a rival and sometimes overlapping strategy for truth telling and the garnering of legitimacy has been proposed, namely transparency.

Similar to the notion of "journalistic objectivity", "transparency" is, however, an abstract phenomenon. To be useful as a concept and to have an impact upon actual news production, transparency needs to be translated into useful, everyday "rituals of transparency". Although the notion of transparency has received much attention, there is only a handful of empirical studies which have attempted to capture the use of transparency in everyday news production—especially in a comparative setting. Moreover, some research studies (Arant and Anderson, 2001; Cassidy, 2006; Singer, 2005) indicate that traditional routines remain strong in the online setting.

In this context, the purpose of this study is to explore and identify if and how leading United States, English and Swedish news media utilize what can be termed "rituals of transparency", that is working notions of transparency. In addition, the study compares

the extent to which these rituals are already in use at three news sites in distinctive national settings.

Journalism's Authoritative Rituals

Routines are a way for media producers to reduce uncertainty and accomplish work (Lowrey and Latta, 2008). But routines also play a vital part in journalism's needs to distinguish itself from other sources of media work, since it builds legitimacy around the notion that journalism is the only form of media work with a commitment to the truth (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Zelizer, 2004). However, the truth cannot be told in the whole nor can it be ignored. If journalism is not to rely on the audience's blind faith that news is reported truth-fully, there seems to be a need for workable notions of truth that can be referred to if journalistic truth-telling is being questioned or criticized. Examples of such notions of truth-telling are what is referred to as rituals of objectivity (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009; Tuchman, 1972) that serve the dual function of protecting journalists and news corporations from critique as well as building legitimacy. As time-constrained journalists do not have the time to contemplate whether they have established the whole truth of a story, objectivity routines, strategies and rituals serve as working notions of truth. Typically these rituals include relying on many sources, keeping the journalist's view out of the news story and relying on verifiable facts (Schudson, 2001; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Soloski, 1997). Subsequently, the information emerging from news media is required to have been subjected to certain standardized routines that transform mere *information* into *journalism*.

Another important dimension in the rituals of objectivity is that they need to be performed in front of the audience because, as Tuchman (1972, p. 661) argues, "the correct handling of a story, that is, the use of certain procedures discernible to the news consumer, protects journalists from the risks of their trade, including critics". The crucial word here is *discernible* as it suggests that these journalistic routines must be communicated to the outside world. Carey links ritualistic forms of communication (1992, p. 18) to terms such as *shared* (as discernible suggests) and more so to facilitate *participation* and *the possession of a common faith*. Thus for various routines to be working journalistic rituals they must be communicated to the audience but more importantly, understood and accepted as journalistic rituals by the audience in order for the audience to separate journalism from other forms of communication. Accordingly, in establishing these objectivity rituals as accepted ways of achieving legitimacy in journalistic truth-telling, standards are created by which journalism is evaluated and held accountable by the audience and peers. Failure to deliver according to these standards will, for instance, risk losing the trust of the audience (Tuchman, 1972) and be criticized by peers as was illustrated by the case of the infamous Jayson Blair at the *New York Times*.

Similar to rituals of objectivity, the rising journalistic norm of transparency faces the same challenges—namely how to translate the overarching notion of openness (Plaisance, 2007; Singer, 2007) into rituals that can be used in everyday journalistic work and be communicated to, understood and accepted as journalistic routines by the audience and peers. If this is achieved, transparency can serve the dual function (Allen,

2008) of serving as a system of accountability and a way of increasing legitimacy with citizens.

Identifying Rituals of Transparency

If there is one word to sum up what transparency stand for it is *openness* (Allen, 2008; Plaisance, 2007; Singer, 2007) and many scholars have pointed out that the new transparency norm could possibly have a significant impact on journalism (Deuze, 2003; Hayes et al., 2007; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001). Researchers have also provided illustrations that transparency standards are already in use and change the way news media operate (Allen, 2008; Plaisance, 2007).

In order to impact on journalism the general notion of openness that constitutes transparency has to be translated into specific techniques that can be used routinely by journalists and identified and understood by users, in much the same way that rituals of objectivity have been materialized in, for instance, the use of multiple sources. How, then, has previous research identified and described transparency in a more detailed manner?

Transparency has so far been understood in two sometimes connected strands. The first strand of transparency implies that news producers can explain and be open about the way news is selected and produced—a *disclosure transparency*. The second strand concerns users being invited to participate in different stages in the news production process—a *participatory transparency*. These two strands are often placed together but in reality they rely on different technological architectures as the first strand partly could have been implemented in a one-way medium while that is not the case with the second strand.

Disclosure Transparency

Disclosure transparency is concerned with whether news producers are being open about how news is being produced thus relating to making journalistic routines discernible (Tuchman, 1972) and communicating standards *to* but not necessarily *with* the audience. Disclosure transparency presupposes a common faith between the producers and consumers of news but does not facilitate explicit participation by news consumers.

Previous research has pointed out that explaining news selection, decisions and processes are transparency techniques (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Rupar, 2006; Singer, 2007) along with communicating the preferences and motifs of the media worker (Hayes et al., 2007). This was technically achievable but absent in the analogue media system as it was marked by a closed news culture (Bennet et al., 1985; Deuze, 2003).

Going into more detail, disclosure transparency has been claimed to be achievable by publishing links to original material and the sources that are used (Hayes et al., 2007; Lasica, 2004; Smolkin, 2006). Moreover transparency can also be made manifest by forthrightness concerning mistakes that have been made. When making an error, responsibility should be accepted by acknowledging the error and publishing the corrected information alongside the original information (Lasica, 2004).

Disclosure transparency is brought even more to the fore by the instant publishing model which has significant impacts on the content of online news because the content

never truly finds a finite form and different, successive drafts are published. Quandt (2008) reports from a German context that online journalists edit news content on a regular basis. Kutz and Herring (2005) highlight that online news can be retracted or undergo major changes in the way it is presented. Tremayne et al. (2007) found that immediacy thrived and increased over time in online news.

Thus it can be argued that the high speed of online news publishing warrants disclosure transparency even more as the content frequently changes after the initial publishing. The arch portal of transparency is openness and in order to achieve disclosure transparency from an immediacy point of view, these changes could be stressed in different ways such as using detailed time stamps to highlight and explain changes that have occurred.

Participatory Transparency

While disclosure transparency places emphasis on communicating *to* the audience *participatory transparency* aims at getting the audience involved in the news production process in various ways. Previous research has associated various forms of interactivity that allows users to participate in the news process as transparency techniques (Bivens, 2008; Bruns, 2004; Deuze, 2005; Lowrey and Anderson, 2005; Robinson, 2007).

Connecting interactivity to transparency, Deuze (2005, p. 455) suggests that transparency can be viewed as: "the increasing ways in which people both inside and external to journalism are given a chance to monitor, check, criticize and even intervene in the journalistic process". Bruns (2004) goes into more detail and suggests that transparency requires that users can participate in every stage of news production, from newsgathering to reporting, publishing, analysis and discussion.

Other possibilities to achieve transparency could include (Friend and Singer, 2007; Platon and Deuze, 2003) a public discussion concerning the considerations taken into account when something is published. Furthermore, the continuous news cycle produces different drafts (as mentioned above) that not only can be addressed by the producers but can also be revised after inputs from users (Deuze, 2003).

To reiterate, it seems that any interactive feature that opens up possibilities for the user to either directly or indirectly produce or influence news contents or contexts can be considered as participatory transparency. Disclosure transparency, on the other hand, would include links to sources and original documents, openness on how information has been obtained, openness about and corrections of mistakes, and finally an effort to explain to the public how the dynamics of the 24/7 news cycle affects news content.

Method and Data Collection

Studying online content prompts many challenges (Deuze, 2008; McMillan, 2000; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009) and to date no standardized or commonly accepted methodology has been agreed to overcome the difficulties. This research employs explorative content analysis as methodology and studies the content of front-page news items ($N = 335$) on substantial, quality news sites in three countries across a sample news week (cluster sample). The United States is represented by the online version of *The New York Times*, the United Kingdom by *The Guardian* and finally Sweden by *Dagens*

Nyheter. The online versions of these major newspapers were chosen as the digital publishing form is a prerequisite for origins and procedures of transparency.

Much previous research on transparency has tended to be rather essayistic, anecdotal and/or focused at the news *site* level (Allen, 2008; Deuze, 2003, 2005; Hayes et al., 2007; Plaisance, 2007) thus illustrating or studying if there are different transparency techniques present at all in online journalism. This study investigates the extent to which transparency is present at the news *item* level. Different disclosure and participatory features presented at the news item level are thus viewed as workable notions of transparency. Additionally, individual news items are pointed out as a relevant entity to study (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009) since it is in the specific news content that the whole news production is manifest. Moreover, when objectivity rituals such as the use of many sources or keeping the journalists' personal view out of the news story are employed, they are used at the news item level. Thus rituals, objectivity or transparency can be argued to be most useful as truth-telling techniques when they address specific rather than general content. Put more clearly: a correction section somewhere at the news site will not be of much help if an erroneous news item itself remains unedited or is changed without this being highlighted. Furthermore, having a single news item that invites user participation cannot be considered as transparent as having every news item facilitating user participation. Thus news items offer a useful starting point when trying to establish whether or not and to what extent, news sites utilize different rituals of transparency.

The sample of news items was taken from the main news column on the front page collected at 5 pm local time during a full week in June 2009 using downloading software and/or screen grabs. The news items were scrutinized again two weeks later to investigate if any corrections had been published. An intrasubjective Holsti test on a 15 percent sample of the data was performed seven weeks after the original material was gathered and yielded satisfactory results (0.99).

Findings

The study returned 14 different features which can be considered workable notions of transparency given the previous literature review. The features and their impact on respective news site are presented in Table 1.

The first four features in Table 1 are related to disclosure transparency and the last 10 are connected to participatory transparency.

All sites have extensive use, as demonstrated in Table 1, of *detailed time stamps*. *The Guardian* is the most transparent news site and highlights both time of publication and (latest) update in almost nine out of 10 news items. Yet there is no way of knowing, given the methodology employed in this study, if all news items that have changes have their publishing time updated. However, it has been shown at least in a Swedish context (Karlsson, 2006) that news sites frequently fail to highlight that updating of the news item has occurred. *The New York Times* has its time stamp (for the greater part of this study) on the front page but not in the news item itself. Furthermore, it is unclear if the time stamp on the front page refers to the original time of publishing, updates or both—in Table 1 the time stamps on the front page have been treated as the original time of publication only.

While *The Guardian* acknowledges many updates to their news items they rarely *highlight and explain the changes* made, neither does *Dagens Nyheter*. *The New York Times*

TABLE 1
The different transparency features found and their proportionate impact on respective news sites (%)*

	Dagens Nyheter (N=189)	The Guardian (N=77)	The New York Times (N=69)
Detailed time stamps divided in:	97	99	91
Time of publication only	89	12	88
Time of publication and update	3	87	3
Time of update only	5	0	0
Highlight and explain changes (corrections)		3	7
External links	5	17	51
Original documents	1	1	13
E-mail	44	42	
Comment	46	22	29
Discuss	1		
Bloglinks	66		
Chat	2		
Poll	7		
Reader news	0.5 (1 item)		
Reader collaboration is wanted	2		1
Reader contribution is published	2		1
Report errors in news item	85	100	

*For instance, users are invited to post comments on the site at 44 percent of *Dagens Nyheter* news items, 22 percent at *The Guardian* and 29 percent at *The New York Times.*

publishes statements about changes (all changes are corrections) in almost one out of every 14 news items, thus indicating that news items are sometimes published too quickly. At the same time they utilize the elastic nature of digital media to change the jumbled news items while simultaneously declaring that these changes have been made as well as explaining why.

The last two disclosure features in Table 1 concern two forms of hyperlinks. The first is news items with *external links* that point the user to other websites such as sources or organizations that are mentioned in the text. This is a well-established practice in news items at *The New York Times* but the links rarely find their way into *Dagens Nyheter* while *The Guardian* is somewhere in between. The second form of hyperlink is labeled *original documents* and appears when the news site links to sources that contain specific facts derived from original sources that the news item has referenced. Again this appears to be an institutionalized way of doing news at *The New York Times* but not on the two European sites.

E-mail implies that the e-mail address of the journalist(s) that wrote the news story (*Dagens Nyheter*) or the editor responsible for the section (*The Guardian*) is available within the news item frame. This feature is not available to the NYTimes.com users while almost every other news item has this feature on the two sites.

All three news sites rather frequently offer users the ability to *comment* on the news item. In this way the news item is contextualized and framed by user communication. *Discussion* crops up twice on *Dagens Nyheter* and differs from comments insofar as the discussion takes place away from the page where the news item is published, and hence plays a lesser part in setting the frame for the news item.

One of the most frequent modes of user communication on *Dagens Nyheter*, occurring at 66 percent of the news items, is *bloglinks*. Bloglinks allow users to link their blogs to selected news items and a hyperlink to the blogger is then published in the vicinity of the news item referred to by the blog. The existence of "Bloglinks" is wholly dependent on referring back to the original article, thus enabling the site to judge and advertise the attention its news items are receiving from the outside world. In doing so the "bloglinks" support a symbiotic relationship between news sites and users where bloggers can achieve a bigger audience and the news sites can tap into the bloggers network. This feature is not present on the other two sites.

Other modes of user participation found in limited numbers on *Dagens Nyheter*, but missing on the others, are *poll* and *chat*. Both these features enjoy a rather limited degree of freedom compared to comment or bloglinks as they are heavily moderated (chat) or have predefined answer options (poll). Nevertheless, the features have the potential to allow the users to express themselves, at least to a certain degree.

Dagens Nyheter also stands out as the news outlet that most actively, along with *The New York Times*, although on a very small scale in both cases, invites and publishes users' contribution in, or as, news items. *Reader news*, found once in the study at *Dagens Nyheter*, signifies that the news item is presented as being wholly written by a user. *Reader collaboration is wanted* is when the news outlets advertize for user contributions to be supposedly published in a news item or as an illustration to a news item. *Reader contribution is published*, found at *Dagens Nyheter* and *The New York Times* in small numbers, is when the latent promise is fulfilled and user contribution is identifiably published as a part of the news item.

Report an error which is well established on both *The Guardian* and *Dagens Nyheter*, although absent on *The New York Times*, offers encouragement to users to be more involved in some aspects of news production. This implies that the news sites try to recruit users to do proofreading and fact checking but also trust the user with knowledge greater than the journalists' to refine the published version of a news item.

Taken together the findings presented in Table 1 illustrate that the news sites use many different features that can be, according to the previous literature review, considered rituals of transparency. Moreover, the results signal that *Dagens Nyheter* is the news site that employs participatory transparency but is rather opaque in how their news is being produced. Conversely, *The New York Times* appears to be concentrating on disclosure transparency and be straightforward about mistakes being made while keeping user involvement at arms length. *The Guardian*'s transparency rituals fall somewhere between the two.

An overview of the percentage of news items displaying any form of transparency is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Percentage of news items on each site that have at least one transparency feature

	Dagens Nyheter	*The Guardian*	*The New York Times*
N	189	77	69
Percentage	99	100	100

Although the three news sites have implemented different rituals of transparency and their impact fluctuates, Table 2 illustrates that almost every news item in the study has at least one transparency technique.

All in all the results presented in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the news sites have implemented some transparency rituals; some are used routinely others more scarcely. All three news sites utilize some kind of time stamp to indicate that online news stories are work in progress, thus acknowledging and informing the users of the liquid character of online news content.

The Swedish *Dagens Nyheter* has implemented user participation to a large degree while the audience does not have the same possibilities to participate at *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*. Bearing in mind that user participation at every stage, from news gathering to reporting, publishing, analysis and discussion, is viewed as transparency (Bruns, 2004; Deuze, 2005), *Dagens Nyheter* comes closest to allowing user involvement in all these stages apart from publishing.

The New York Times to a greater degree than the others, has embraced the possibility both to link to original documents and highlight and explain why the content of the news story has changed in the process, thereby fulfilling some news production disclosure transparency (Hayes et al., 2007; Lasica, 2004; Smolkin, 2006).

Overall these results show that transparency can be said to have made an impact in how news is presented at the news item level, supporting other research (Allen, 2008; Plaisance, 2007) reporting that transparency has had an effect. Another evident observation is that the transparency techniques implemented and their impact varies substantially between the news sites, suggesting that the execution of transparency is subject to the culture and policies of the respective news organizations and probably to various social factors in their respective countries.

However, the most noteworthy results from this study are that most news stories are produced the way news stories have traditionally been produced—without significant user participation in the vital parts of news production (reporting and editing), explanations of how or why they are being produced (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Rupar, 2006; Singer, 2007) or the personal preferences of the journalist (Hayes et al., 2007). Rather the news items appear on the news sites without any explicit rationale for their advent. If users are participating at all in the news production process, their involvement tends to be limited to various forms of commenting on already-published news items. Consequently, the online news portrayed in this study falls short of fully committing to the openness that is at the heart of transparency.

In view of journalism's need to rely on routines and rituals as shared and referable notions of truth-telling (Carey, 1992; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1972), it seems reasonable to suggest that the online news covered in this study so far takes confidence from other more traditional rituals and routines than transparency as other research also signals (Arant and Anderson, 2001; Cassidy, 2006; Singer, 2005).

Conclusion

A somewhat divided conclusion can be drawn from this pilot study. On the one hand, it is clear that workable notions of the transparency norm are starting to impact on online news in different countries although the scale and the techniques introduced and implemented to date differ between news sites. On the other hand, it is also evident that

this process is currently only slightly more than embryonic and that the transparency norm has yet to make the kind of impression forecast by many scholars. However, this process is in all probability slow and evolutionary as other research regarding concepts new to journalism (user-generated content and multimedia) has demonstrated.

As this is a pilot study focusing on one week's news items at three mainstream online news sites in western democracies, there are only limited possibilities to generalize the results. Further studies should embrace a larger sample, extended both in time and space, to establish the impact of transparency on a greater scale and with a higher degree of certainty. In addition, further research should also aim to investigate how users perceive and evaluate disclosure and participatory transparency as their involvement and judgment is crucial if the transparency norm is to have any lasting impact.

In spite of these limitations, the three news sites studied in this case study remain significant since they attract large audiences and are regarded as models when it comes to upholding and defining quality journalism in their respective countries. If the transparency norm is to have a significant overall impact in journalism, it most certainly has to have that impact on the biggest and most highly regarded news sites.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

ALLEN, STUART D. (2008) ''The Trouble with Transparency. The challenge of doing journalism ethics in a surveillance society'', *Journalism Studies* 9(3), pp. 323–40.

ARANT, DAVID M. and ANDERSON, JANNA Q. (2001) ''Newspaper Online Editors Supports Traditional Standards'', *Newspaper Research Journal* 22(4), pp. 57–69.

BENNET, LANCE W., GRESSET, LYNNE A. and HALTOM, WILLIAM (1985) ''Repairing the News: a case study of the news paradigm'', *Journal of Communication* 35(2), pp. 50–68.

BIVENS, RENA K. (2008) ''The Internet, Mobile Phones and Blogging. How new media are transforming traditional journalism'', *Journalism Practice* 2(1), pp. 113–29.

BRUNS, AXEL (2004) ''Reconfiguring Journalism: syndication, gatewatching and multiperspectival news'', in: Gerard Goggin (Ed.), *Virtual Nation: the internet in Australia*, Sydney: UNSW Press, pp. 177–92.

CAREY, JAMES W. (1992) *Communication as Culture. Essays on media and society*, New York: Routledge.

CASSIDY, WILLILAM (2006) ''Gatekeeping Similar for Online, Print Journalists'', *Newspaper Research Journal* 27(2), pp. 6–23.

DEUZE, MARK (2003) ''The Web and Its Journalism: considering the consequences of different type of news media online'', *New Media & Society* 5(2), pp. 203–30.

DEUZE, MARK (2005) ''What Is Journalism? Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered'', *Journalism* 6(4), pp. 442–64.

DEUZE, MARK (2008) ''The Changing Context of News Work: liquid journalism and monitorial citizenship'', *International Journal of Communication* 2, pp. 848–65.

FRIEND, CECILIA and SINGER, JANE B. (2007) *Online Journalism Ethics. Traditions and transitions*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

HAYES, ARHTUR S., SINGER, JANE B. and CEPPOS, JERRY (2007) ''Shifting Roles, Enduring Values: the credible journalist in a digital age'', *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 22(4), pp. 262–79.

KARLSSON, MICHAEL (2006) ''Nätjournalistik. En explorativ fallstudie av digitala mediers karaktärsdrag på fyra svenska nyhetssajter'', dissertation, Lund Studies in Media and Communication 9, Lund.

KOVACH, BILL and ROSENSTIEL, TOM (2001) *The Elements of Journalism. What news people should know and the public should expect*, New York: Crown Publishers.

KUTZ, DANIEL O. and HERRING, SUSAN C. (2005) ''Micro-longitudinal Analysis of Web News Updates'', paper presented at 38th International Conference on System Sciences, Hawaii.

LASICA, JOSEPH D. (2004) ''Transparency Begets Trust in the Ever-expanding Blogosphere'', *Online Journalism Review*, http://www.ojr.org/ojr/technology/1092267863.php, accessed 20 September 2007.

LOWREY, WILSON and ANDERSON, WILLIAM (2005) ''The Journalist Behind the Curtain: participatory functions on the internet and their impact on perceptions of the work of journalism'', *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication* 10(3), article 13.

LOWREY, WILSON and LATTA, JOHN (2008) ''The Routines of Blogging'', in: D. Domingo and C. Paterson (Eds), *Making Online News. The ethnography of new media production*, New York: Peter Lang, pp. 185–97.

MCMILLAN, SALLY J. (2000) ''The Microscope and the Moving Target: the challenge of applying content analysis to the World Wide Web'', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 77(1), pp. 80–98.

PLAISANCE, PATRICK L. (2007) ''Transparency: an assessment of the Kantian roots of a key element in media ethics practice'', *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 22(2), pp. 187–207.

PLATON, SARA and DEUZE, MARK (2003) ''Indymedia Journalism, a Radical Way of Making, Selecting and Sharing News?'', *Journalism* 4(3), pp. 336–55.

QUANDT, THORSTEN (2008) ''Old and New Routines in German Online Newsrooms'', in: David Domingo and Chris Paterson (Eds), *Making Online News. The ethnography of new media production*, New York: Peter Lang, pp. 77–97.

ROBINSON, SUE (2007) '''Someone's Gotta Be in Control Here': the institutionalization of online news and the creation of a shared journalistic authority'', *Journalism Practice* 1(3), pp. 305–21.

RUPAR, VERICA (2006) ''How Did You Find That Out? Transparency of the newsgathering process and the meaning of news'', *Journalism Studies* 7(1), pp. 127–43.

SCHUDSON, MICHAEL (2001) ''The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism'', *Journalism Studies* 2(2), pp. 149–70.

SHOEMAKER, PAMELA and REESE, STEPHEN (1996) *Mediating the Message. Theories of influence on mass media content*, New York: Longman.

SHOEMAKER, PAMELA and VOS, TIMOTHY (2009) *Gatekeeping Theory*, New York: Routledge.

SINGER, JANE B. (2005) ''The Political J-blogger. 'Normalizing' a new media form to fit old norms and practices'', *Journalism* 6(2), pp. 173–98.

SINGER, JANE B. (2007) ''Contested Autonomy. Professional and popular claims on journalistic norms'', *Journalism Studies* 8(1), pp. 79–95.

SMOLKIN, RACHEL (2006) ''Too Transparent?'', *American Journalism Review*, April/May, http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4073, accessed 18 February 2010.

SOLOSKI, JOHN (1997) ''News Reporting and Professionalism. Some constraints on the reporting of news'', in: Dan Berkowitz (Ed.), *The Social Meaning of News. A text- reader*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 138–54.

TREMAYNE, MARK, SCHMITZ WIESS, AMY and CALMON ALVES, ROSENTAL (2007) ''From Product to Service: the diffusion of dynamic content in online newspapers'', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 84(4), pp. 825–39.

TUCHMAN, GAYE (1972) ''Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: an examination of newsmen's notion of objectivity'', *The American Journal of Sociology* 77(4), pp. 660–79.

ZELIZER, BARBIE (2004) ''When Facts, Truth, and Reality are God-terms: on journalism's uneasy place in cultural studies'', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 1(1), pp. 100–19.

Michael Karlsson, Department of Media and Communication Studies, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT, Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden. E-mail: michael.karlsson@kau.se