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Introduction

In a radio interview in March 2015, Australia's attorney general, Senator George Brandis, stated that bloggers are not journalists. Senator Brandis was being questioned about the data-retention laws that were passed in Australia in early 2015 and what protection journalists would have regarding their sources when government agencies and other authorities could access their phone and Internet records. The interviewer asked, "How do you define a journalist? Because I mean that definition is pretty wide now. Are bloggers covered for instance?" (Brissenden 2015) and Senator Brandis answered: "For the purposes of this discussion a journalist is a person engaged in the profession of journalism" (ibid.). This particular example is timely because of that problematic question: What is the definition of journalism and who is a journalist in the digital space? This paper discusses "who is a journalist" by drawing on the first stage of a research project that is examining new media entrepreneurs in Australia.

The researcher has interviewed bloggers (political and lifestyle, including fashion and beauty, entertainment, food and health, and Mummy bloggers) online magazine publishers (advocacy, lifestyle and long-form journalism), website producers and broadcasters (such as sports) in Australia to examine how media practitioners who work in online publishing ventures survive in the online space. The aim of the research was to find out their key skills, what business models are successful, what platforms and technologies they are using, and what is the extent of their success. One of the questions that arose out of the initial literature review for the project was whether these producers are doing journalism, and participants were asked if they believe that what they are doing is journalism and whether they call themselves journalists.

Arguments about journalism and its traditions and values and the online space have been happening for many years. Journalists and the public view journalism in a particular way (Hardt

1996). Portrayals of journalists in popular culture maintain the public's perception of who is a journalist by presenting the following occupational mythology:

The journalist, accustomed to being an outsider, fears no one and cannot be corrupted in the pursuit of truth, whatever the temptation. Always ready to drop everything in pursuit of a "story," the journalist is always on the move, seldom pausing too long to reflect, and "tells it like it is," whatever the personal cost. In Australia, the popular tradition of the journalist is also as a somewhat undisciplined larrikin. He (and it is a he, despite the statistical reality that the majority of journalists are female) has seen it all at least twice. He is a pub philosopher who likes nothing more than bringing the mighty to account, or championing the cause of society's powerless (Sheridan Burns 2001, 25).

Svennik Høyer (1996) listed similar traits as his ideal journalist, but traditions such as truth in reporting, invocation of the public's right to know, presenting information for citizens to make informed decisions, undertaking the political watchdog role and employing the notion of objectivity are examples of "the core traditional mission" (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon 2001, 10) of journalism, or the principles that govern both the public's and practitioners' perception of the profession. Core ideals such as independence, verification and accountability shape journalists' identities (Singer 2015). Journalism that relates to politics and the public good, such as hard news reporting and investigative journalism, is often seen as more valuable than other forms (Hanusch 2012), such as the so-called soft news of lifestyle writing, a description of writing that describes what several of the research participants produce in their blogs and online magazines and on their websites. Writing feature articles such as character profiles is another journalism form that is seen as highly desirable: "If news reporting is the bread and butter of journalism, feature writing is perceived by many as its strawberries and cream" (Conley and Lamble 2006, 315).

Craft and Davis (2013) reinforce the understood core role of journalism in a democracy when they describe the role of the press in a democracy as the mirror, the watchdog and the "marketplace of ideas" (2013, 5) and list several democratic needs that journalism is supposed to satisfy:

information dissemination, where the press publishes information the public needs to make decisions; accountability, similar to the watchdog role in that the press holds the powerful to account; representation, giving equal opportunity for all citizens to have their voices heard; and, deliberation and, conflict resolution, where the press provides a forum for the public to debate and resolve issues. Craft and Davis ask "what is journalism?" and answer that question by discussing the importance and unique nature of journalism (2013, 31) as a practice crucial for democracy and self-governance along with journalists' obligation to seek verifiable truth and act independently, that is, "the procedures that produced it [journalism] were as free of competing interests as possible" (2013, 51).

These core roles and ideas proposed by Craft and Davis are examples of the socially responsible model where journalism would give "people unfettered access to information and a voice in the political life of the nation" (Morgan 1998, 62). Colin Sparks used the term "public enlightenment journalism" (1996, 46) to describe news that is "a valuable constituent element of democratic political life" (ibid.), thus reinforcing the commonly understood, and romanticized, role of journalism in society and, thus, who is a journalism practitioner.

Hanno Hardt (1996), however, described this vision of journalism as utopian, with the popular myths of the Fourth Estate and journalist as watchdog undermined by the commercial imperatives of news organizations. Hardt, though, also proclaimed the end of journalism because of the Internet, a notion that has not been borne out: while the platform to deliver journalism may be changing, journalism itself has not died (Deuze 2007; Nerone 2013). Sparks noted, quite presciently, how self-publishing could become a serious threat to news organizations, particularly in relation to advertising, with companies able to establish their own online sites rather than advertise with, what he called, "electronic newspapers" (1996, 49). However, while academics such as Sparks predicted an online environment where readers would have access to more news outlets as well as "a plethora of public enlightenment material" (1996, 44), there was little acknowledgement that new players outside traditional media, such as those included in this research, would become important in the online space.

These understandings about journalism inform the research participants' perceptions about what they do. For these participants at least, *journalism* and *journalist* are viewed in a particular way. The participants who identified as journalists are typically those who have worked in traditional media, while those who dismissed the occupational term, even though they may be doing the same type of information dissemination, came to online publishing via other paths. The article will discuss whether producers of information online can be described as journalists by presenting findings from the research participants' interviews and situating these findings in literature around the soft news/hard news dichotomy, objectivity, ethics and standards, and producing content in the digital space. However, in the first instance, it is important to provide context for the discussion by briefly discussing definitions.

Who is a journalist?

A previous paper reporting on the research (Fulton 2014) presented a review of the literature and attempted to provide a definition of *journalist* and stated: "In a similar way to new media itself, the definition for digital media workers is fluid and is difficult to define … defining *journalist* is contentious" (Fulton 2014, 4). In summary, despite attempts that have been made over many years to define *journalist*, there has been limited success in coming up with a satisfactory definition (Shapiro 2014) and Sheridan Burns (2013) claims that the online environment and the ability of anyone to publish makes trying to define *journalist* even more complex. Zelizer agrees: "Although one might think that academics, journalism educators and journalists themselves might talk about journalism in roughly the same manner, defining 'journalism' is not in fact consensual" (2004, 13), and the same can be said about *journalist* with Zelizer stating that there is disagreement among professionals and academics in how broad or narrow the definition should be. Zelizer claims, simply, that a journalist is one who does news work but then asks the question: "Is a teenage girl who produces daily entries in her diary and shares them with her friend a journalist? According to the above-mentioned definition, she is" (2004, 23). Other examples that Zelizer claims fit into the provided definition are film reviewers, music critics, radio talk-show announcers, weblog producers and reality television. If we take Zelizer's definition and comments into consideration, the participants in this study could be

considered journalists. Craft and Davis define journalism as the "process through which "news" gets made … News is constructed by people who are selecting and confirming and explaining those things out in the world" (2013, 39), and journalists are those people who construct the news. Thus, according to Craft and Davis, "it means that the definition of "journalist" could apply to anyone who engages in that distinctive journalistic process of selecting, confirming and explaining" (ibid., 40) thus, again, including participants in this research project.

Further discussions about who is a journalist involve the notion of verification (Hermida 2015), the objectivity norm (Broersma and Peters 2013), the divide between editorial and advertising (Briggs 2011; DeMasi 2013) and ethics. Allan Knight (2008) states that it is professional ethics that differentiates journalists from bloggers, and if people classify themselves as bloggers, and thus put them outside professional journalist ethics, they are not journalists.

In a formal sense, governments and other organisations have provided definitions for legislative and guideline purposes. In 2010, Australian Member of Parliament Andrew Wilkie put forward legislation that would provide protection to journalists' sources. The *Evidence Amendment (Journalists Privilege) Act 2011* came into force in April 2011, and for that legislation a definition for journalist was included: "*journalist* means a person who in the normal course of that person's work may be given information by an informant in the expectation that the information may be published in a news medium" (Parliament of Australia 2010, Division 1A, 126G, lines 13-16, emphasis in original). And while this is a very narrow definition of the understanding of what a journalist does (for example, it does not cover opinion writers) several of the respondents in this research certainly do publish information from an informant in a news medium. It should also be noted that in the same Act *news medium* was also defined: "any medium for the dissemination to the public or a section of the public of news and observations on news" (ibid.), and this definition provides more clarity of definition for the participants in this research project.

Furthermore, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, journalists "research and compile news stories, write and edit news reports, commentaries and feature stories for presentation in print and electronic media, and compose written material to advertise goods and services"

(Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015), and, again, that describes what the research participants do. Finally, the Australian Journalism Code of Ethics states that a journalist "describes society to itself" (MEAA 2008), and an argument can be made that this is what online content producers do as well, regardless of the type of platform or content management system they are using.

Interestingly, a New Zealand High Court judgment has stated that bloggers can be legally classified as journalists, and online platforms, such as blogs and websites, can be recognised as a news site (Johnston 2014). This judgment is considered to have far reaching consequences because of shield laws, that is, a blogger has the same right as a journalist in regard to protection of sources. In an earlier report, the New Zealand Law Commission stated that in a digital environment, news disseminators outside traditional news media publishers should be awarded the same privileges, while adding a caveat regarding standards:

> *… it is important to extend the news media's special legal status to other publishers who are engaged in generating and disseminating news and commentary and in performing the other functions of the fourth estate* – provided these entities are willing to be accountable to an independent standards body to ensure these privileges are exercised responsibly *(NZ Law Commission 2013, 9, emphasis in original)*.

In the case of the New Zealand High Court judgment, it has been noted that the defendant, who was arguing his work was journalism, had not joined an independent standards body (Goetze 2014). In an Australian context, a standards body would include the Australian journalists' union, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), which provides the Australian Code of Ethics; or the Australian Press Council, a self-regulation body that is funded by the major press organisations in Australia although several online publishers have become members of the Australian Press Council in the last couple of years (for example, At Large Media, Focal Attractions, The New Daily and Private Media). It is not compulsory in Australia to be a member of either the MEAA or the Press Council to practice as a journalist, and neither of these organisations has the power to expel journalists from the profession if they are found to breach either the Code of Ethics or the Press Council guidelines. This is true of traditional media journalists as well as new media practitioners.

When the respondents in this project were asked if they were journalists, or if what they were doing was journalism, there was a distinct division between those participants who had worked as journalists in traditional media and others who had come into the space via other professions. Those who had worked in the occupation previously still identified as journalists, while those who had not were more cautious about using the occupational term.

Methodology

This research project employed what Hine (2007) describes as connective ethnography, a method that integrates research across online and offline spaces, taking into account the offline contexts of individuals' production of online texts. Connective ethnography "accommodates that online practices are increasingly embedded in offline practices and vice versa" (Dirksen, Huizing and Smit (2010, 1046) and is "much better equipped to capture more accurately the dynamics of online practices" (ibid.). Thus, connective ethnography allows an investigation of both the online and offline context of producers in an online media environment by using traditional methods of ethnography, such as semi-structured interviews, and analysis of the participants' online publications and engagement. The researcher has, in this stage of the project, conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-eight media producers who have embraced alternative ways to publish, including bloggers, website producers, online magazine publishers, and broadcasters, in order to explore their experiences in the new media environment. Participants have been chosen using Burgess's key informant sampling, where informants are chosen "using the researcher's judgment and can therefore be used to portray aspects of the social situation" (1984, 75).

The primary method employed in the research has been semi-structured interviews. Burgess calls this style of interviewing "conversations with a purpose" (1984, 84) and notes that interviews are a longstanding method in social research. There is also a tradition in using semi-structured interviews in journalism research in Australia (Josephi 1998; Forde 1999; Ewart 2004) as well as online journalism research (see, for example, research reported on in Paterson and Domingo's (2008) *Making online news: the ethnography of new media production*). As a supporting method, and in the

second phase of the project, the researcher also intends to conduct an analysis of the key informants' online publications and engagement with the online space to provide data for analysis.

The interviews have been between 30 and 90 minutes long and the transcriptions input into NVivo, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to identify key themes. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis provides the researcher with a tool to recognise patterns or trends in the data and thus identify "themes and patterns of living and/or behavior" (Aronson 1994). This method of analysis offers a means to analyse coded data, enabling the researcher to "build a comprehensive, contextualized, and integrated understanding" (Bazeley 2013, 191) of what has been discovered during data collection.

Results and Discussion

Findings from the interviews have shown that, with these respondents at least, there is a definite view of what journalism is and who can call themselves journalists. What has been found is that the participants who identify themselves as journalists, and these are typically those who have worked in mainstream journalism, clearly define what they do as journalism and consider themselves journalists, while others are more wary to own that occupational term. These other participants include people who have come from occupations including information technology (IT), marketing and sales, the public service, universities and electronics. To give numbers, fourteen out of the twenty-eight interviewed said they were journalists and doing journalism, and all had worked for recognised news publications. On saying that, one of the respondents, who still works as a freelance journalist but also blogs personally and for others, said: "When I'm blogging I don't consider that I'm working as a journalist" (Johanna Baker-Dowdell i/v 10.4.14) although she did qualify that by further saying, "However, I think I blog in a different way to people who aren't journalists" (ibid.) and noted thorough research, more objectivity and "journalistic skills" (ibid.) in her blogging style. Johanna's differentiation between her work as a journalist and a blogger seems to indicate that there is also a demarcation in the minds of professional journalists between who can be classified as a journalist and who cannot. Nikki Parkinson, an ex-journalist who now describes herself as a lifestyle blogger focusing on fashion and beauty, said the following:

> *I guess I'm always, yes, no, I say I'm a blogger but I think my journalistic background helps me to frame content and understand the needs of my readers, because that aspect of it is still very much the same. How I play out day-to-day with delivering that content and responding to that content is very different from what I used to do, and that's what makes a blogger different from a journalist (i/v, 9.5.14).*

Several of the participants stated that parts of what they did were journalistic. For example, one of the participants is a partner in his online publishing venture and calls himself a content director – "a term that never really existed up until about five years ago … It's an old school editor in chief" (Tim Duggan i/v 23.3.15) – but stated that in this role, he still tries to uphold the ethics of journalism. Duggan has a business degree but chose journalism, public communication and marketing courses as electives and initially worked as a freelance journalist for *Rolling Stone* magazine. When asked if he considered himself a journalist, his reply summed up one of the arguments of this paper: "I get a feeling if you were you always will be" (ibid.). To provide the other argument: the participants who have a non-journalistic background each stated that they were not doing journalism and did not identify as journalists, although one, who runs a TV blog, said he calls himself a journalist for convenience. He also provided some insight into that notion of occupational identity:

> *I guess because I still have this semi-antiquated [view] of journalism as the people who have done the hard work and got the piece of paper that says that they've got the degree and then have gone and done cadetships or done that sort of stuff. And also in part because I look at the content of what I do, what I cover, I'm not going to change the world talking about television. And I see journalists as people who are your Sarah Ferguson [award winning Australian journalist] kind of people or investigative journalist people that uncover the big thing or reveal to us all of the facts on the other thing. So not really, but I get lumped into it. It's better being called a journalist than being called a blogger because I just think that … it's said quite often with derision (Steve Molk, i/v 27.3.14).*

While it is easy to recognise the occupational mythology of journalism in Molk's comment, he is drawing on the idea of journalist as watchdog, the latter part is referring to an early argument against bloggers, particularly by those involved in traditional news organizations, which stated that blog content was a regurgitation of news stories investigated and reported on by mainstream media. In 2003, Rebecca Blood firmly rejected blogging as journalism because "the vast majority of Weblogs do not provide original reporting – for me, the heart of all journalism" (2003, 62), and research done by the Pew Research Center (2010) showed that more than 99 percent of content on US blog sites linked to mainstream media outlets. However, as Bailey and Marques point out, "We are witnessing the proliferation of a range of news blog experiences: from reproducing content published in mainstream media, to reproducing part of this content and adding extra material or critique, to producing their own material under the blogger's editorial control" (2012, 403), and participants in this research project range along this continuum of blog experiences.

It has also been claimed that blogging is commentary only (Macnamara 2014; Pavlik 2013) with bloggers dismissed as not being "real journalists" (Flew and Wilson 2012, 170). Bruns and Highfield, though, make the valid point that mainstream media has less of a traditional journalism role because "most of the information which journalism draws on is already available to the public, through press releases from government, commercial, and non-government organizations" (2012, 21) and thus journalism has a "news curation" (ibid.) role, in a similar way to alternative news sources such as bloggers. Furthermore, this "commentary only" argument also does not recognise that there are those who work in mainstream media who are commentators and columnists who call themselves journalists and, referring to the official definitions included above in Australian legislation and other government bodies, "observations" (Parliament of Australia 2010, Division 1A, 126G, lines 13-16) and "commentaries" (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015) are valid forms of journalism.

The argument "Is commentary journalism" came up as a common theme among the non-journalists in this study, as noted by Paula Matthewson, a political commentator and blogger, who said: "I don't report news, which I believe is the distinction between bloggers/opinion writers and journalists" (i/v, 17.9.14), a point taken up by Kayte Murphy, a blogger who writes about her family

and life: “I’m a Blogger … even though I think that the lines are becoming very blurred now between a lot of traditional journalists who are becoming opinion writers. But, you know I see journalists as you know hunting down the facts for a story and presenting it without bias” (i/v 21.7.14). The examples from Matthewson and Murphy, both non-journalists, demonstrate the typically understood perception of journalism as noted earlier by Hanusch (2012) and Singer (2015), where in mainstream publications there are hierarchies in journalism with certain forms valued over others. For example, forms such as what Franklin (2012) calls lifestyle or service journalism, including travel, fashion, beauty, entertainment, gardening, financial advice, personal technology and cookery, are often criticised in relation to “‘hard’ news and watchdog journalism” (Franklin 2012, 1), a form of news considered more valid. An examination of lifestyle journalism demonstrates that there is a vast range of online producers, including many in this research project, who could be considered under Hanusch’s “news you can use” (2012, 4) definition. Lifestyle journalism, Hanusch states, is:

> *… a distinct journalistic field that primarily addresses its audiences as consumers, providing them with factual information and advice, often in entertaining ways, about goods and services they can use in their daily lives. Examples of lifestyle journalism include such fields as travel, fashion, style, health, fitness, wellness, entertainment, leisure, lifestyle, food, music, arts, gardening and living. These may constitute individual sections in newspapers, entire magazines, programs on radio or television, or even dedicated websites (2012, 3-4).*

Therefore, returning to Molk’s comment that “I'm not going to change the world talking about television” (i/v 27.3.14), if we refer to Hanusch’s definition, Molk could be considered a lifestyle journalist. In other words, in a similar way to mainstream journalism, online producers have a wide range of interests, writing styles, topics, and audiences, a point agreed with by Greg Jericho, a highly regarded political commentator who blogged for several years while he was working with the public service and has leveraged the social capital gained from that writing into paid columns for several other media organisations. He summed up the difficulty of continuing to classify journalism

within a narrow definition: “I mean it's such a broad occupation nowadays” (i/v 18.7.14). However, Jericho continued by thoughtfully considering the difference between *journalist* and *reporter* and stated why he considers himself a journalist but not a reporter:

> *I mean I'm okay with journalist; I don't think of myself as a reporter. That's sort of because I don't do press conferences, I don't report on what somebody said (Greg Jericho, i/v 18.7.14).*

Others took up Jericho’s point, including Sholto McPherson, an accounting blogger who has worked as a journalist:

> *I think there’s an aspect of what I do that makes it journalism. So for example, if I was just writing reviews and case studies and how-tos I would still consider that journalism. But I think why a blogger who does that but refrains from doing hard news (pause), that’s [hard news] where the real test of what a journalist is. So I still consider other forms of writing journalism … but it’s kind of like a triangle - the pointy head of the triangle is writing hard news, and that is how people think of journalism (i/v 2.7.14).*

McPherson’s comment reinforces the earlier point of the public’s perception of what can be defined as journalism. The hard news and investigative formats, the reportage, of journalism are viewed with higher regard, with hard news categorised as including “politics, public administration, and national security” (Sjøvaag 2015, 105) as well as stories of major crime and social importance. These categorisations are clear examples of the understood core role of journalism in a democracy: watchdog, Fourth Estate, enabling the public to make decisions to govern.

Broersma and Peters (2013) discuss the “objectivity norm” and how the claim of objectivity established a difference between journalists and other professions competing in the information market. However, Broersma and Peters also claim that newer players in the media space lay no claim to objectivity and, in fact, “have to demonstrate and display their convictions” (2013, 7) to differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market. It could be argued that in traditional media, the rise in opinion writing and partisan media outlets means this objectivity norm cannot be used as a

claim to differentiate journalism from other players in the online space. Furthermore, it has been recognised by many researchers that journalism is not, and cannot be, an objective practice and that there needs to be a recognition of a news worker's own values and work processes (Carlyon 1982; Conley and Lamble 2006; Downie Jr. and Kaiser 2003; King 1997; Lamble 2004; Macnamara 2012; Sheridan Burns 2013; Soloski 1997; Tapsall and Varley 2001). Thus, with this reasoning, the participants interviewed for this research could claim they are journalists.

However, Deuze defines journalism as an ideology and lists five traits or values that are perceived as an important part of that ideology: to provide a public service; to practice neutral, objective and fair reporting; the need for freedom and uncensored reporting; the necessity of speed in reporting; and, an ethical obligation and need for legitimacy (2005, 447-450). Deuze's points here seem to be the perception of the participants in this research, particularly the non-journalists, as can be noted by the quotes discussed previously. On the other hand, Melissa Sweet, who writes and edits health blog *Croakey*, is proud to call what she does journalism and still identifies as a journalist:

> *Absolutely, yeah. I'm providing, except, you know, in a different way, I'm providing a service to the community, and it's news, and it's analysis and it's investigative projects. It's just very different from, you know, traditional journalism. If you look at* Croakey*, I put up a post last night and it's on Peter Dutton's [then Australian Health Minister] talk at the National Press Club yesterday. It's not a traditional news report; it's more of an analysis type. It's a narrative which embeds Tweets, you know, it provides context. It provides, so you know it's a work of journalism to me. It's just not what journalism used to look like (i/v 29.5.14).*

Sweet's last comment about the change in journalism's delivery and structure is a common theme with other journalists interviewed. Nikki Parkinson called herself an ex-journalist and blogger who blogs about beauty and fashion:

> *You might do a website, you might do a daily e-mail, you might do a directory. You might, as I say, you might do awards, you might do a conference, you might do training. But, you know, you're hanging all of these kinds of baubles off the Christmas*

> *tree. And actually the only difference we're really doing is we don't happen to have a print product (i/v 9.5.14).*

Parkinson went on to say: "So it's, you know, it's new tools obviously and making the most of them. But the original principles, I think, are much the same" (i/v, 9.5.14), and it has been argued that the application of an ethical code, as one of those principles, is one of the differences between journalists and other content producers such as bloggers (Sheridan Burns, 2013; Knight, 2008). However, these ethical codes are still important to practitioners who work in this space. Tim Burrowes runs *Mumbrella*, a media and marketing site (which is also a member of the Australian Press Council), but he also identifies himself as a journalist, and the way he does that is by talking about ethical practice:

> *Most of what we do, we would apply the rules of journalism as we see it to them. So for instance, you know, we'll, when we do anything, whether it's an event, whether it's a news story, we'll try and be very transparent with the readers, write for the readers, not for the advertisers. Declare interest. So all of those things, I think, you know, if you come to look at the journalistic ethics that we were taught along the way, you know, an awful lot of it is about respect for your, let's use the word, audience, respect for your readers. So I, in the end I suspect that that's one of the definitions of journalism (Tim Burrowes, i/v 7.8.14).*

It should also be noted that there are many instances where traditional journalism practitioners have not acted in an ethical manner, and one recent case is the phone-hacking scandal in Britain by the *News of the World*, a publication owned by media giant NewsCorp, where the publication closed after journalists were found to have obtained information illegally. In Australia, News Corporation has up to 70 percent of the Australian print audience and has been accused of partisanship (Hobbs and McKnight, 2014), a form of journalism that is considered unethical under the Australian Journalism Code of Ethics. Furthermore, Sheridan Burns (2013) notes that in a 1997 study conducted by Australian academic Jackie Ewart, journalists claimed to support ethical codes but admitted that there were times when pressure from management meant these journalists acted

against the code of ethics. Thus, while a code of ethics may, in a perfect world, differentiate professional journalists from bloggers, online magazine publishers, broadcasters and website developers, in practice, journalists may not be able to lay claim to the professional title.

Conclusion

While the results discussed here are from the first stage of the research, analysis has revealed interesting themes in regard to the perception of what constitutes a journalist. In other words, in this cohort at least, there is a schism between those who call themselves journalists and those who seem to do the same type of work but are wary about labelling themselves as such. The participants who have worked as journalists in traditional media still call themselves journalists and label their work journalism, while others who have come into the space via other professions are cautious about using the term. The understanding of journalism, and what journalism is, by both the public and journalists themselves, plays into how each of these participants views the work that they do.

While it can be shown that some of the common understandings of who is a journalist can be applied to both sets of groups, that is, commentary as journalism, the soft news/hard news dichotomy, the objectivity norm and an application of ethical codes, there is still a particular frame around *journalism* and *journalist*. In a nutshell, in a similar way to traditional journalism, there is ongoing debate and discussion about who is a journalist in the online space.

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