Original Article

New Media, Legacy Media and Misperceptions Regarding Sourcing

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Abstract: Resource dependence theory and related theories of management suggest online-only news media may displace legacy news media, but until that happens the two systems are likely to be dependent on the same resource: news. This quantitative content analysis finds that the systems exist as parallel but distinctly separate entities. Websites associated with legacy news media such as newspapers publish mostly hard news or news analysis in the form of original work. New, online-only news media publish mostly unoriginal features, but the origins of much of the content published by online-only media are unclear.

Keywords: New Media, sociology of news, resource dependence theory, content analysis

Introduction

That the way news is produced, delivered and received has been changed dramatically by the Internet is a foregone conclusion. More of us get our news online now than at any time since the advent of the news website in the 1990s, and there is no reason to expect the move toward digital to end. Print circulation declined 6.7% in 2015, the biggest drop since 2010, and the percentage of Americans who often use the Internet to access news (38%) is now nearly twice the percentage who often use print newspapers (20%) (Lu & Holcomb, 2016; Mitchell & Holcomb, 2016; Deuze, 2001).

But with the ease of access and speed of delivery inherent in new media come structural changes that should concern consumers and journalists alike. There are far fewer professional journalists vetting information than 15 years ago (Pew, 2014) and on some new media sites, the origins of information are not always clear.

Conventional wisdom among journalists holds that traditional media organizations, such as newspapers, produce much of the original content that they publish and that new media organizations, such as BuzzFeed, recycle content that originated in traditional publications. But most existing literature regarding new news media concerns the content on algorithm-driven aggregation websites such as Yahoo! News and Google News, not those of individual

online entities. As a result, the relationship between traditional media content and new media content online remains largely unexplored.

This analysis extends the reach of existing literature by comparing the origins of news that appears on web-only, new media sites and the origins of news that appears on websites operated by traditional news organizations. For working journalists who are accustomed to seeing their original work aggregated, the results may be counterintuitive.

Literature Review

After online news effectively made its debut in the early 1990s (Deuze, 2001) its market penetration grew steadily. By 1998, 12% of news consumers turned to the web for breaking news, compared to 9% who turned to radio and 2% who waited for the next edition of their local newspaper (Paterson, 2007). By 2006 34% of news consumers received some or all of their news via the web (Ahlers, 2006) and by 2015 the percentage of consumers regularly getting news online reached 38% (Lu & Holcomb, 2016). By 2014, nearly 70% of consumers surveyed reported accessing news via a desktop or laptop computer in the previous week, with more getting their news via cell phones and tablets (American Press Institute, 2014). In total, the Internet has swiftly grown from infancy to more than 1 trillion webpages in 2011 (Chiou & Tucker, 2011).

The virtual rush to the web has been accompanied by a parallel shrinking of the legacy news media, including print newspapers and broadcast news organizations guided by traditional news values and practices (Westlund, 2013). Domestically, newspapers have been shedding jobs or closing entirely at an alarming rate. Since 2003 more than 16,200 newspaper jobs and more than 38,000 magazine jobs have been eliminated in the U.S. (Pew, 2014). *The New York Times*, widely considered to be a success story for the new Internet model, recently eliminated 100 newsroom jobs as it continues to search for ways to cut costs (Somaiya, 2014). Similar trends are at work internationally, where original reporting is produced by just a handful of old-media organizations, led by Reuters and the Associated Press (Paterson, 2007; Sundar & Nass, 2001).

With news consumers quickly migrating to the Internet and traditional news organizations shrinking or closing, demand for original content online has outpaced supply. The practice of repackaging and republishing the work of others, commonly called aggregation, has been widely adopted to fill the void. While there has been little research on the scope and implications of aggregation, anecdotal evidence suggests that much of the content offered by blogs and other digital native publications comes from legacy news media, mostly newspapers. A Pew Research Center study of the evolution of the media market in Baltimore (2010) found that about 80% of news stories that reached consumers there included no original reporting, and of the stories that did contain original reporting 95% came from the traditional media, mostly newspapers. *The Baltimore Sun*, meanwhile, published 73% fewer stories in 2009 than it did in 1999. The result, on a national scale, is a "spiral of sameness" or an echo chamber effect in which the same news product is repeatedly published, often with unclear provenance (Boczkowski, 2010). Separately, however, what empirical evidence there is suggests that true competition between legacy media and aggregators is rare (Lee & Chyi, 2015; Huang, Yang & Chyi, 2013). And new media advocates argue that aggregation builds value. Speaking at a presentation at a 2010 FCC workshop, CUNY journalism Professor Jeff Jarvis argued that there are two creations of value: creation of content, and creation of audience, and increasingly, different entities create each (Anderson, 2013).

As the origins of content has become muddled old and new media have begun evolving to look more like one another. While legacy media has moved to the web, digital native media

has begun adopting some of legacy media's standards and practices. Several early web-only publications once known as generators of "click bait," or shallow content meant to illicit page views, have hired experienced journalists and begun to produce original content. BuzzFeed now has a staff of 170 in its news department, including Pulitzer Prize winner Mark Schoofs, and the website Mashable has a news staff of 70 (Pew, 2014; Mitchell, 2014). Gawker added reporters hired away from traditional media, including former Chicago Tribune reporter John Cook (Kurtz, 2009). Even the Huffington Post, an aggregation pioneer often derided by old-school journalists, now has a staff of 575 in its news department, and in 2012 its military correspondent David Wood–formerly with Newhouse News Service–was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. In their study of public interest blogs, Lowrey, Parrott and Meade (2011) found that many blogs were trying to establish themselves as legitimate members of the journalism community. More than half of public service blogs carried advertising in 2008, and in 2009 the average full-time blog spent $2,200 on staff beyond its main operator. Among the 151 blogs sampled, 40% had staff and about half of those blogs indicated they employed regular writers (Lowrey, Parrott & Meade, 2011).

Resource theories

As old news media and new news media grow toward one another in terms of standards and practices, they have one core thing in common: news. The Pew study of the Baltimore market suggests that both new and old media rely on the same raw material, an overwhelming majority of which is created by legacy media (Pew, 2010; Martin 2015). Organizational theory suggests that this dual reliance on the same resource places old and new media–to the degree they can be told apart–at odds with one another, and that their relationship will be a function of two forces: power and dependency (Emerson, 1962; Pfeffer & Novak, 1976; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005).

Pfeffer and Salancik's resource dependence theory rests on the idea that an organization's survival depends on its ability to acquire critical resources from the external environment (Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005), and that competing firms adopt tactics based on their place in that system. The classic concept first forwarded in Pfeffer and Salancik's 1978 book still holds sway 37 years later, having been cited by scholars 19,877 times, and scholars see the fact that it was republished in 2003 without revision as further evidence of its utility (Nienhuser, 2008). Pfeffer and Salancik theorize that parties in competition over resources will try to reduce uncertainty by unilaterally bypassing the source of constraint, by reducing need for the resource, by cultivating alternative sources of supply, by forming coalitions, through the exchange of other goods, through long-term agreements or via mergers and acquisitions. Citing Pfeffer and Salancik, Nienhuser (2008) also theorizes that dependent organizations may avoid the demands of critical resources by creating "the illusion that the demand has already been met" (p. 15). In the world of online news, where the origins of information are often unclear and copyright law often ignored, this already has proven to be a popular tactic.

Pfeffer and Novak (1976) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) also predicted that in mergers and acquisitions–which they envisioned as the absorption of constraint–dependent organizations are more likely to absorb the source of their dependence than dominant firms are to acquire their dependent competitor. In short, the authors of dependence theory believe that the dependent organization will do everything it can to gain control over the resources it needs to survive. As Nienhuser writes, "Concentration of resources means above all concentration of power" (p. 12).

The theory has faced its share of criticism. Casciaro and Piskorski (2005) alleged that a lack of supporting empirical evidence makes resource dependence little more than a metaphor, or "a ghost in organizational discourse, a lingering presence without empirical substance" (p. 167). They identify four areas of concern: First, they argue that there is not sufficient distinction between the two dyadic power constructs of power imbalance and interdependencies. Second, the theory lacks applicability because it prescribes what organizations should do rather than what they may be able to do. Third, the concepts of power imbalance and dependence are ambiguous and, fourth, what little empirical research exists considers dependence, but not inter-dependence. Their findings supported their broad criticism, in which they argued that the theory may be practical at the macro level but it comes up short when applied to individual relationships or industries.

But several years later, to mark the 30th anniversary of the publication of Pfeffer and Salancik's book, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, Hillman, Withers & Collins (2009) assessed the theory's standing and found resource dependence theory remains, largely, sound. The theory adequately contributes to understanding of the mechanisms behind joint ventures, board appointments and mergers and acquisitions. And, by the time of Hillman et. al's analysis, it could no longer be said that the theory has not been rigorously and empirically tested (Hillman, Withers & Collins, 2009; Davis & Cobb, 2010). Davis and Cobb went so far as to write that resource dependence theory and a handful of contemporary theories "like other products of the mid-1970s, such as disco and polyester clothing … continues to exercise influence today" (p. 22).

For the purposes of this study resource dependence theory's explanation of power dynamics and dependency is key. Both anecdotal evidence and the Pew analysis of the market in Baltimore suggest that legacy media relies on its network of professional journalists to create news content, and that new media, lacking a similar infrastructure, is reliant on the work of legacy media. This idea is further supported by research regarding the removal of Associated Press content from Google News during a contract dispute in 2010. When AP content was removed from the new media aggregation site the number of visitors who visited the site and then navigated to other sites declined relative to competitors, suggesting that consumers placed greater value on original material produced by traditional media than its aggregated substitutes (Chiou & Tucker, 2011).

Resource dependence theory suggests that new media, lacking a stream of original content, will attempt to acquire resources elsewhere or otherwise decrease its dependency on its traditional competitors. New media companies, however, have only just begun building editorial staffs to produce original work and coalitions and other agreements involving the exchange of goods between new and old media are not common (Pew, 2014; Mitchell, 2014). New media acquisitions of legacy media remain rare and deals such as the sale of *The Washington Post* to Amazon.com founder Jeffrey Bezos have been categorized as vanity buys by deep-pocketed new-media pioneers (Fahri, 2013). Resource dependence theory, therefore, suggests that while new media may one day employ all of these tactics the fact that it has not yet done so widely indicates that legacy and new media should still be dependent on the same raw material, the news product of legacy media.

The forces at work can be similarly explained by the cohort of management "theories of the firm" most often used to analyze business strategy during times of swift change, such as the technological revolution in news. The dynamic capabilities model suggests that in markets that see little turmoil, institutional behavior may be stable and predictable, but in times of change behavior becomes more unpredictable (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Advantages may come not just from having resources, but from finding new ways to leverage them (Schumpter, 1934). While dynamic capabilities theory suggests that competitive advantage lies in a combination of competencies and resources, the resource-based view of

the firm provides a framework for understanding how advantages can be sustained, suggesting that long-term advantage lies in finding value-creating strategies that aren't easily duplicated (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997).

Theory of the Niche

While resource dependence theory suggests that common and limited resources drive relationships between new and old media, the niche dimension of uses and gratifications theory offers another possible explanation. Niche theory, which originated in the field of bio-ecology, suggests that new media fulfills needs and provides gratification while simultaneously incentivizing old media to change (Ha & Fang, 2012). Older media may face consequences including exclusion, replacement or displacement (Dimmick, Kline & Stafford, 2000). New mediums compete with established media for consumer satisfaction, time and advertising dollars, sometimes providing new solutions to old problems, and growing, competing and prospering by responding to users' needs (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). The Internet is especially well-positioned to fill needs and provide gratification because it can provide essentially the same content as traditional media, and advance the model by doing more, (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Lai, 2014; Sundar, 1999, 2000).

At the center of the model is the "third dimension" of gratifications, "gratification opportunities." Gratification opportunities are defined as perceptions that a new medium has benefits over an old one regarding choice. These perceptions can amplify gratification, making the new medium even more appealing than it seems based solely on its merits. Dimmick, writing before the advent of Internet streaming, noted that new media gives consumers a level of control not present when they consume broadcast television or newspapers. Each advance in technology, such as cable, the VCR and the Internet, presents new gratification opportunities, amplified by their novelty (Dimmick, 2000): "…The new media offer greater choice, more control over content, or both" (p. 22).

The medium's niche is defined as its place in the greater environment, which is shaped by time, advertising, news budgets and gratification opportunities, among other factors. The environment can be deconstructed for analysis, and is composed of parts that themselves may present gratification opportunities and that can be viewed from different "dimensions." The niches of cable and broadcast television, Dimmick explains, can be viewed from the perspective of the advertising dimension, or from the perspective of the video dimension, for example. Citing Dimmick, Ha and Fang (2012) write that the theory uses three concepts to explain the relationship between consumers and media: (a) Niche breadth, or the range of gratifications available in a medium, (b) overlap, or the extent to which two media provide the same thing, and (c) degree of superiority of one medium over another. Empirical research supports the idea that there is overlap between news available on the Internet and traditional news media, and that the Internet has a significant degree of superiority. Generally, the more time consumers spend getting their news online, the more gratification they receive and the more likely they are to perceive the Internet as a superior delivery mechanism (Ha & Fang, 2012).

Just as old and new media overlap in terms of work product (Pew, 2010; Martin 2015), they also overlap in terms of gratifications provided to consumers via the content they deliver. "…There is a moderately high degree of overlap or similarity between the niches of the Internet and the traditional media on the gratification-opportunities dimension" (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004, p. 19). New media have a significant advantage over old when it comes to opportunities for gratification because Internet publishing is unencumbered by the scheduling and content constraints common to old media. Just as movies and radio displaced live entertainment and television displaced radio, new media will displace legacy media,

depressing advertising rates for legacy media and fueling still further displacement (Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004). Just as news content is the limited resource in resource dependence theory, time is the limited resource in the niche dimension of uses and gratifications theory. In their analysis of new media effects Dimmick, Kline and Stafford (2000) found a clear displacement effect resulting from the advent of online news as consumers spent less time watching TV news. Television had the highest level of displacement with 33.7% of those surveyed reporting that they watch less television news since they began using the Internet to get news, followed by newspapers (28%), cable TV news (22.6%) and radio (22.2%). With the exception of the findings regarding newspapers, the results are consistent with a Pew survey that found displacement in broadcast (2000). A more recent survey found that the displacement effect lags behind exposure. It takes consumers about five years of Internet use to reach the point at which they become comfortable and it significantly displaces other mediums (Ha & Fang, 2012).

In broad terms, Dimmick and Rothenbuhler (1984) found that two conditions must be met for a new medium to replace an old one. The new medium must gratify the same needs as the old one with a significant degree of overlap, and the new medium must be superior to the old in some respect. The findings of Dimmick, Chen & Li, (2004) suggest those conditions may have been met.

With this in mind the following research questions are posed.

RQ1: What proportion of content on websites associated with legacy news media and on websites of new news media is original content?

RQ2: What proportion of content on websites associated with legacy news media, and on websites of new news media, is aggregated?

RQ3: What proportion of aggregated content in online legacy news media stories and in new news media stories is sourced from online legacy news media?

RQ4: What proportion of aggregated content in online legacy news media stories and in new news media stories is sourced from new news media?

RQ5: To what degree does the nature of content in new news media differ from the nature of content in legacy news media?

Methodology

For this quantitative content analysis, samples of stories were chosen from the homepages of websites belonging to the legacy news organizations *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Fox News and CNN, and from new media sites belonging to the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Breitbart.com and Drudge Report. For the purposes of this study, legacy news media websites are defined as sites associated with mass media companies including those that operate print newspapers or with broadcast news organizations, which have significant resources and which are guided by traditional news values and practices (Westlund, 2013). New news media websites are defined as Internet-only operations that provide news content, either original or aggregated. This definition is drawn from Perez-Latre (2014). Among the legacy websites sampled *The New York Times'* website is the most-visited newspaper website in the U.S. and fifth most-visited news site in the country. CNN is the third most-visited news

website in the U.S, FoxNews.com is the 12th most-visited and the *Washington Post* site 13th. Among new media sites, The Huffington Post is the most-visited web-only news site in the U.S. and ranks fourth among all news sites. BuzzFeed ranks 34th in the U.S. overall, Drudge Report 26th among news sites and Breitbart 46th, according to rankings compiled by analytics firm Alexa Internet Inc., which is a division of Amazon.com (Alexa, 2015). In total, 400 stories were drawn from the most-recently-posted content on the eight websites in two phases, one sampling *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Huffington Post and BuzzFeed from March 21 to March 26, 2015 and the second sampling CNN, Fox News, Breitbart.com and Drudge Report on July 28 and July 29, 2015, with the sampling periods chosen in part because they included no news of such great significance that it was likely to skew results. Stories were sampled exclusively from the home pages of the eight organizations studied, from most recently posted down each page. The stories analyzed in the first phase were sampled exclusively by the author while the stories analyzed in the second phase were sampled independently by the author and a research assistant.

Original content, for the purposes of this study, is defined as content that was written for the entity in which it was published, regardless of whether that entity is a print product, an online product, or both. A story written by a *New York Times* staff reporter and that appeared both on the Times' website and in print would be considered to be original content on both platforms, as it was written for both and both platforms are products of the same news organization.

Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the news story. Fifteen percent of the stories sampled in phase two were used to calculate inter-coder reliability based on Cohen's Kappa, with reliability ranging from .722 to .892, which exceeds the generally-accepted minimum reliability coefficient of .70 for content analysis (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002).

Measured variables

A story is considered *hard news* if it, to a significant degree, is politically relevant, reports in a thematic manner, focuses on social consequences of events and is impersonal and unemotional in style. A story is considered *soft news* or a *feature* if it demonstrates little political relevance, reports in an episodic manner and if it is personal or emotional in nature. These definitions are drawn from Reinemann, Stanyer, Scherr, & Legnante's meta-analysis of operationalizations of the concepts of hard and soft news (2011). Feature and soft news stories are coded as "1," hard news stories are coded as "2" and others, or stories that do not fit clearly in either the hard news or soft news/feature categories, are coded "3." Inter-coder reliability for the news type variable in the phase two sample was .722.

Content is considered to be *original* if it carries the byline of a content provider associated with the organization to whom the web page belongs, or if the story includes unattributed interviews, information or other reporting. Content is considered to be *aggregated* if it is attributed to an entity outside of the webpage in question and is reproduced in part or in whole. Content is considered to be *wire service* content if it carries a byline or tagline identifying it as the product of a wire service, or if a wire service is credited in the body of the story. The definition of "original" is purposefully broad for this analysis, so as to err on the side of originality of content in instances in which content is not attributed. In other

words, unattributed content on new media sites is assumed to be original for the purposes of this study. All of the content sampled from legacy media sites was attributed.

Stories that include mostly original content are coded "1," stories including mostly aggregated and or wire content are coded "2" and stories including original and aggregated or wire content in equal measure are coded "3." Inter-coder reliability for the originality variable in the phase two sample was .892.

A *hyperlink*, or link, is defined as an active link directing a reader to another story, website or document.

A story is considered to have *advertising* if it appears on a web page that also includes a display advertisement or a link or aggregated story and link labeled as an "advertisement" or as being "sponsored" content. Stories accompanied by three or fewer ads were coded "1," for low number, and stories accompanied by four or more ads were coded "2," for large number.

Results

To explore research questions No. 1 and No. 2, a chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of original content on websites associated with legacy news media (see Table 1) and the frequency of original content on websites associated with new news media for the phase one sample. A significant difference was found (χ^2 (1) = 74.061, p <.05). Original content was more likely to appear in legacy media (69.8%) than in new media (30.2%), and aggregated content was more likely to appear in new media (96.2%) than in legacy media (3.8%). A chi-square test of independence also was calculated comparing the frequency of original content in legacy media (see Table 2) and in new media for the phase two sample, finding similar results. A significant difference was found (χ^2 (2) = 25.49, p <.05). In the phase two sample original content was more likely to appear in legacy media (58.2%) than in new media (41.8%), and aggregated content was more likely to appear in new media (63%) than in legacy media (37%).

Table 1: *In the phase one sample, original content was more likely to appear in legacy than new media*

| | | | Nature | | | |
			Original	Aggregated or Wires	Both	Total
Media Type	Legacy	Count	97	2	0	99
		% Within Legacy	69.8%	3.8%	0.0%	49.7%
	New	Count	42	51	7	100
		% Within New	30.2%	96.2%	100.0%	50.3%
Total		Count	139	53	7	199
		Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In terms of distribution within media outlet from the phase one sample, 98% of the content sampled from the homepages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* websites was original work produced by Times and Post staffers or others employed by those organizations. Of the content sampled from the homepages of the Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, 42% qualified as original work.

Table 2: *In the phase two sample, original content was more likely to appear in legacy media*

			Nature			
			Original	Aggregated or Wires	Both	Total
Media Type	Legacy	Count	64	30	6	100
		% Within Legacy	58.2%	37.0%	66.7%	50.0%
	New	Count	46	51	3	100
		% Within New	41.8%	63.0%	33.3%	50.0%
Total		Count	110	81	9	200
		Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

To explore research questions No. 3 and No. 4, regarding sourcing of aggregated material, a chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency and nature of links (see Table 3) to other media in legacy and new media in the phase one sample. A significant difference was found (χ^2 (1) = 49.7, $p < .05$). Links to legacy media were more likely to appear in legacy media (83.3%) than in new media (16.7%) and links to new media were more likely to appear in new media (80.4%) than in legacy media (19.6%).

Table 3: *Links to legacy media were more likely to appear in legacy media*

			Destination				
			Legacy Media	New Media	Both	Unclear or None	Total
Media Type	Legacy	Count	55	9	9	26	99
		% Within Legacy	83.3%	19.6%	40.9%	40.0%	49.7%
	New	Count	11	37	13	39	100
		% Within New	16.7%	80.4%	59.1%	60.0%	50.3%
Total		Count	66	46	22	65	199
		Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In terms of distribution within each media type for phase one data, 55% of links in legacy media stories took readers to other legacy media sites, while 9% took them to new media. Within new media, 37% of links took readers to new media, and 11% to legacy media. Of new media stories containing multiple links, 59% included links sending readers to both new and old media sites, versus 40.9% of legacy media stories doing the same. A chi-square test of independence did not find a statistically significant relationship among the same data in the phase two sample, though both media types were three times as likely to link to legacy media as to new media in the second sample, reflecting broad agreement.

To explore research question No. 5, a chi-square test of independence was calculated (see Table 4) comparing the frequency of hard news stories and feature and soft news stories in legacy and new news media for the phase one sample. A significant difference was found (χ^2

(1) = 11.69, $p < .05$). Feature stories were more likely to appear in new media (61.4%) than in legacy media (38.6%).

Table 4: *In the phase one sample, hard news was more likely to appear in legacy media*

			Type			
			Feature or Soft News	Hard News	Other	Total
Media Type	Legacy	Count	39	60	0	99
		% Within Legacy	38.6%	61.9%	0.0%	49.7%
	New	Count	62	37	1	100
		% Within New	61.4%	38.1%	100.0%	50.3%
Total		Count	101	97	1	199
		Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In terms of distribution within media type, 39.4% of stories in legacy media were feature stories, and 60.1% were news stories. Within new media, 37% of stories were news stories, and 62% were features.

Separately, a chi-square test of independence was calculated (see Table 5) comparing the frequency of hard news stories and feature and soft news stories in legacy and new media for the phase two sample. A significant difference was found (χ^2 (2) = 10.381, $p < .05$).

Table 5: *In the phase two sample, which included Breitbart, feature stories were more likely to appear in legacy media*

			Type			
			Feature or Soft News	Hard News	Other	Total
Media Type	Legacy	Count	44	55	1	100
		% Within Legacy	65.7%	42.6%	25%	50%
	New	Count	23	74	3	100
		% Within New	34%	57.4%	75%	50%
Total		Count	67	129	4	200
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100.0%

Interestingly, in the phase two sample feature stories were more likely to appear in legacy media (65.7%) than in new media (34%), and hard news stories were more likely to appear in new media (57.4%) than in legacy media (42.6%). It should be noted that the phase two sample included content from Breitbart, the lone new media site in either sample that

contained a significant volume of original news content. That content was almost exclusively hard news and can reasonably be assumed to have influenced said results.

Anecdotally, an overwhelming majority of the work sampled from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* was traditional journalism, defined as coverage of breaking news or analysis, while most of the original work sampled from BuzzFeed was lists of information compiled by BuzzFeed staff and of indeterminate origin. Huffington Post contained, largely, a greater mix of original and aggregated content. The phase two sample followed a similar pattern with one exception. Legacy media outlets CNN and Fox posted a significant amount of original reporting and new media's Drudge Report posted almost exclusively aggregated material. Eighty-six percent of the content posted by CNN was original, with the remainder being aggregated or a combination of original and aggregated material, while 42% of Fox's content was original, 48% was aggregated and 10% was a combination of aggregated and original content. Of content on Drudge, 98% was aggregated and the site routinely included redundant headlines/links that used different wording but sent readers to the same stories in apparent service of search engine optimization. On the new media website Breitbart, however, 90% of the content was original. While evidence suggests that a large majority of web-only enterprises rely on aggregation, Breitbart is not entirely unique as web-only news organizations continue to hire journalists (Pew, 2014; Mitchell, 2014; Lowrey, Parrott & Meade, 2011).

Separately, chi-square tests of independence were calculated comparing the volume of advertising present alongside stories on new and legacy media, alongside original and aggregated content and alongside hard and soft news. Significant differences were found in all three cases, respectively: (χ^2 (1) = 19.56, p <.05); (χ^2 (2) = 18.845, p <.05) and (χ^2 (1) = 3.487, p < .05).

Table 6: *In legacy media, advertising clusters were more likely to be large*

| | | | Outlet | | |
			New	Legacy	Total
Number of Ads	Small Number	Count	23	6	29
		% within Type	31.5%	6.0%	16.8%
	Large Number	Count	50	94	144
		% within Type	68.5%	94.0%	83.2%
Total		Count	73	100	173
		% within Type	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In legacy media, 94% of advertisement clusters were large clusters, compared to 68.5% of clusters in new media (see Table 6). On pages hosting original content, 94.2% of ad clusters were large, compared to 70% of ad clusters associated with aggregated content (see Table 7).

Table 7: *On pages hosting original content, advertising clusters were more likely to be large*

			Originality			
			Original	Aggregated	Equal	Total
Number of ads	Small Number	Count	5	24	0	29
		% within Orig	5.8%	30.0%	0.0%	16.8%
	Large Number	Count	81	56	7	144
		% within Orig	94.2%	70.0%	100.0%	83.2%
Total		Count	86	80	7	173
		% within Orig	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

On pages associated with feature or light content, 90.2% of ad clusters were large clusters, compared to 70% of clusters on pages associated with hard news (see Table 8.)

Table 8: *On pages including feature content, advertising clusters were more likely to be large*

			Type		Total
			Feature	Hard	
Number of Ads	Small Number	Count	6	23	29
		% within Type	9.8%	21.1%	17.1%
	Large Number	Count	55	86	141
		% within Type	90.2%	78.9%	82.9%
Total		Count	61	109	170
		% within Type	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Discussion

There is little evidence to suggest that new media have employed the tactics enumerated by resource dependence theory as tools for overcoming dependence. Pfeffer and Novak (1976) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978)'s constraint-absorbing mergers are simply not occurring, for example, and one searches in vain for examples of the sorts of strategic alliances theory suggests should be evident. Because previous research indicates new media regurgitates the

work of old media, it was anticipated that this analysis would show that new media largely re-publishes content created by legacy media, while legacy media produces original work. But the analysis found instead that, while an overwhelming majority of content on legacy media sites was original and a majority of content on most new media sites was not, the two systems exist parallel to one another, providing significantly different content and undermining the niche dimension of uses and gratification theory's requirement of overlap. Legacy media provide mostly original reporting on news and events, and with some exceptions new media provide mostly features compiled using information found on other new media sites elsewhere on the Internet or information of indeterminate origin. This is especially significant because of the continuing decline in employment in legacy media, as it suggests that new media are not filling the news vacuum left by the decline in the number of professional journalists, but are instead giving consumers aggregated content re-purposed as features. One possible explanation, while disheartening for news professionals, is that new media have created the "illusion that the demand has already been met" (Nienhuser, p. 15), and consumers of information simply are not aware of what they are not getting.

This idea is supported by the niche dimension of uses and gratifications theory, which suggests that "gratification opportunities," or perceptions that new media have more unique content, satisfy more and offer more opportunities for gratifications, amplify gratification. Further, dynamic capabilities theory suggests that new media should be able to find such opportunities to gain ground during a time when the foundation of the traditional news media is shifting. Also disheartening for old media news professionals is Ha and Fang's conclusion that there is a period of adjustment to new media, after which the rate at which they displace other mediums accelerates (2012). This suggests that the migration of consumers from legacy media to new media may be far from over.

The idea that new media is reliant on legacy media is further undermined by the findings regarding the use of links. Legacy media and new media in the phase one sample were basically mirror images of one another regarding use of links, with 83.3% of links that appeared in legacy media taking readers to other legacy media and 80.4% of links appearing in new media taking readers to other new media. New media was considerably more likely to link to both new and legacy media in the same story, with 59.1% of new media stories with multiple links linking to both, compared to 40.9% of legacy media stories (Table 2). In the phase two sample no statistically-significant relationship was found, but both new and legacy media in the sample favored links to legacy media. This provides limited support for the idea that new media is more reliant on legacy media than legacy media is reliant on new media.

The nature of content, categorized as hard news or features, was more complicated as it was studied across platforms. In the phase one sample 60% of the stories that appeared on legacy media sites were hard news stories, and about 40% were features, while the numbers were basically reversed for new media, where a significant portion of the feature stories were lists, often little more than a series of stock photo images with a sentence or two of copy for each. With the inclusion of Breitbart, which published a significant amount of original content, the second phase sample may better reflect the growing diversity of the online marketplace for news.

The snapshot of advertising, which can play a key role in both resource dependence theory and the theory of the niche, suggests that legacy media still holds the upper hand among advertisers. Original content and legacy news organizations have substantially more advertising as measured in this analysis. Still, feature content–which is in the wheelhouse of new media–also appears to be more popular than hard news as online advertisers pursue eyes and Ha and Fang's findings (2012) suggest momentum favors new media.

With technology developing at a pace that sometimes makes platforms obsolete (consider MySpace) the consequences of this disruption of the news market remain unclear. Citing Pew

data (2000), however, Dimmick writes that the consequences to legacy media are perhaps larger than one might expect, because broadcast news operations typically already are the least profitable divisions at television networks. The consequences for print news, as well, are still unfolding.

Limitations

The results regarding the proportion of original content to aggregated content in legacy and new media may be limited in applicability because of sampling method. Because only home pages were sampled the sample could have excluded stories that are categorized on themed pages, such as a sports page. The results are further limited because the four new media sites sampled, the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Drudge and Breitbart, may not be representative of the fast-changing world of online-only news. The largest web-only purveyors of news, Yahoo News and Google News, were purposefully excluded because they exist largely as headline services. Breitbart, meanwhile, was a clear outlier in terms of content originality among web-only news organizations studied. Future study could benefit from a wider net.

Finally, with the exception of the narrow look at number of ads, this analysis considers the resource of editorial content at the exclusion of the resource of advertising revenue. If resources amount to power, as resource dependence theory suggests, a similar analysis of advertising revenue might be enlightening, though solid revenue data may be hard to come by.

Conclusion

Resource dependence theory suggests that new and old media should rely on the same resources, and Dimmick, Kline & Stafford found that there is overlap regarding their gratification niches (2000). While they do have a parallel existence, this research suggests that new and old media draw from very different sets of resources. A majority of new media are dependent largely on other new media, feeding off of like resources as unoriginal and repackaged content is republished, and to a lesser extent, new media feed off of old media. Old media, however, draw largely from their own work product and other legacy media organizations that do the same. Each exist as a mostly closed system, linking largely to like entities. The reasons for this remain unclear, though it could be explained in part by research showing that entertainment, not news, remains the dominant gratification achieved online (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000).

Pfeffer and Salancik's resource dependence theory and related theories of the firm suggest that new media will eventually absorb old media in a bid to remove constraints on their ability to acquire critical resources. One can already see hints of this as new media managers are displacing old media managers within organizations that have distinct old and new media divisions, including the replacement of newspaper editors with new media natives at Advance Media newspapers as that company reorganizes to make digital delivery of news its priority (Luengo, 2014). But the theory of the niche offers a competing prediction that might offer some comfort to those concerned about the loss of old media's original work product and editorial standards. It suggests that, rather than being absorbed by new media, old media may adopt and adapt, learning how to better deliver original work on new platforms and how to use crowd-pleasing practices common to new media while maintaining the standards and credibility inherent to legacy media (Duncan, 2000; Dimmick, Chen & Li, 2004).

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