#Trafigura: One Tweet Is All It Took

How Twitter was reported in the British daily news during the 2009 Trafigura toxic waste scandal that forced The Guardian into silence.
How does Twitter fit into the modern media landscape? How does it appear in news coverage? Taking the 2009 Trafalga toxic waste scandal as an example, a case in which The Guardian was banned from reporting Parliamentary ongoings by means of a court order issued by Trafalga, this thesis will look at how Twitter was reported on in traditional media. Based on the notions of citizen journalism, an active audience and Twitter as a news media and following theories presented by Bruns, Hermida, Lasorsa and others, quantitative research will be carried out to see what role Twitter played in the uncovering of the Trafalga scandal. In 2009, Twitter was not as ‘big’ as it is today and sourcing from Twitter was limited in nature. A bias towards traditional sources was observable. What Twitter did succeed in was spark a debate on the topics of freedom of speech and press and the value of it to modern society, a debate that was subsequently picked up by The Guardian. This research will provide a baseline for further research into the value of Twitter as a news media in cases where traditional media is unable to report on events.

Keywords: Twitter, Trafalga, The Guardian, The Telegraph, digital media, audience,
“We’ll see a great expansion of the ways citizen journalists will help drive the news: recommending stories. Technology has enabled millions of consumers to shift their focus from passive observation to active participation.”

- Ariana Huffington in 2010 during an interview for Wired Magazine -

"There won’t be a single dominant platform, but rather many platforms that rise and fall. Overall, my money is on mobile: real-time and massively participatory media that will be primarily created and consumed via smartphones. Twitter is the first platform to truly harness this new ecosystem. But it won’t be the last."

- June Cohen (TED Conference producer) in 2010 during an interview for Wired Magazine -

“It is undeniable that Twitter has emerged as a significant platform for people to report, comment and share news about major events, with individuals performing some of the institutionalised functions of the professional journalist.”

- Alfred Hermida in From TV to Twitter, an article published in 2009 -
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1. INTRODUCTION

Over half a billion users, an average of 58 million updates sent per day, a record of over 300 million updates published in one day and over 9000 status updates published per second.\(^1\) Twitter, a social networking platform introduced in 2006 allows users to post short updates (140-character limit) and to follow other people or organizations. The first significant milestone for Twitter came in 2008, when it broke the one million users barrier, who were good for over three million updates per day.\(^2\) Five years later, over 600 million users are active on the platform, and over 100,000 new users sign up daily.\(^3\) Since 2006 Twitter has grown into one of the biggest social media platforms worldwide going from 200,000 updates sent per year to that amount being sent in less than half a minute. Asking the simple question of ‘what’s happening,’ the platform entices its users to post updates of what they happen to be doing at the time, whether this is a post about their morning routine, something happening in their immediate surroundings or larger issues, such as posting their opinion on current events and news stories. What started out as a platform to share updates with your followers has developed into something that holds much greater potential. Twitter, with its possibility of publishing real-times updates, is filling a gap to get ‘boots on the ground’ where traditional media might not be in the position to do so. The boots on the ground is both literal as metaphorical, as it serves a purpose of reporting during crisis situations, such as riots and protests, but also provides the audience with the ability to report on stories that traditional media cannot report on. The latter is what will be explored in this thesis by taking the Trafigura toxic waste dumping scandal of 2009 as a case study and seeing what role Twitter played in the development of the case and how the traditional media responded to it.

Twitter, as a social media platform, has shown its power to the world since its inception in 2006. Social networks, such as for example Facebook and Twitter, allow the audience to be heard in more ways than one, but also influence the way in which

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\(^1\) Numbers found on Statisticbrain.com, a statistics aggregate service. Website accessed 15 August 2013 http://www.statisticbrain.com/twitter-statistics/

\(^2\) Numbers found on TechCrunch, one of the leading tech websites. Website accessed 15 August 2013 http://techcrunch.com/2008/04/29/end-of-speculation-the-real-twitter-usage-numbers/

\(^3\) Numbers found on Statisticbrain.com, a statistics aggregate service. Website accessed 15 August 2013 http://www.statisticbrain.com/twitter-statistics/
news is consumed and where the audience go to get their daily news fix. A report released in the fall of 2013 by the Pew Research Center, as part of their Journalism project, shows that of the 64% of adults that use Facebook, 30% consume news by means of that platform, but only four percent of the people surveyed call it their most important way to get news, while over 70% of users consume news on Facebook by ‘accident,’ and not using it as their primary source for news consumption kevin hart (Mitchell, 2013, Online). The audience can connect with each other, share stories, organize events etc. Short updates about protests on Twitter, video posts about police brutality during Occupy New York on YouTube or photos of Tahir Square during the uprising, it is all being posted on the Internet for the world to see and for the audience to share. Two decades ago, a journalist had to be somewhere to cover a story and make sure the world sees it. A camera crew had to be on-site to capture video so that an item could be seen on the evening news broadcast. That no longer seems to be the case. User-generated content seems to be one of the buzzwords of the 21st century and the content produced by the audience is flooding the digital highway. Twitter has several moments in its history when it made history itself as a platform. On January 15th 2009, 64 typed characters made history when that update was the first news about a US Airways plane having crashed in the Hudson. “There’s a plane in the Hudson. […] I’m on the ferry going to pick up the people. Crazy,” (Beaumont, 2009, Online.). Accompanied with a picture, this update was a prime example of the sort of updates Twitter could be used for and the man who made and published the picture, Janis Krums, was lauded as a citizen journalist star (Mackey, 2009, Online). The 2009 bombings in Jakarta were also reported first by means of Twitter as bystanders and witnesses took to the social media platform to post updates.

Twitter, often called a micro-blogging platform by scholars due to its similarity to blogs, has become one of the ways in which news is published. The potential of Twitter as a platform for the publishing of news updates really surfaced during the Arab Spring. Twitter users amidst the conflict became primary news sources for many media organizations and journalists, and in extension, for many people outside of the conflict areas (Hermida, 2012, 8). By looking at Andy Carvin’s Twitter feed, an NPR journalist covering the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, Hermida studied the practice of sourcing the non-elite. Hermida concluded that Carvin favored non-elite sources when it came to retweeting stories (over 70% of retweets came from non-elite, alternative
voices) and that overall just under 50% of his reporting contained the voices of the non-elite (Hermida, 9).

The power of Twitter to break through censorship was once again proven in 2009, when a British newspaper got banned from reporting on the dealings of parliament by means of a super-injunction issued by multinational corporation Trafigura. Trafigura had been in the news sporadically over the years between 2006 and 2009. 2006 is when the toxic waste spill occurred, but it was not until 2009, that the story made headlines (Leigh, 2009, Online). The Guardian was censored through a court order. Trafigura had one big reason to try and silence the media, as they were trying to cover up one of the biggest toxic waste dumping scandals in recent history. In 2006, the company dumped toxic waste in Ivory Coast, resulting in severe illness and death of the locals. This was exposed in September of 2006 in the Minton Report, but Trafigura’s lawyers Carter-Ruck immediately and effectively banned all talk of this report. Even though the report was already on the table, the content was to remain classified. Editor-in-chief of The Guardian Alan Rusbridger took to his own Twitter account to publish one very crucial tweet, stating that The Guardian was banned on reporting about the dealings of Parliament and included a link to an article posted on the website of The Guardian which, it must be stressed, made no mention of Trafigura, Ivory Coast, The Minton Report or anything else directly linking this ban to the toxic waste scandal.

According to an article published on The Guardian’s website, it took less than an hour for people to discover what the story was behind Rusbridger’s tweet. “One of the quickest to reveal the full story was a 34-year-old human rights activist, Richard Wilson. […] A few minutes of frantic Internet searching later he published the fact that the gag related to Farrelly's questions about Trafigura. He also published the text of the questions itself,” (Booth, 2009, Online). After some Internet and search engine scouring, Wilson posted the following tweet, “Any guesses what this is about? My money is on, ahem, #TRAFIGURA!” and less than half an hour later he had posted all of Farrelly’s questions dealing with Trafigura and the toxic waste scandal. At this point, famous British political blogger Paul Staines, using the moniker Guido Fawkes,

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made the connection between the Farrelly questions and the gag imposed on The Guardian. From that point on, the floodgates were open, with numerous other political bloggers weighing in on the questions. Other mainstream media also picked up on the story and a story posted on The Spectator’s website made the whole thing abundantly clear. "It's hard to recall, even in the long history of appalling gagging orders, a more disgraceful injunction than this."5 Within hours, readers of The Guardian as well as active social media users had uncovered the entire story, from the lawyers involved to the cover-up happening in Parliament.

The Trafigura toxic waste dump is the case study in this thesis, which aims to investigate how The Guardian, The Telegraph and the BBC, some of Britain’s leading media outlets, reported on the use of Twitter during the uncovering of the scandal, the days following it and how and in what context Twitter (and in extension social media) was mentioned. Was the platform of Twitter deemed important enough by traditional media outlets such as The Guardian and the BBC for it to have articles with an exclusive focus on Twitter or was it simply used to make a connection to the larger issues at hand, such as freedom of speech and Trafigura itself? A quick look at the web archives of The Guardian show a handful of articles that focus on Twitter, with the platform being mentioned in the headline, but what remains to be seen is how high the number of articles is that focus on Twitter compared to those that focus on Trafigura or other events and how Twitter was used as a source and, if so, how extensively this was done.

The aim of this research is to find out how the established media covered Twitter and its relation to the toxic waste scandal following the uncovering of the Minton report and the events that followed and also the context in which Twitter was mentioned; was Twitter of vital importance during the unfolding of the scandal, was it mentioned as a backdrop in the Trafigura stories or was it simply mentioned because it was a part of the larger event? Opposed to the importance and the prominence of Twitter in the Trafigura stories stands Trafigura itself. How many articles were published dealing with the corporation and how many talked about Twitter and mentioned Trafigura to anchor it to the other stories published.

5 Original article no longer available on website. Quote found through Guardian.co.uk
I intend to answer these questions by exploring existing literature on a number of things; Twitter, its value to traditional media, how traditional media is coping with challenges by Twitter and how the audience can become part of journalistic practice. This will be done in order to establish a solid theoretical base for the analysis. In the case of Trafigura, there was a surge of online activity as the audience pitched in on the proceedings with their thoughts, observations and conclusions. Next, I will be further outlining the research method, why I chose for a combination between quantitative and qualitative methods, how I designed the coding scheme and further explaining the research questions. I chose a combination of quantitative and qualitative angles to show how Twitter as a source stands in correlation to other, more traditional sources in both context (how the platform is mentioned) and the amount of times it is mentioned in relation to the bigger story, being Trafigura. I aim to not only look at how much Twitter was mentioned in the traditional media, but also at how and in which context it was mentioned and how it compares to other topics taking within the same chain of events. In the fourth chapter, the results obtained from the research will be presented and analyzed.

Twitter, at the time of writing, is already far more developed than it was in 2009, this thesis and the accompanying research gives a detailed look at how Twitter was perceived by traditional journalists. Research shows that the attitude of journalists towards Twitter and the way in which they use the platform changed over the years, from mostly negative to seeing the possibilities and integrating the platform into their own newsroom. This research aims to combine two fields of research; the research into Twitter and its coverage by news media as carried out by scholars such as Hermida, Lasorsa and Arceneaux, and the research into citizen reporting by scholars such as Burns, Kwak and Deuze.

This research aims to point out how Twitter can be used to uncover stories. As a source for alternative voices, the platform is one of the more powerful out there, but it has a far greater potential than that, being that it can not only give importance to stories that would otherwise go unheard of in the mainstream media, but it can allow stories to surface, stories that otherwise would have drowned because of certain events taking place, i.e. the super injunction placed on The Guardian by Carter-Ruck, with the newspaper being unable to report on parliamentary proceedings and thus the Trafigura toxic waste scandal.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, an overview will be given of existing literature and research on the topic of how traditional media stands in relation to social media and how the audience is creating their own form of journalism, a form that Alfred Hermida decided to classify as ‘ambient journalism’ (Hermida, 2007). Next to that, I will be looking at existing literature on Twitter as a tool for journalists, how it might be challenging the role of traditional journalists, established media and journalistic practice and how journalists are adapting to incorporate these innovations. This will be done in order to form a strong theoretical base for the research carried out in this paper, which focuses on multiple aspects of traditional and social media, from how journalists are coping with the rapid digitalization to how the traditional journalist is being challenged by and adapting to the increasing use of social media platforms in the gathering and spreading of news.

2.1 The Digital (R)Evolution?

The late 20th and early 21st have been witness to an explosion when it comes to digital expansion. Going from print to online media and from traditional television to Internet broadcasting, the growth of the digital media is exponential. It could be said that social media networking is becoming a mainstay in the digital media world. In this chapter I will look into the idea of a digital revolution occurring and how this has possibly been triggered by the growth of the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Twitter, Facebook, social networking, sharing, liking, recommending; all of these are buzzwords that are marking the rapid growth and development of the digital world that exists thanks to the World Wide Web and the Internet. Henry Jenkins (2003) says that, no matter in which way you look at it, there is a digital revolution unfolding in front of our eyes, whereas McNair (2010) tries to disprove this notion. Caught in the middle is Rasmus Klein Nielsen, who ‘sees’ a revolution occurring, but is hesitant to refer to it as such. Numerous media organizations have adapted to this digital ‘life’. The New York Times and The Guardian, as well as other big media, maintain their print publication, but have also chosen to create an online presence by means of websites and using social media platforms. Online platforms lend themselves
extremely well for breaking news, something that before was limited to television and radio. Now, thanks to tools such as Twitter and Facebook, scoops are up for grabs by whoever is paying attention at the right time, no matter whether the person is a professional journalist or an ‘amateur.’

While there are those that see the new media era as a possible revolution by comparing it to the revolutions brought on by, among others, the printing press and the telegraph (Manovich, 2003; Bjerre and Mogensen, 2012), other scholars are more hesitant to acknowledge this. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, for example, does not refer to the growth of digital media as a revolution specifically, but shows us all the notions of a revolution occurring. In his *Ten Years That Shook the News Media*, he illustrates how a number of drastic changes are taking place, affecting the legacy media, as he refers to traditional media. These legacy media are still the main providers of news content, but there are plenty of challenges out there from digital media (Nielsen, 2012, 2). Making moves online, such as starting websites, has not, as Nielsen puts it, been life changing, but it is allowing legacy media to survive. “The rise of digital technologies represents a profound change in how we communicate, how we interact, and how we learn about the world” (5). News is the primary way in which we as the audience learn about the world, and as Nielsen shows, this is changing drastically. The legacy media are losing ground to niche publishers and broadcasters, many of which exist as online-only platforms (18). Following these two observations, the idea of a revolution is not too farfetched.

Unlike Nielsen, who refuses to acknowledge the idea of a digital revolution, Henry Jenkins, professor of Communication and Journalism at USC, is a proponent of the digital media revolution, arguing that the Internet and social media have revolutionized the interaction and mobilization of audiences. In his 2003 piece *The Digital Revolution, the Informed Citizen, and the Culture of Democracy*, written together with David Thorburn, he shows how the Internet (his piece was written pre-Twitter) has torn down the barriers between corporate media and citizens, ensuring a greater freedom and allowing people “to transform their computers into printing presses” (Jenkins and Thorburn, 2003, 12). They also identify a certain fear in gatekeepers and those reliant on that process. Almost a decade later, Jenkins revisits the notion in *The Other Digital Revolution*, where he concludes that the digital revolution is mostly taking place in areas where activists roam, taking the Twitter-heavy Arab Spring, a period during which more was found on social media feeds than
on actual news, as an example. Between the lines, Jenkins does not explicitly refer to the established, Western media and as such is in line with Nielsen. Following Nielsen and Jenkins, there are definitely big changes happening, which might lead some to refer to them as a revolution (Jenkins does both). Looking at Jenkins’ work, this revolution started long before Twitter came into play, even before the Internet started developing and is a revolution that is picking up speed along the way.

However, not everyone supports the notion of a revolution occurring in the media world. Brian McNair is very clear when it comes to his idea of this so-called ‘revolution’ in his 2010 paper *Managing the online news revolution: the UK experience.* “Revolution is an overused word, applied as much to superficial trends in fashion and style as to radical, qualitative shifts in socio-economic or political organization,” (McNair, 2010, 38). What McNair also states is that, if we take a look at the dictionary definition, which defines revolution as “a sudden, extreme, or complete change in the way people live work,” he agrees that that is what has been happening in British media over the last decade or so.

These changes are causing a crisis in modern news. Robert McChesney et al. (2010) note the decline in news quality and the overall selection of stories, stating that there are multiple things that point to this decline; the lack of investigative reporting, the degeneration of political and international journalism, horserace reporting and the popularity of celebrity and scandal news (McChesney et al., 2010, 54). Whether or not the media world is falling into a crisis depends on where you look. McNair states that the term crisis, just like the term revolution, has lost its impact, simply because it is being overused (McNair, 2010, 39). If we look at pre-Internet media organizations, these are suffering from the crisis, but it is not because of the competition or the financial strain, but rather, as McNair says;

There is in British journalism, first, a real and widespread crisis of confidence, of professional identity; an existential crisis, one might say, triggered by the realization, after a period of collective denial, that the age of unidirectional, top-down, elite-mass, print and linear broadcast journalism is coming to an end (39).

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6 Definition found on http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/revolution
So, according to McNair (2010), rather than being in a crisis because of the competition, media organizations are at odds with themselves with regards to what comes next. He observes that there is a fundamental shift in journalism practice. “The way journalism is made is changing, then, and by whom, as is the way it is consumed” (McNair, 45). The non-professional newsmaker is becoming more involved, both as a creator and an observer. To illustrate his point, McNair refers to a number of events in which this was prevalent, being the 2009 Iranian protests, the 2005 London bombings, the 2007 Glasgow airport attack and the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. In all of these instances, the majority of raw material used in news pieces came from ordinary people who were on the ground, rather than professional journalists (45).

The monopoly held by media organizations less than two decades ago is dwindling. The one-way flow of news from producer to audience is drastically changing, and this change is in favor of audience activity and interaction. Heinrich (2008) proposes a different structure, moving from a pyramid to a network. Essentially, the structure is going from rigid to fluid, where there are many endings and connections between the different parts of the ‘system’ and information travels both ways. Heinrich refers to these unique connections between different actors as network journalism, a term that is rather fluid in itself. It has stood for everything from citizen journalism to the concept of online journalism as well as civic participation with regards to news production (Heinrich, 2008, 5). Heinrich looks at network journalism as a blanket term for the dynamic structure that is evolving in the global news sphere, where this type of journalism affects everything, from print to radio, broadcast and online journalism (5). Sources, journalists and the audience are all actors, or ‘nodes,’ in this network. They all play an important role and the development of these nodes and the connections they make will partially determine the future of the evolving global news sphere. In this system, there is an open exchange of information. The media needs to redefine itself in this new digital sphere and “define their new tasks and goals and above all figure out what role they want to take in this network journalism sphere” (6). The audience has the power to affect every part of journalism and in an always-on environment, journalists are forced to experiment with their established practices in order to satisfy the audience, which they do hesitantly. “Many traditional news organizations are still afraid to let go of the ‘good old times’, hoping to build on the authoritative position in the field of information provision,” (Heinrich, 2012, 66). As a
platform for news dissemination, Twitter is nothing more than just another push medium, another method in which the media publish their content. Twitter, with its followers-followee structure, its retweet/mention/favorite functionality and its potential to bring the audience together is more geared towards interaction between different ‘nodes.’ When looking at network journalism, Twitter is the glue that connects the nodes together. These nodes are restructuring the existing relationship between the journalist and the audience.

The expanding possibilities of online platforms have leveled the playing field. Media organizations are increasingly using online platforms as well as social networking tools such as Twitter and Facebook to get closer to the audience. The same goes for news consumption by means of cable television (CNN, Fox, MSNBC etc.) where, according the Pew Center’s 2013 *State of the News Media* report, the average viewership remained the same. CNN was hit hardest over the past years and is the only network that showed significant decline, losing over four percent of its prime-time viewers, whereas Fox stays at the top with 1.9 million viewers on average per night, followed by MSNBC, who are in second place with 818,000 during the evening. Across the board, however, digital media is steadily growing, with an audience increase of over seven percent when compared to 2011. Rather than entirely switching platforms, it appears that the audience is trying to diversify their media consumption.

Akin to McNair, Justin Lewis (2013) also sees this digital expansion as an evolution, the logical solution to the chain of events. He classifies the notion of an exclusively online younger generation as a cliché, stating that the younger generation does not consume more news online nor do they consume less news through traditional means than their older counterparts, those in the 35 - 44 age group (Lewis, 2013, Online). What Lewis does point out though is that there is an observed disinterest in traditional media, but again this, as Lewis points out, does not necessarily result in a turn to online media. When looking at the annual *State of the News Media* report carried out by the Pew Center, these findings are mostly backed up, as newspaper sales stayed even when looking at 2012, the first time after years of decline (Pew Center, 2013, Online).

The media landscape is changing rapidly and media organizations, rather than being early adopters, are playing catch-up to the digital lives of their audience. Another observation is that the crisis that the media finds itself in, is very real, but is nowhere
near the stages of dying out just yet even if back in the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan stated in interviews that humans are moving out of print culture because of the increasing availability of television and radio and that print is dying. Print culture will rather adapt and overcome rather than completely die out.

2.2 Twitter and the Media

Twitter is gaining traction in the modern media landscape, especially when it comes to news consumption and where the audience gets their news. This is affecting the modern media, who are seeing diminishing returns, to put it in business terms. In the 2013 State of the News Media report released by the Pew Center, a grim picture is painted. “Nearly one-third—31%—of people say they have deserted a particular news outlet because it no longer provides the news and information they had grown accustomed to, according to the survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults in early 2013,” (Enda and Mitchell, 2013, Online). Abandoning a news outlet could mean that people are finding their news elsewhere. Unlike Lewis, the Pew Center observes a rapid increase in online news consumption. Online news media, at least in the US, are winning the war against print news. Almost 50% of consumers get their news online on a daily basis, while only 29% of people surveyed turn to newspapers to fulfill their need for news. Breaking this down further, almost 20% of the respondents turn to social media for their news (Sasseen, Olmstead and Mitchell, 2013, Online).

Twitter is often dismissed as frivolous by critics, while proponents see it as having a variety of educational, political and commercial uses. In Seems Stupid Until You Try It, Arceneaux and Weiss (2010) look at how Twitter appeared in the press between 2006 and 2009. When Twitter first went public in 2006, journalists and news organizations viewed Twitter with ambivalence and viewed it as nothing more than just another trend. Using three different response categories; from negative to positive, continually positive and from positive negative, Arceneaux and Weiss identify how other technologies fared when they were first introduced to the public. Both the telephone and the mobile phone are prime examples of the first category, as after a period of rejection, both became mainstays of daily life. “This pattern suggests that wide- spread diffusion encourages tolerance, and the technology is perceived as simply another aspect of modern life” (Arceneaux and Weiss, 2010, 1265). Computers fall
into the second category, while the Internet, for example, stands in direct contrast to the path of the computer and (mobile) telephones, as people were increasingly worried about things such as privacy, hackers and an information overload. “Technologies, such as Twitter today and the telegraph in the past, inspire negative responses because they disrupt established concepts of communication, prevailing notions of space and time and the distinction between public and private spheres” (1265).

These observations stand in contrast with the majority of coverage on Twitter. The platform was praised for its speed and the 140-character limit was explained. Rather than negative, most reporters were either skeptical or positive. The skepticism stemmed from the information overload, much like the early coverage on the Internet. Twitter was lauded for its ability to generate social awareness and its potential to spread information to a mass audience quickly (1270). Arceneaux and Weiss conclude that this skepticism did not inhibit the growth of Twitter, which is supported by the statistics mentioned earlier.

Paul Farhi looks at whether journalists should use Twitter and how the platform is influencing journalistic practice. Starting off with the question whether Twitter is just another plaything or whether it has more potential when it comes to news-dissemination, a reporting and source-building tool (Farhi, 2009, Online). No more than a sentence later he answers his own question, stating that it all depends. Just as others, Farhi praises Twitter for its potential to aid in reporting and the spread of information as well as giving access to newsmakers and other important figures. A Twitter account eliminates the middleman when trying to contact a high-placed figure and also allows a journalist to ‘group’ his contacts, giving him a clear overview of what is going on, even being able to pick up quotes straight from his news feed without having to speak to PR-officials.

However, according to Farhi, there is also a negative drawback to following too many people. There is too much ‘noise’ on Twitter, too much drabble. A Twitter newsfeed seems to operate on a ‘blink and you will miss it’ principle, as the constantly updating newsfeed never stops spewing out new updates. Another drawback that Farhi sees is the 140-character limit that Twitter imposes on its users. Questions arise whether 140 characters are really sufficient to tell a story or to entice a response. The 140-character limit is in place to make sure that updates can be sent out fast and that only
the important information or news is sent out. Most of the time, news organizations embed links in the update that lead the user to more content.

Twitter challenges and alters the way in which the media reports the news, as many news outlets have taken to social media platforms as another way in which they can reach their audience. Uses include disseminating news (Lasorsa 2011; Farhi 2009) as well as looking for a way in which they can interact with audiences and sources (Ahmad, 2010). NPR, to give an example, sees social media as an extension of their traditional news platform and urges their reporters to treat it with the same scrutiny as their other outlets, and to make sure that what they post on the Twitter feed is not received as personal opinion (Cozma, 2013, 34).

2.3 Relationships: Between Traditional and Social Media

Social media is a game changer when it comes to digital media and while some look at the relationship between traditional media and social media as a strained one, other scholars see it as a platform that is opening up a sea of possibilities for news organizations to evolve and innovate.

As Arceneaux, Weiss and Fahri pointed out, when Twitter first hit the public in 2006, it was viewed with ambivalence and skepticism. Fast-forward to three years later and it has seemingly become entrenched in daily journalistic practice. Media organizations have taken to Twitter as a means to disseminate news. This is also the main starting point for Broersma and Graham, who looked at social media as beat. “In particular, they are using it in four ways: to disseminate news, to market stories, to establish relationships with news consumers, and as a tool for reporting” (Broersma and Graham, 2012, 403). This is very much in line with Lasorsa (2011) and Farhi (2009), who mainly focused on Twitter as a disseminator and Ahmad (2010), who sees Twitter as a new means to establish a relationship with the audience. News organizations primarily resort to using Twitter as their primary platform for ‘breaking’ news as a process. This increased Twitter activity with regards to breaking news has lead to some people saying that news no longer breaks, but it tweets instead (Solis, 2011). Rather than reading full stories or skimming articles in the newspaper, Twitter delivers news in bite-size, ready to serve chunks. A headline and a hyperlink is often all that the audience sees when they look at their Twitter newsfeed, sometimes also
accompanied by a picture. News on Twitter is much like fast-food culture. For the mobile audience, there is no time to sit down and enjoy an elaborate meal, but something fast will satisfy a craving. In this case, that craving is the need to be informed 24 hours per day. Scanning headlines almost as if it were a menu, a selection and filtering process takes place on the spot.

2.3.1 The Challenges to Established Media

This idea of news on a menu is impacting the world of journalism and with this news-on-demand and platforms such as Twitter comes a multitude of challenges. To put it bluntly, the growth of online and digital media is putting extreme pressure on the traditional media and journalists become stuck between the proverbial ‘rock and a hard place,’ something which has been looked at by multiple scholars from a variety of angles. From looking at how online journalists see themselves (Hartley, 2013), looking at credibility in an online-driven world (Hayes, 2007), changing news consumption (Hermida, 2012) the impact of technology on journalism (Pavlik, 2000) as well as how news quality is being affected by this changing news environment (Philips, 2012).

When looking at the work done by Hartley (2013), journalists are caught between the crossfire of trying to stick to the ideals and norms they have been taught, such as credibility, authenticity and autonomy, and what the audience is looking to get from them. There is also a disparity between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ generation of journalists. While the old generation stands behind its traditional values, online journalists often position themselves as opposing old media habits and tools. However, according to Hartley (2013), even though the new breed of journalists is opposed to traditional values, they still see ‘old’ journalism as better journalism, mostly because they see how online journalism is not yet fitting in seamlessly with news production and often resort to producing their ‘own’ stories, picking them off of the internet (Hartley, 2013, 578).

Online journalists perceive themselves differently from their traditional counterparts, but the overall themes are the same between the two; “knowledge and expertise, sources, technical skills, research, and content” all form the identity of both types of journalists and act as editorial capital in news production (Hartley, 2013, 573). Hartley looks at how this ‘capital’ has a different value to a different type of journalist.
The biggest difference between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ is speed. This speed puts pressure on the traditional media because it is changing the way news is produced. News is consumed 24-7 and online media have an edge over traditional, and especially print, media in two ways; the speed of production and the possibility to break news/report on developing stories as they happen. “The fact that the online desks lay so much emphasis on news stories that are developing, and on breaking news, must also be seen in the light of their self-perception as generalists rather than subject specialists; that the nature of the genre itself, and the dissemination of developing news is their specialization,” (Hartley, 579). Online news is ‘fast’ news and online journalists focus more on quick and factual reporting than in-depth stories, leaving that to the ‘old.’

Not only the newsroom is being affected by these online moves. Hayes (2007) identified the problem that everyone, or at least the ‘digital natives,’ can call themselves a journalist or a publisher. All it takes is a blog, a webpage, a YouTube account or a Twitter handle. If everyone can call themselves a journalist, then what sets the amateur apart from the professional? Together with the speed factor, this is one of the biggest challenges that the modern media world faces. The audience increasingly takes to the web for their stories, but is greeted with an overflow of information. Hayes calls it an information explosion (Hayes, 2007, 263). This information explosion first came about with CNN’s 24-7 news channels, and social media is adding fuel to the fire. What sets the professional journalist apart from the rest, according to Hayes, are traditional values such as news selection and verification, values that, according to Hartley (2013) are typical of ‘old’ journalism and might be under threat. The audience selects news on the basis of opinion, rather than fact. Is this story interesting to me? Am I looking for a piece that also has an opinion? Do I care whether fact and opinion are mixed (Hayes, 2007, 264)?

Journalists differentiate themselves from non-journalist because of the professional training they have received, allowing them to be objective, separating fact from opinion. Freedom of the press and expression, however, allow everyone to practice ‘journalism.’ To define the role of a journalist is to go in a circle, there is no clear definition. If journalism is the reporting of news and current events, the process does not call for a qualified individual to do it. More so, in this digital age, there are already numerous examples of citizens doing first hand reporting. What then makes a
journalist? One of the possible answers is that his job is the content he produces, and whether it is factual, verifiable and if it adds to the public discourse (Hayes, 265; Hartley, 2013). It is this that is saving legacy media from blogs and online ‘news.’ Before publishing a piece, a journalist goes through fact-checking and follow-ups to ensure his story is authentic and is himself accountable for any mistakes published. This makes the journalist autonomous in the news-making process.

Dominic Lasorsa (2007) expands on the ideas presented by Hayes (2007) and Hartley (2013), offering a more recent and comprehensive look at Twitter in connection to traditional media. Lasorsa (2012) and Hayes (2007) both show that Twitter can aid in the credibility of journalists. Twitter brings journalists closer to their audience and allows him/her to interact with this audience, allowing a rapport to be set up. Lasorsa shows that Twitter is being normalized to fit traditional journalistic norms, much like blogs have been. Journalists are conforming new media technologies to fit into their old framework, trying to close the gap between old and new as presented by Hartley (2013). Lasorsa et al. (2012) found that j-tweeters, in contrast to the ‘elite’ media, express opinions more freely, share user-generated content with followers and are more open than in their mainstream media stories about how they conduct their work,” (Lasorsa et al., 2012, 13). Much like Hayes (2007) and Hartley, (2013) Lasorsa shows how the professional journalist can maintain his ‘elite’ position in the changing environment. By using Twitter to open up towards the audience, the journalist is in the position to establish a relationship and allowing the audience to witness production of news as it happens.

Online content is published and updated almost non-stop. Verification seems to have taken second place to breaking a story. A good example of this is CNN, who in their rush to break news has slipped up several times. These include breaking the news that President Obama’s health care plan had been overturned as well as publishing a story on their website stating that one of the Boston bombing suspects had been arrested. The New York Post implicated two innocent bystanders in the Boston attack by publishing a photograph on the front page stating that the FBI was looking for them.

without proof that these were suspects in the case. With the focus on speed (Phillips, 2012), breaking and developing news (Hayes, 2007), quality is sometimes sacrificed. On-demand news consumption and the speed with which news needs to be published nowadays are the two biggest challenges to established media. Between trying to hold onto entrenched values and catering to the audience, journalists are struggling, but also realizing that certain compromises to be made if legacy media is still to play a valuable role in the future. Digital media, at least for now, is not causing the death of legacy media, but is rather forcing it to restructure.

Where there are challenges or problems, there are solutions. Over the years, journalists have become more adept at handling digital expansion and are closing the gap, recognizing different benefits that come with this ‘new’ digital territory. Social media are in a position to aid the practice of journalism, of which a few already became apparent. Ali Nobil Ahmad, whose Is Twitter a Useful Tool For Journalists (2010) tackled the subject directly, asking himself the question whether Twitter could be used by journalists to source and investigate certain stories, but also looks at whether the tool will, in the near future, become a useful tool for established media.

Ahmad shows both the good and bad sides of social network use by a newspaper, focusing on The Guardian. First of all, Ahmad makes clear that “the representation of Twitter in The Guardian lies at the heart of wider debates about technology’s changing relationship with journalism, debates which in turn have considerable relevance to the issue of Twitter’s limits as a tool,” (Ahmad, 2010, 149). The debate that is taking place is not just whether news organizations should use Twitter, but also whether Twitter should even have a place in the world of professional journalism. Ahmad witnessed first-hand how Twitter, even in 2009, was primarily still off the radar at the UK’s largest print publication (150). According to Ahmad, Twitter is a double-edged sword. Where it aids in fact-finding and newsgathering, it also harms it. Journalists are no longer needed to show what politicians and other experts are thinking, as Twitter brings these straight to the audience, cutting out the journalist as the middleman.

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At the time when Ahmad (2010) published his findings, citizen journalism was a topic that was on the rise, but as he notes, the narrative of citizen journalism was missing one major contributor, namely Twitter and especially any sort of mention about how Twitter has transformed aspects of journalistic practice and the speed at which these take place (Ahmad, 2010, 150). Since 2010, Twitter has been growing at an exponential rate, taking a more prominent position in the media world.

Traditional media are even going as far as saying that the evolution of online media is leading to their downfall. Michael Skoler (2009) looks at this downfall from a different angle. There is a drastic change in news culture that is leading this withering of traditional media (Skoler, 2009, 38). A drop in public trust, the diminishing value attributed to the media by the audience, the widespread availability of (mostly free) information and the disregard of local news by the big conglomerates, who did not think that local news would result in profit are all points raised by Skoler. There is a disconnect growing between the professionals and their audience. “The news became less local and less relevant, and reporters became less connected to their communities” (38). As this discontent rose, Internet grew and filled the gap the audience was looking at. Local news could now easily be found online (38). According to Skoler, the media can regain its audience by regaining its trust. Social media platforms are key to this, says Skoler, who identifies the fact that many media organizations are already on Facebook and Twitter, but use it for the wrong reasons, focusing on getting the most followers and using it as another platform to disseminate news. They are missing what makes Twitter most valuable to journalism; connecting with their audience, establishing a ‘personal’ relationship and listening to their audience. Social media platforms are the way in which the audience might be drawn back in.

2.3.2 Acceptance and Adoption

Digital media presents more than just challenges. It also brings innovation and a changing media environment. Journalists and news organizations are increasingly turning to Twitter and other platforms in order to rekindle the connection with their audience. The degree to and the way in which Twitter is used by media organizations differs a lot from organization to organization. Kate Crawford is a polar opposite of Ahmad (2010), and looked at how Twitter fits in with the wider news ecology. Vis
(2012), Armstrong and Gao (2010), Bruns (2012) and Holcomb (2011) all look at how journalists use Twitter, looking at the practical side, to Ahmad’s (2010) more theoretical approach, while Ejvind Hansen (2012), acknowledging the different challenges to traditional journalism, looks at how the media can become stronger through digital media.

Crawford, for example, questions the use of Twitter by journalists, news organizations and its own user base as well as whether Twitter could be considered journalism and, more importantly, when. The first observation she makes is that, even though Twitter has the power to send an update all over the world by means of retweets or mentions, this rarely ever happens and that many posts ‘die’ out without going beyond a user’s immediate network. She also notes that many Twitter users prefer to ‘listen’ or just read updates instead of regularly updating their own feed (Crawford, 2011, 116). More so, Crawford identifies the biggest weakness of Twitter for news organizations. The user chooses whom to follow and whom to ignore. “What would be considered traditional news is often filtered through a nominated set of friends, associates and strangers: designed by each user to predetermine the kinds of updates they will receive” (116). In this way, a Twitter user already sees a filtered news feed, rather than a general one, which links back to the ideas presented by Hayes (2007) when news selection and filtering were discussed.

Crawford argues that media organizations are not using platforms such as Twitter to their full potential, an issue also raised by Skoler (2009). “The most common style adopted by news agencies is to treat Twitter like another broadcast outlet: delivering dozens of updates per day, but not receiving updates from others in turn, or tracking how the news is received, or responding to any feedback” (Crawford, 2011, 118). Next to that, she argues that established media are still clinging to norms and values of the past, still trying to maintain their hierarchical position, where the communication with the audience is passive rather than active.

Breaking news is one of the things Twitter seems most suitable for. Farida Vis (2012), in a way following up to the 2011 ‘Reading the Riots’ project organized by The Guardian, looked at how two prominent journalists, Paul Lewis and Ravi Somaiya, used Twitter during the 2011 riots in the UK. The two journalists combined for 731 tweets sent during the four days of the riots (Vis, 2012, 30). Lewis accounted for more
'original’ tweets, doing first-hand reporting or tweeting questions (36) while Somaiya more actively engaged in dialogue with her followers. (37). Both journalists used their Twitter accounts as a rich source for story leads and material, as well as getting questions answered. Thanks to Twitter, members of the audience became closely involved with the production of news and were also responsible for “random acts of journalism,” (43), a term also used by Bruns and Highfield (2012).

Hansen (2012) proposes different fields where journalists can rise to prominence once again. “On the one hand the load of possible relevant information is immense, on the other hand the perceiving resources of the readers, listeners and viewers are scarce” (Hansen, 2012, 682). Journalists filter an immense amount of information from different sources and decide what the audience needs to see, read or hear. They essentially go through the same process as observed by Hayes (2010). It was essential for the journalist to be selective, but to also be able to cater to a wide audience to prevent bias. Hansen states that the role of the journalist in the digital media world lies more in line with those of an editor. Rather than producing the news, a journalist will help guide it in the right direction, but also have another task that is of greater importance. “Journalists should also help to show the blank spots of ongoing dialogues, in order to make the silent voices heard. Journalists should facilitate an awareness of which voices are not heard in the ongoing dialogues” (679). From being the producers of news, journalists have essentially stepped down one step on the ladder, becoming witnesses as news roams freely through a number of outlets, not necessarily professional ones.

Armstrong and Gao (2010) have a very straightforward conclusion when it comes to news media using platforms such as Twitter. Primarily used as a tool for news dissemination, Twitter really shines when stories are concerned with crime and public affairs. Looking at crime as an example, they see that sending out a story might lead to more views into the case and with public affairs such as natural disasters. Twitter has become one of the primary ways in which to keep the audience updated. These observations are not strange, as scholars such as have already seen how journalists value the use of social media when it comes to developing stories. Journalists are increasingly employing new media technologies, but they are still holding on to traditional values.
Axel Bruns has looked at the platform of Twitter extensively. From the use of hashtags to bring together an audience (Bruns and Burgess, 2011) to how news organizations adapt to a new platform (Bruns, 2012) and to how citizen journalism is aided by social media platforms in their search to engage in news production (Bruns and Highfield, 2012).

Bruns (2012), basing his findings on research done in Australian newsrooms, similarly finds that traditional values are still extremely prominent, even in online-only parts of the newsroom, which is in line with Lasorsa’s research into the normalization of digital media. In 2012, news organizations have largely incorporated Twitter into their daily practice, painting a very different picture than that of just three years before, where Twitter was still seen as another hype, a platform they did not need to carry out their journalistic duties.

For Twitter to function properly, especially with regards to media pages, the audience has to be willing to disseminate these stories further. This willingness has been found, as it is fairly commonplace for accounts with a mediocre amount of followers to get their stories out to millions of people, thanks to retweets, mentions and hashtags. However, when there is little interaction between the organization and the audience, this is not as common as when an individual journalist shares a story, who have become very proficient at generating visibility for issues through Twitter, mainly because of their more ‘human’ approach. Next to their approach, individual journalists are also more likely to use hashtags than the media organization they work for (Bruns and Burgess, 2011, 25). Bruns summarizes it best in the following statement: “Twitter visibility appears driven by individual personality, not institutional imprint” (Bruns, 2012, 105).

Hashtags are used to associate a story with the larger topic at hand. Journalists use this to their advantage to gain visibility for issues, as Bruns and Burgess (2011) rightfully identified. What hashtags also accomplish is to group the potential discussion occurring after a story hits the news feeds of the audience. Hashtags can be important to political discussion and can bring together certain themes and topics. By using hashtags, journalists as well as the audience are tying themes together with their own opinion, forming ad hoc publics (Bruns and Burgess, 2011, 27).
Based on the presented research by Lasorsa (2012), journalists have readily tried to incorporate Twitter into daily journalistic practice, but have done so in limited fashion. Armstrong and Gao (2010) concluded that Twitter is still mostly used for news dissemination, especially with regards to crime and developing stories. Vis (2012) showed just how important Twitter can be in a developing story that has multiple voices trying to be heard and Crawford (2011) looked at how Twitter is becoming a platform for ‘personal news.’ To say that traditional journalists no longer have a role in this digital world would be overstating the power of digital media. Even though journalists and the audience are becoming more alike, tasks such as verification, validation and gatekeeping/watching are still very much associated with professional journalists. Professional journalists now share a lot of tasks with the audience. Processes such as the filtering of content and verification of stories are no longer just done by the media organizations, but also by the audience. Rather than withering away before the digital onslaught, legacy media and professional journalists are reinventing themselves, at the same time solidifying the position of traditional media in a digital media environment.

2.4 The Changing Audience

Audience engagement with the established news media is increasing. The audience expects a certain degree of engagement and interactivity from media organizations, even if it is only the opportunity to publish comments under a published article. The audience is looking to be heard and thanks to the growth of social networks and digital media in general, this is becoming easier. Twitter is reliant on their audience for content and as a result of this the audience is becoming an intrinsic part of journalistic practice. The audience proved to be vital for the spreading of news during the Trafigura event, even if only limited to the period before the super injunction was lifted.

Twitter falls in a grey area when it comes to practicing citizen journalism, mainly because of the codes and processes associated with professional journalism (Crawford, 2010, 118). “Even in the case of Janis Krums, he had no intention to ‘practice’ journalism when he published his update. “His message was not an attempt to tell an objective story, nor to conduct and investigation at arm’s length by following leads or making enquiries,” (118). Crawford uses words such as ‘subjective’ and ‘emotional’ to
classify Krums’ actions rather than, had he been a journalist, objective. So it could be argued that what Krums was doing was not reporting, but only newsgathering. His tweet went global within a matter of minutes, including circulation by major news media, leading Crawford to classify it as news. What Crawford questions however, is whether the process that generated the tweet, could be labeled as ‘journalism’.

The audience is becoming an intrinsic part of news production. News has become an intricate part of a social process. When a story is published on Twitter or any other social network, it is immediately peer reviewed by thousands of followers. According to the annual *State of the News Media* report carried out by the Pew Research center, nearly one in ten of adult Twitter users in the US use the platform to look for and consume news (Pew Research Center, 2013, Online). Nearly half of these users fall in the age group of 18-29, and only two percent are over 65. Taking 2012’s Hurricane Sandy as an example, New Yorkers sent over 20 million tweets, with 34% of these tweets being directly related to sharing news and eyewitness accounts, whether textual, by means of photo or video. An article on Popphoto displays how numerous of these pictures made it to news websites, newspapers and news broadcasts, as eyewitness accounts from the heart of the storm were highly sought after by many media organizations (Horaczek, 2012, Online). There was a high degree of interplay between the media and the audience. Most media outlets use Twitter as an extra tool to provide consumers with news, albeit links to existing articles, and the occasional breaking news. For these organizations, “Twitter has become a regular part of the daily news outreach” (Holcomb et al, 2011, Online). According to Holcomb et al, news organizations mainly focus on their own platform, only sharing news from their own organizations and sharing very little news from outside sources. This shows just how news organizations mainly use Twitter strictly to disseminate news, rather than engage with other sources or sharing news from other sources, resulting in their newsfeed closely resembling their legacy platform.

Nowadays, both the professional media as well as the audience are eyewitness to a changing relationship. The border between professional and amateur (or non-journalist) is fading quickly and traditional practices are changing. Professional journalists are growing increasingly reliant on the audience, whom they look to for stories, commentary, sources, pictures and videos. Another change in the relationship is the growing collaboration between mainstream journalists and the audience, which
was perfectly evident during the Trafigura incident. Ward and Wasserman (2010) looked at how the collaboration between the professional and the amateur allowed this story to break in the way that it did. In the past, the audience was known to keep tabs on the proceedings of mainstream media and its journalists, but with Trafigura something else happened.

This was not so much a case of the public keeping checks on the mainstream media but rather more a case of the public working with the media (and the public as the media) to defend freedom of speech, truth telling, and the dignity of Africans harmed by the dumping (Ward and Wasserman, 2010, 285).

Next to the points listed above, there was one more important point that loomed over this. The free flow of information was severely undermined by the ban. The Twitter ‘campaign’ surrounding the case was a full-on assault against those trying to curtail the freedom of speech and press. We could even go as far as saying that without the active audience, the journalists would have not been able to lift the imposed ban. The Twitterati carried out numerous tasks previously strictly associated with the professional media, such as verification and carried out original reporting as well, publishing most of their findings on Twitter.

People, as well as communities, decide what is important to them and how they engage with these topics. Simply put, Twitter is a highly subjective platform thanks to its users. In essence, users are able to create their own news agenda, selecting the outlets most important to them. So even though a tweet can reach thousands and thousands of people, the tweet needs to be sent at the right time and have the right content in order to engage other users.

After looking at the different problems that the Internet (starting in the 1990s) and digital media cause for journalists, Hansen (2012) proposes a different task or role for the traditional journalist. Traditionally, the journalist is a reporter and opinion maker, but due in large part to social media, there are now also reporters outside of the professional area. In Aporias of Digital Journalism, Hansen digs deep to bring the media world back from the cliff that it was approaching. Thanks to the Internet the entry level to being journalist or publisher was lowered dramatically, with the case in
point being bloggers gaining ground and rising to prominence. With social media platforms, this entry-level was lowered even further, allowing the audience to act as reporters and journalists. The role of journalists as gatekeepers in the balance, but to be fair, in this digital age, gatekeeping has turned into gatewatching and the audience has become part of this process.

2.4.1. Audience Engagement

Regular citizens are becoming more important to the established media world almost daily. Crowdsourcing and user-generated content are words of the day when it comes to media. Several scholars have looked at the phenomenon of an active audience. Hermida (2010) and Burns (2010), for example, look at the audience as ambient journalists, a form of journalism that surfaced together with the growth of social media. Deuze and Fortunati (2011) look at a journalism without professional journalists, a role that will be taken over by the audience in due time, going from a consumer role to a prosumer. Java, in turn, looks at why consumers are using Twitter, starting at the bottom (sharing daily activities) to user interaction and the searching for/sharing of information and news. We, as the audience, are witness to a shift when it comes to the production of content. Increasingly, the established media are turning to the consumer for content. When the media solicits the use of its audience, it is mostly for content created by them, such as videos or photographs of events, protests or even disasters and times of crisis. One of the more famous examples of user-generated content being used by the media in recent years was a set of photographs that made it to the front pages of many print publications around the world. These were photographs of the London bombings made with camera phones, providing hundreds of eyewitness accounts of the bombings and the aftermath. Although the bombings took place in a pre-Twitter era, there was no shortage of sharing pictures with the media. The BBC received over 300 e-mails with an average of three photographs attached on the day of the attack, as well as over 30 videos, none of which were made by professional media crews. Some of these videos were aired on national television.

within 30 minutes of the attacks,¹⁰ and these events showed that “this technology can transform the news-gathering process. It provides access to eyewitness images at the touch of a button, speeding up our reaction time to major breaking stories” (Owen, 2005, Online). Three days after the attacks, The Guardian spoke of a democratization of the news process and the birth of what they referred to as the ‘citizen reporter’, a notion that has been explored to great length. Much like during the Trafigura incident, citizens proved vital to the news media during the London bombings. This was one of the first instances where the audience became more than consumers and broke through the largely one-directional relationship between the media and the audience.

In their work WeMedia, Bowman and Willis (2003) define citizen journalism as “the act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of the participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires,” (Bowman and Willis, 2003, 9). It has to be noted that citizen reporting and citizen journalism are terms that are often used interchangeably and are both terms that have varying definitions.

Over the past few years, Twitter has dabbled into the field of news media, but at heart it is still a social media platform.¹¹ Kwak et al. (2010) looked at how users behave on Twitter and how Twitter should be classified. Kwak et al. lack a definite answer into whether or not Twitter is a news media, but there are a multitude of reasons for user behavior and participation. First of all, users are most likely to follow accounts that their peers follow, next to accounts that they find interesting (Kwak et al. 2010, 4). Users are also likely to follow celebrities and news organizations with a large amount of users and a recognizable brand (2). Is Twitter a news medium? From what Kwak et al. (2010) show, and supported by scholars such as Phillips (2012) and Hermida (2010), the answer seems to be no, or at least not really. It is rather a tool that is used by people to access news and interact with it. Whether this means retweeting a story, responding to a question or discussing it with a peer, there is very little that classifies Twitter as a news medium. During the case of Trafigura, Twitter was essentially the only platform which was used to report much of the story during the

¹⁰ Ibid.
¹¹ Wolff, Michael. Twitter is about to change the news media – again. The Guardian
http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/28/twitter-changing-news-media
first few days of the scandal, but not because it was a news medium, rather because the media were barred from doing so.

Like Kwak et al. (2010) Akshay (2007) found that Twitter is mostly used for sharing daily activities, but also used to look for and share news or information. Twitter fills a gap, says Akshay, which is why the audience is flocking to it. Twitter fills the gap of speed and faster communication. Twitter stories are, in essence, instantaneous. However, as expected, Akshay concludes that the number one topic that is discussed on Twitter is daily routine (Akshay, 2007, 7). Reporting news does not show up till place number four on the list, with conversations and sharing of information or URL’s being more prevalent. Twitter was only introduced as a platform in 2006 and did not become really popular till post-2009. But even though the sharing of news might have been less important, the most followed accounts in 2007, apart from celebrities, were news media accounts, showing a certain degree of stability. Following Kwak (2010) and Akshay (2007), not much changed during the three-year gap in research. Between 2007 and 2010 it seems that Twitter was mainly used as another platform to interact with friends.

In From TV to Twitter, Alfred Hermida, explores how using Twitter to report news constitutes a new form of journalism that he refers to as ambient journalism. Ambient journalism, according to Hermida (2010), was ‘created’ once social media technologies started playing the role some associate with it most, namely rapid disseminators of news. Ambient itself, however, is not a new term when it comes to the world of journalism. Going back more than a decade to 2002, Hargreaves and Thomas (2002) used the term ambient to describe how news, in the UK and the rest of the Western world, is readily and easily available through a host of different platforms, coming to the conclusion that “news is, in a word, ambient, like the air we breathe” (Hargreaves and Thomas, 2002, 44). In this way, news is ambient as it exists as a sort of noise, encompassing people and the media ‘decodes’ this noise. From 24-hour news channels to live-blogs, websites and digital newspapers, the news now literally is everywhere, and there is ‘noise’ all around the audience. “I suggest that ambient journalism presents a multi-faceted and fragmented news experience, where citizens are producing small pieces of content that can be collectively considered as journalism” (Hermida, 2010, Online). Ambient journalism puts the audience in a position in which they can aid the news production process.
Social media technologies play a large role in today’s digital media world. “It approaches real-time, networked digital technologies as awareness systems that offer diverse means to collect, communicate, share and display news and information in the periphery of a user's awareness” (Hermida, 2010, 7). It is this awareness system that allows Twitter to shine during world events (Hermida, 2010, 395). Following Hermida’s notion, ambient journalism really shines during times of crisis and disaster, such as the Arab Spring, the monk uprising in Myanmar or the conflict in Syria. News and information was provided more by the people in the streets than by journalists, who were often outside of the direct staging area due to the risks involved of being on the ground during these conflicts. The media is supplementing their own reporting with the reporting done by the audience.

The audience still largely fell outside the journalistic process before the notions of citizen-reporters or ambient journalism developed. Part of the explanation Hermida offers in his article attributes this change to the growth of digital means. “Non-linear, many-to-many digital communication technologies have transferred the means of media production and dissemination into the hands of the public, and are rewriting the relationship between the audience and journalists” (Hermida, 2010, 7). News is becoming a social experience, a participatory activity and social media is the main reason behind this change.

Alex Burns, who also deals with ambient journalism, proposes an alternative definition of ambient journalism, which “emphasizes craft, skills acquisition, and the mental models of professional journalists, which are the foundations more generally for journalism practices” (Burns, 2010 Online). Unlike Hermida, who focuses on this participatory media context and strictly taking an audience angle, Burns looks at what he calls ‘institutional adaptiveness,’ which he describes as being the following; “how journalists and newsrooms in media institutions rely on craft and skills, and how emerging platforms can augment these foundations, rather than replace them” (Burns, 2010, Online). Burns breaks down Hermida’s system as follows; “(1) an information systems model of new platforms and networks, and (2) a normative argument that these tools empower ‘para-journalists’ to engage in journalism and real-time commentary.” These para-journalists are citizen journalists who aid journalists in their work. However, Burns’ definition looks more at how ‘ambient’ journalism works in the professional community, whereas Hermida shows how the audience can contribute to this community.
‘Ambient journalism’ is an emerging analytical framework for journalists, informed by cognitive, cybernetic, and information systems research. It 'sensitizes' the individual journalist, whether professional or 'para-professional', to observe and to evaluate their immediate context. In doing so, 'ambient journalism', like journalism generally, emphasizes 'novel' information. It can also inform the design of real-time platforms for journalistic sources and news delivery (Burns, 2010, Online).

Burns’ definition makes a clear distinction between the professional and the amateur, something that Hermida does not follow, choosing to focus on how the audience fits into this new form of journalism and can work in parallel to professional journalists. For Burns, the two are separate, even though they are able to learn from each other and can work together. Ward and Wasserman (2010), who showed an increasing reliance of the news media on citizens, showed that by working together with citizens, the traditional media gained a lot of power, even if this did not come by means of established channels.

Social media platforms and digital media in general are facilitating a change in the role of the consumer. This audience is sometimes referred to as prosumers and Axel Bruns popularized the term ‘produsage’ in 2007, when he studied Wikipedia. Bruns and Highfield (2012) revisited the concept of produsage, this time incorporating Twitter. The audience is in the position to produce and disseminate their ‘own’ news, as well as creating their own news agenda. They are part of a system like that proposed by Heinrich (2008; 2012), as the audience become nodes that are connected to the traditional media, putting them in the position to cooperate. Social media platforms offer a shared space of news produsage, shared by audience members and journalists so that they can interact with each other. (Bruns and Highfield, 2012, 9), mirroring the ideas of network journalism. The sharing of news is aided by hashtags as they allow users to see tweets outside of their own ‘social’ circle, bringing them in touch with other audience members, opening up the “potential participant base,” leading to increased commentary and allowing members of the audience to become gatewatchers. This is a perfect example of the collaborative effort proposed by Ward and Wasserman (2010). Isolated tweets might not make much sense to an onlooker, but once context is
established by using hashtags, Twitter offers a wealth of information and brings together an audience to form a virtual community or ‘ad hoc’ publics (Bruns and Burgess, 2011). This produsage still falls outside of the professional (Bruns and Highfield, 2012, 12) or professional spheres (Hermida, 2008;2012) meaning they belong more to random acts of journalism, rather than a para-journalistic community. Twitter is becoming more and more important to journalists and the audience alike and it provides the connections between the audience and the professional journalist (Bruns and Highfield, 2012, 13).

News organizations see social media platforms as another means to disseminate news, but also realize its potential to start a subsequent debate (Humprecht, 2012; Lasorsa, 2012; Armstrong and Gao, 2010). Media organizations are looking to spark a debate, they often stay out of it themselves, seemingly sticking to the core values of objectivity and impartiality and upholding the one-way communication that was typical for established media (Humprecht, 2012). Rather, the debate itself takes place between different members of the audience. The original tweet serves as an initiator, but journalists rarely monitor the subsequent conversations. This is an issue recognized by Mark Deuze and Leopoldina Fortunati who state, “the majority of the press has been characterized by the lack of a true interaction between newsrooms and the audience and a situation of ‘dissociated’ interactivity (that is, interactivity mainly between audience members, rather than between journalists and audience members.)” (Deuze and Fortunati, 2011, 165). According to Deuze, editors remained blind and deaf to what Jay Rosen dubbed “the people formerly known as the audience” (Rosen, 2006, Online). Just a few years ago, media organizations seemed to not be keen on getting closer with the audience, trying to avoid interaction and cooperation if they could. They did not want to relinquish the power they held (167). Now, news organizations are increasingly reliant on the audience. Just as Skoler (2009) sees social media as the means for survival, Deuze et al. (2011) see the developing relationships between the former elite and the audience as the thing that will save journalism, both traditional and ‘new.’ Journalism is in need of a breath of fresh air and getting on one level with the audience is one of the ways in which this can be achieved.

Some organizations however, have already noticed the true value of social media and are adopting their production methods to suit this development. Increasingly, journalists resort to citizens, locals on the ground to get more information
on a certain story or even to get scoops. After all, citizens are eyewitnesses, not journalists. Armstrong and Gao (2010) argue that social media allow the media to fulfill their assigned tasks of both public service and social responsibility. Twitter allows news organizations to give their consumers the information they require. The same platform could prove indispensable when it comes to the spreading of information during a disaster of some sort, such as the wildfires in San Diego and southern California, a crisis which was the backdrop for an investigation into how American news organizations used Twitter to spread news when the KPBS news main website crashed (Armstrong and Gao, 2010, 222). The audience is increasingly becoming more important in the journalistic process, taking on many tasks that were previously limited to being carried out by professionals.

The media is looking to collaborate more with the audience, one of the ways being user-generated content. The rise of UGC can be directly attributed to the growth and development of digital and new media. Multiple scholars have looked at the different aspects of UGC; from how it is used in the newsroom (Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Paulussen and Ugille, 2008) to the credibility, social trust and social roles of UGC (Nah and Chung, 2012) and the potential of the citizen to be a significant source of news (Williams, 2010). UGC in itself refers to a range of media content available to the audience through various channels that is not produced by professional media. From articles to multimedia content, as long as an amateur, or non-journalist creates it, it can be considered UGC.

2.5 From the Audience Up

Twitter, for all intents and purposes, has become one of the primary platforms on which news is discussed and covered. Bruns and Burgess (2011) studied Twitter and how its users engage with newsworthy events on different levels. Users do not only read, they also discuss and disseminate, with examples being the tsunami in Japan, a topic that generated an average of 140,000 tweets per hour (#tsunami) or the hearings of James and Rupert Murdoch (Bruns and Burgess, 2012, 801). What drives these discussions forward most is the ease with which tweets are sent, including video, photos or hyperlinks to other pieces of content, both content created by official media as well as user-generated content. “These additions extend Twitter’s affordances far beyond the 140 character limit, adding a rich media layer to the tweets themselves –
and these multimedia materials often also make their way into mainstream media coverage” (801-802). Hashtags bring these tweets together and allow users to engage in discussion with users outside of their immediate follower circle.

BBC director of news Helen Boaden (2008) observed a change in the way journalism works following the 2005 London bombing attacks.

Our journalism is now fully embracing the experiences of our audiences, sharing their stories, using their knowledge and hosting their opinions,’ she declared; ‘we’re acting as a conduit between different parts of our audience; and we’re being more open and transparent than we have ever been (33).

Boaden collectively called the pictures and short messages sent by means of MMS messages etc. accidental journalism. This accidental journalism is the most common use of UGC for the BBC. This form of accidental journalism shares many similarities with the random acts of journalism as mentioned by Vis (2012) as well as Bruns and Highfield (2012).

Harrison (2009) raises an important and very valid point at the beginning of her article. “UGC has created a range of tensions and problems for journalists who seek to reconcile their traditional values of quality, impartiality and balance with ‘audience participation’” (Harrison, 2009, 243). The dynamic between the two parties is changing. Much like with Ward and Wasserman (2010), UGC is shown as a collaborative effort. Harrison asks herself the question why media organizations would resort to using and incorporating UGC when it brings so many problems to the table. Not only do media organizations need to dedicate staff members to monitoring UGC activity, every piece of content that is received also needs to be fact-checked and checked for validity and truthfulness. However, the BBC sees UGC as a mixture of public broadcasting services, a means to combat disengagement and disinterest and as a way in which to bring the audience back to the BBC. (Harrison, 2010, 243).

The World Wide Web has forced journalists to look towards alternative methods of information distribution as well as including voices previously unheard in the mass media. Overall, UGC has become something that is directly associated with the modern media landscape, but its adoption was slow, as newspapers are known to oppose change, which brings with it a number of different challenges in a rapidly
evolving media landscape. With the adoption being slow, Hermida and Thurman (2008) concluded that UGC was incorporated in newsrooms on a ‘sink or swim’ idea. The media feared that if they did not provide a platform for debate, they would lose the audience (Hermida and Thurman, 2008, 347).

Sharing stories is easier than before the online era. One of the platforms that allows for easier sharing of content with established media is Twitter. A tweet can be sent in a matter of seconds, even with attached media, such as a photograph or video. Quotes and stories can be sent to media organizations directly and news organizations can connect back with their audience in the very same manner. It has to be noted that neither journalists nor the audience seem to capitalize on these possibilities. Active users were a severe minority, making up less than 10% of online media visitors (Hermida and Thurman, 2008). What Twitter is perfect for is the dissemination of this same content. By use of hashtags, a lot of this content is tied together, making tweets appear under one column when, for example, a journalist is looking for tweets regarding a certain topic, so Twitter can be both seen as a collector and as a disseminator, aiding both the audience and the professional journalist.

These challenges present themselves now that the audience is growing more active. To say that in order for the media to survive it needs to cooperate with its audience might not be such a bold statement after all. Skoler stated that social media platforms are intrinsic for the future of journalism, a statement echoed by scholars such as Bruns (2012) and Farhi (2009), who showed just how important Twitter and other social media can be to the modern-day media, both online and traditional. Rather than standing at opposite ends of the spectrum, Hermida (2008; 2013), Harrison (2009), Ward and Wasserman (2010) and others have shown that there is a certain degree of cooperation between the two sides. Hermida and Thurman already noticed this trend back in 2008, when he looked at how the BBC incorporated UGC in their newsroom and this cooperation has grown steadily from there on in. Nah and Chung, for example, look at how media credibility is affected by this cooperation, while Williams is seeing a positive development, both from the side of the audience as well as within the newsroom.

There has been a massive shift in the way that the professional media perceives UGC. In 2004, editors described blogs as dull, mediocre and of marginal interest, but individual journalists rather welcomed blogs because of their fluid and flexible nature. Blogs were often perceived as overrated and were more hype than anything else
Less than half a decade later, most of these opinions have withered, evident from looking at the amount of possibilities for UGC offered by the traditional media. Fear of being left behind is the main reason for adopting UGC. Even though a lot of organizations have given the audience a platform to incorporate UGC, this is mostly limited to article comments, something that is used sparingly (Williams et al, 2010).

2.6 Sourcing the Tweet

As Twitter has gained popularity among the media, tweets in published articles are not so rare anymore. Journalist can now look towards Twitter to cut out the middleman if they are looking for a quote and can ask questions to other users, at times putting these tweets in their articles to add information or color to a story.

There is interplay between the journalist and their source, interplay that Broersma et al. (2013) call a courtship. This courtship exists because “there is no story without a source” (Broersma et al, 2013, 388). Journalists hold near-ultimate power over news discourse. They decide what will be covered, who has access to news, but also how these stories are illustrated and framed (393). Twitter has turned this courtship into a constantly changing dynamic between the source, the journalist and the audience. Now the journalist needs to make sure that both the audience and the politician are ‘courted.’ Twitter allows the audience and the politician to cut out the journalist as the middleman.

By looking at the 2010 British and Dutch elections, Broersma and Graham (2012) look at how Twitter was used as a news source during the elections and what implications this holds for journalism as a whole. The changing dynamic between journalist and source is changing the way in which journalists work. Newspapers and media do not only source experts, but are often ‘caught’ looking towards Twitter to get more opinions and angles for their pieces. Twitter is leading the charge in a reinvention of sourcing practices, with sources now being available to the audience as well.

Tweets are now increasingly used as a regular source in newspaper coverage (Broersma and Graham, 2012, 417). Tweets also have the power to trigger a story and bring it to mainstream attention, which we saw in the case of Tragifura. This information explosion has given journalists a quick, easy and rich harvest from which they can pick their news (408). The audience is also getting in on this, as published
tweets are not limited to expert sources, but when expressing public sentiment or opinion, journalists look for audience tweets and when a politician is unavailable to address the media, Twitter offers a solution as it offers a wealth of information.

Journalists and news organizations look to Twitter as sources for one of two reasons; because the source or the story are newsworthy and because they look to add color to a story, citing a number of different sources. The latter is predominant, as over 60% of sourced tweets were used to illustrate broader issues. Broersma and Graham argue that this has dire consequences for journalism as a whole, but also for the relationship between the journalist and their source. Social media interaction takes away the formality of the relationship, ‘cheapening’ it (Broersma and Graham, 2013, 461). However, Broersma and Graham see this as a positive development. Where Broersma and Graham seem to see a healthy relationship between Twitter and journalists, Lariscy does not. In 2009, Lariscy looked at the role of online social media in sourcing and came to different results than Broersma and Graham. Conducting telephone interviews with over 200 journalists, Lariscy finds that journalists embrace the idea of social media more than they use it. Non-interactive online information is still the first source for a journalist (Lariscy, 2009, 316).

There are both pros and cons to Twitter when it comes to sourcing. The journalist is in a position to see more stories or include more angles simply because he can monitor the development of a story and even though it cuts down some of the time required to complete a story, including quotes and opinions, there is still a very large possibility of false information being spread through Twitter. The information explosion has exponentially increased the amount of news that has to be filtered by the media. It has become easier than ever for the audience to spread stories through a multitude of ways, whether this is through blogs, Tweets, YouTube videos etc. So rather than only worrying about correct sourcing and attribution, journalists are trying to filter out what is true and what is not.
3. RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of this research is to find out how Twitter was covered in the mainstream media during the unfolding of the Trafigura scandal. By looking at both the newspapers and online counterparts of two leading British newspapers, I aim to see whether the media saw Twitter as an important factor during the scandal and how the audience played a part in the unfolding of the scandal itself. In order to do this, the following questions were drawn up;

*RQ 1: How did traditional media report on the use of Twitter during the uncovering of the Trafigura scandal?*

*S. RQ 1: How prominently was Twitter mentioned in traditional media during the times of the Trafigura scandal when compared to the prominence of other sources?*

*S. RQ 2: What role did the audience play in the uncovering of the scandal?*

*S. RQ 3: In what context was Twitter mentioned?*

The main research question is aimed towards looking at how Twitter was covered in the mainstream media during the events of the Trafigura scandal. During the unfolding of the events surrounding Trafigura’s toxic waste dumping and the super injunction imposed on *The Guardian*, Twitter proved of vital importance to get the story out to the people when the newspaper could not. The news of the scandal essentially broke on Twitter and it was used as one of the main platforms of discussion, judging from the 5,500 tweets sent with the hashtag #trafigura on Oct. 13th 2009 alone, as reported by *The Guardian* on that same day\(^\text{12}\). Under the pressure of these tweets and the sudden attention to the case, law firm Carter-Ruck lifted the injunction hours before *The Guardian* was due to appear in court to appeal that same injunction. Did the traditional media attribute the same importance to Twitter in the days after? Was Twitter in the news often and, if so, in what context was Twitter mentioned?

When discussing prominence, I will be looking at whether Twitter was used as a source, whether tweets appeared in news coverage and how they were pitted against

other sources (politicians, expert sources, etc). Looking at Broersma and Graham (2012; 2013) and Arcenaux and Weiss (2010), this can go either way. Whereas Broersma and Graham state that tweets were widely used as sources in news coverage from 2007 onwards, Arceneaux and Weiss as well as Lariscy (2009) see this as erroneous, with a very limited Twitter presence in traditional media coverage. How prominent was Twitter as a source during the Trafigura case when compared to other sources? Was Twitter mentioned in any headlines, was it mentioned in the lede or was it buried in the article? Were tweets used as source materials or were any Twitter users directly referenced in the articles with their tweets? The coding categories associated with this are category two and six, which can be found in Appendix 1.

The audience played an important role in the first few hours following Alan Rusbridger’s tweet, uncovering the story behind the super injunction. The audience turned to Twitter and engaged with other users to get to the bottom of the story. Questions I hope to answer in the second sub-question include how important the audience was to traditional media outlets and how their Twitter activity was reported in the coverage, both on and offline. This will be studied by looking at content, which is category four.

The final sub-question deals with how Twitter was mentioned. In what context was Twitter mentioned in news coverage; was it seen as a vital piece or did it fade to the background, only being used to discuss larger issues? How was Twitter covered when compared to Trafigura? What aspects of Twitter were most important to news reporters during the unfolding of the case? This will be looked at through categories three, five and six.

This chapter gives a detailed look at the research design and the methodological approach. Section 3.1 explains the reason for choosing this specific case. In 3.2 I will discuss the research design and the quantitative method chosen as a means of analysis.

3.1 Research Method & Design

To answer the question of how Twitter was reported on in traditional media, I have chosen to conduct a case study into how the issue was covered in two major traditional media outlets, being The Guardian and The Telegraph, looking at both the newspaper itself and their respective websites as both newspapers have a well-developed and well-known online counterpart. The choice for The Guardian is obvious, as this is the
organization that was directly involved with the scandal. The reason for choosing *The Telegraph* is to see how the news appeared in an outlet that was not directly associated with the scandal. In order to properly guide this case study, I will be carrying out a quantitative content analysis, which means that I will be looking at posts on the different websites as well as looking at the newspapers through LexisNexis. By including *The Telegraph*, I aim to give a more extensive look into how traditional media reported on Twitter and the story itself and to give an outside perspective as well, seen as *The Guardian* played a major role in the case itself.

The timeframe I have chosen to use for this research spans from 12-10-2009 to 26-10-2009. Even though Trafigura obtained the super injunction a month earlier, on 11-09-2009, after the publishing of the Minton Report, which exposed the toxic waste dumping in the first place, the toxic waste scandal was covered up until 12-10-2009 by means of the parliamentary-issued super-injunction. On that day, editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger tweeted a question regarding the super-injunction and the gag put on *The Guardian*. The fourteen-day period chosen includes the start of the Twitter investigation into the gag which was started by users, the climax of events which, depending on the point of view was either the total uncovering of the scandal on 13-10-2009 and the day on which *The Guardian* was allowed to report on the case or the complete lifting of the super-injunction itself on 16-10-2009 and the run-down of events as it continued to be covered by different media. This timeframe was chosen to include the start of the scandal and the run-down, in order to see how the story developed and how the story ‘fizzled’ out.

The main part of this research will consist of a quantitative content analysis. The reason behind this is to see how traditional media approached the Twitter angle of the story. In order to see how Twitter was reported on in the media during the two-week timeframe I chose a quantitative approach for the main part of this research. This was done in order to collect hard, numerical data (Bryman, 2008, 140) for a number of different variables, such as how many times Twitter was mentioned in a headline or a lede and to see how online coverage differentiates itself from newspaper coverage. The content analysis will follow a coding scheme as outlined in 3.2\(^{13}\) and will mainly look at how prominently Twitter was mentioned in connection with the Trafigura scandal.

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\(^{13}\) Coding scheme can be consulted in Appendix 1.
In order to get a more in-depth look and to get more out of this research than just numbers and statistics, article content will also be looked at. It is expected that Twitter as a social media platform was vital in the case surrounding Trafigura and by also looking at content, I hope to cover not only how much Twitter was mentioned but, more importantly, how it was mentioned. Did Twitter make headlines, was it mentioned in the lede of the story? Next to looking at how Twitter was mentioned, I will also be looking at the nature of the article itself, such as whether it links on to other stories or has video attached to it in the article.

The reason for choosing a content analysis is to answer questions such as; when were the articles published, when did coverage start to die down, how Twitter was covered etc. Next to that, content analysis is transparent, allowing for replication and follow-up studies to be set up based on the findings presented in this thesis (Bryman, 2008, 288). For this content analysis, the sample size is fairly limited, with a total of 79 pieces of content relating to Trafigura published during the timeframe chosen.

To research how the traditional media covered Twitter, I have opted to look at both the outlet websites and LexisNexis, an online database which archives all major print newspapers as well as online articles. The reason for using these two newspapers is to look at how the Trafigura scandal was covered in print media and the differences between print media and online media within the same organization. In both cases, I will be using one keyword, which is Trafigura.

The data found will be compiled in a series of Excel spreadsheets, one for each media outlet, in order to maintain a clear overview of the results. These spreadsheets will then be used to process the most interesting findings and these results will be elaborated upon in the next chapter.

3.2 Coding Scheme

The coding scheme was designed on the basis of the research questions outlined in the first part of this chapter. A deductive approach was taken in this research, as there are a number of presumptions with regards to the prominence of Twitter coverage in the two outlets studied. As seen earlier, Twitter seems to be vital to the uncovering of the case and thus the presumption is made that Twitter is extensively covered in the media

\[14 \text{ Sample of spreadsheets can be found in Appendix 2}\]
during the period selected. The research questions were based on the theory side of this thesis. The main question addresses theories presented by, among others, Tenore (2007), Vis (2012), Bruns (2012) and Java (2007). By researching how Twitter was reported on during the two-week timeframe, I aim to see how the relationship between journalists and Twitter was and whether this is in line with, for example, Bruns, (2012) who stated that at the time of the scandal Twitter was still seen as a hype by most journalists. The sub-questions all address different parts of the theories presented in chapter 2. The final coding scheme consists of 30 variables. The coding scheme is mainly based on quantitative analysis, because this is the method that I believe to be the best to display the prominence of Twitter in traditional media. Variables that will be looked at include whether or not Twitter or social media were used in the headline of a certain article, whether there is mention of Twitter or social media in the lede of the story and how prominent Twitter is mentioned overall as well as in what context Twitter appeared. In case any of these variables are noted as positive during coding (e.g. when Twitter is mentioned in the headline), these will be marked with a 1, where the variable is found to be negative, the fields will be marked with a 0.

Quantitative data lends itself perfectly for a thorough and reliable statistical analysis, but there is a limit to what numbers can say about a case such as Trafigura. Quantitative research will be used as the backbone for the qualititative angle. Numbers such as amount of times Twitter has been mentioned in different news articles can provide an adequate scope of the role Twitter played in the uncovering of the scandal. With the results obtained through this quantitative analysis, a more extensive analysis can be undertaken.

The coding scheme is split into six categories; General, Prominence of Twitter, Trafigura, Content, Prominence of other sources, Context – how was Twitter mentioned. The reason for splitting the coding scheme into six different categories is so that the results can be interpreted on their own and be used to see how exactly the different categories contribute to the overall picture. Even though some of the variables could be put in multiple categories, this would create overlap. In order to avoid this

15 Coding scheme can be found in Appendix 1

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overlap (and double results) seem the choice was made to put each variable in the category that it best suited.

### 3.3 Research Objects

#### 3.3.1 Sampling: News Articles

News articles will be consulted by means of the websites of the media outlets mentioned earlier as well as by using LexisNexis. A total of 80 articles were found that could be directly tied to Trafigura. There are a few keywords I will be looking for in the articles, as well as considering their placement. Obviously, the main keywords are Trafigura and Twitter, but I will also be looking for replacement words or derivatives thereof such as social media, tweets, Twitterverse and others. Search queries included Trafigura and Twitter, as the search function looks for both tags used for the article (such as Twitter, Trafigura, social media) as well as words used in the article. The same amount of articles were found, even when two different search queries were used, such as ‘Twitter’ and ‘tweet.’

The sample of articles was gathered using a non-probability sampling technique as put forth by Bryman (2008, 183). This was done in order to code all the articles related to Trafigura within the time frame so that a structured observation and analysis could be done. By using LexisNexis and the online archives of the media organizations, I hope to eliminate the chance of missing articles when coding. Instead of choosing sample articles over a large period of time, I have opted to limit my timeframe to two weeks in order to be able to process every news article that has been published.

To supplement the results gotten from the news articles, there are also more results I will be using. TagWalk, an online Twitter research platform which allows its users to get more details associated with a certain hashtag, such as total number of tweets, total amount of users mentioning a keyword etc. Tagwalk will be used to scope the total number of tweets published which used the main hashtag associated with the Trafigura case, which obviously was #trafigura. TagWalk will provide some more general results, such as total number of tweets, number of retweets, amount of tweets using links and amount of users talking about specific topics by means of hashtags related to the story, such as #trafigura, #Guardian and #Carter-Ruck.
3.3.2 Units of analysis

As the main subjects of this research are news articles, I will be looking at several different factors that play a role. These include the length of the article itself, the amount of times a word such as Twitter or a derivate thereof is used in an article and the prominence of Twitter or social media in the article by looking at where Twitter is mentioned in an article.

3.3.3 Data archiving and managing

With the data found on newspaper websites and through LexisNexis, no offline database has been established. The findings were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet (one for each media outlet) as that made for the most straightforward results collecting tool. Findings were recorded in a chronological order, with the oldest article or piece coded first. The variables were coded by means of Excel, giving a good overview of found results. A sample of the Excel spreadsheets is available at the end of this paper.\(^{16}\)

3.4 Limitations

There are several different limitations to the methodological part of this study, as a choice was made to only include two newspapers, rather than all UK media outlets, which might have made the research stronger, but also broader. The Guardian is the main focus of this research, but by including The Telegraph, a comparison can be made between the two outlets with regards to the amount of content published related to Trafigura and subsequently, Twitter. This was done to include an outside organization, rather than only looking at the content published by The Guardian, which were a main part of the scandal as it developed.

The sample chosen cannot be truly called representative, due to both the reasons outlined above and also the fact that the sample was self-selected and limited in scope. However, the size of the sample (n=79) does permit to make conclusions about how Twitter was reported in the media and how prominent it was during the unfolding of the toxic waste scandal. At the same time, it could also be said that more

\(^{16}\) A sample of the Excel spreadsheets can be found in Appendix 2.
outlets should have been included to create a larger sample size to obtain stronger results.

There are also a number of methodological limitations associated with this study. Even though Twitter and its links to the media have been well researched, the combination of factors in this research limits the availability of prior studies. Next to that, the research design as found here is one of a number of approaches that can be taken to research how Twitter was covered in the mainstream media and how important it proved to be. The latter might have perhaps come forward better in interviews with people involved in the Trafigura case.
4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will be presenting the results as were obtained after coding. A total of 35 variables were looked at in 92 articles. The results and analyses will be presented linearly in order to accurately analyze each part of the research. It starts with a general overview of the results, before moving into a more detailed look into the more remarkable results. Percentages have been rounded off to one decimal place.

4.1 General Observations

Before the analysis, there are a few things that are to be noted that came up during the coding phase. Even though I decided to assign social media as a general term to three different variables, this term did not appear in any of the headlines or ledes in articles connected to Trafigura, as that was the main search term. Out of the 80 pieces of content coded, only six articles referred to social media, all of them published in either The Guardian newspaper (one instance) or on the website (five instances). Because of this, variables H, I and J will be disregarded in the following analysis.

Another observation during coding was that The Guardian in some cases chooses to use different headlines in the search results on their website and in the actual article on their website. The headlines coded were those of the actual articles. Even though the headlines did not differ from each other that much, some keywords such as Twitter and Trafigura might appear in the search results, but not above the article and vice versa. An example of this is the headline of a podcast published on October 16th 200917 titled Media Talk: The Trafigura Scandal, while the headline in the search results read Media Talk: Trafigura, super-injunctions and press freedom.

4.2 When the Stories Hit

The timeframe studied allowed me to see how the story developed over time and if any trends arose with regards to the amount of stories published by the different

media outlets. On the 13th of October, a day after the story broke on Twitter and the first day that was part of the timeframe as it was the first day on which the media could start publishing about the case, The Guardian published twelve articles online, 21.4% of their total online output over fourteen days. No articles were published in the paper edition, as the paper had already gone to print before the gag enforced onto the newspaper had been lifted. Well over half of the stories published on the Guardian.co.uk were published in the first three days following the lifting of the gag, 32 to be exact. Just as was seen with its online counterpart, the paper edition saw most articles published on the first day of the story reaching the paper. Five out of a total of sixteen articles were published on the 14th of October, while over the following days, the average number of articles published in the print edition was two, with three articles being published on the 17th. Out of these five articles, one article made it to the front page, while the other articles were to be found buried in the rest of the newspaper.

There is a visible slump in the amount of content published after the 22nd of October, after which only The Guardian still published a number of stories related to the topic of the Trafigura toxic waste spill. This is quickly explained by the fact that debates in parliament seemingly ended on the topic of the super-injunction, the court order and Trafigura itself. Although not included in the timeframe, there were only a handful of articles published dealing with Trafigura during the rest of 2009 after the 26th of October. Neither were there a lot of articles posted prior to the uncovering of the scandal. What has to be noted is that this was not the first time that Trafigura was involved in stories such as these, as there were a number of articles both pre- and post this event that showed Trafigura in a bad light.
FIGURE 4.2.1: Amount of stories published per day in surveyed outlets for a total of 80 pieces of content published. Total amount of articles published marked in brackets. Not charted are the dates between 23/10/2009 – 25/10/2009 as neither of the outlets published content related to the topic.

Guardian.co.uk published articles on eleven different days and as these were online, Sundays do count. No stories were published on from the 23rd to the 26th of October, with only three stories appearing online on that final day. This gives an average of 5.1 articles published online per day. This number is significantly lower when it comes to the print edition, with an average of 2.3 articles published per day on seven different days.
FIGURE 4.2.2: The total stories published per day (for a total of 80) in both outlets combined. 23/10/2009 – 25/10/2009 omitted as no content was published.

The Telegraph did not even come close to the amount of content published by The Guardian. In fact, the online edition of The Telegraph only published four articles on the first day. The print edition of The Telegraph did not even mention anything related to Trafigura till the 17th of October, also being the only story published on the topic in the two weeks that were studied. Telegraph.co.uk published stories on three different days, with an average of two stories per day, although that average is bumped higher because of the four articles published on day one.

4.3 Trafigura, Twitter and the Media

When the Trafigura story broke in 2009, Twitter was already breaking its way into the world of established media. From Hermida (2010) to Bruns (2012) and from Broersma (2013) to the findings of the Pew Center, the turn of the decade was a watershed moment for Twitter and other social media, but this was not reflected in traditional media coverage. Apart from a handful of tweets used mostly to add color to a story, there were no signs of the sourcing of tweets in the outlets studied. Much like what was found by Van Leuven and Heinrich, who studied the Arab Spring, journalists primarily
resorted to using expert sources for facts and additional information, and if any tweets were used, they were only used to illustrate the story.

4.3.1 Article Focus

“Now Guardian prevented from reporting parliament for unreportable reasons. Did John Wilkes live in vain? http://tinyurl.com/yhjxo38.” (Rusbridger, 2009, Twitter). Arguably, this is the tweet that started the snowball effect leading to the super-injunction becoming public knowledge within a few hours of Rusbridger’s tweet. The link embedded in the tweet leads to the very first article posted by The Guardian on October 12th, 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content focus of The Guardian and The Telegraph (Online)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Trafigura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Broader Issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3.1: The focus of content published on the websites by The Guardian and The Telegraph. Total amount of focus articles online = 60.

Starting with The Guardian’s online counterpart, a total of 57 pieces of content were posted directly related to Trafigura and the surrounding case, including Twitter. Examples include Twitter Can’t Be Gagged, an article that focused on both Trafigura and Twitter published on October 13th, 2009, the third article published within the timeframe as well as A Spreading of Toxic Gags, the last article to be posted online by The Guardian with a focus on Trafigura. A total of 56 online articles were coded because they directly referenced Trafigura. An article posted before Rusbridger sent
his tweet, published on October 12th, 2009, at 20.31 BST\(^{18}\) was not included in the results as it could not be directly tied to Trafigura. Out of these 56 articles, six focused on Twitter as a social platform and the role that it played during the scandal, which is only slightly over 10 percent of content published. Out of these six, half made mention of Twitter in the headline, while two articles had Twitter both in the headline and the lede of the article. Not surprisingly, two out of three articles that had Twitter in both the headline and the lede, had Twitter as its main focus point. A total of six pieces of content had Twitter as its main focus, including one piece that made no mention of Twitter in its headline or lede. Twitter was mentioned in a total of 19 articles, excluding headlines and ledes, but was only mentioned multiple times in 11 of these.

For *The Telegraph*, the numbers are far smaller due to the limited amount of attention given to this case by the outlet. The total content output of *The Telegraph* online is less than 10% of the content published online by *The Guardian*. With five articles published during the two-week timespan, two articles focused on Twitter, four focused on Trafigura exclusively, while one article had a double focus, talking about both Twitter and Trafigura in detail, *Trafigura tops trending topics on Twitter*, an article published on October 13th. This article dealt with the tremendous amounts of tweets sent (also a topic dealt with by *The Guardian*) and explained the Trafigura angle as well. The large difference between the two different outlets is not surprising though, as *The Guardian* was the only media outlet directly connected to the scandal.

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Figure 4.3.1: The focus of content published in the newspapers by *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. Total amount of focus articles offline = 17.

If we look at the percentages presented, the paper editions of the two outlets studied paid far more attention to Trafigura and only slightly more attention was given to Twitter. However, these percentages are deceiving, as the amount of content published in the newspapers as opposed to online is far more limited in numbers and there were more articles published online that focused on Twitter, but due to the volume of online content, the percentages do not show this. The two outlets combined for eighteen print articles, sixteen of which appeared on the pages of *The Guardian*. The fact that there are only two printed articles printed outside of *The Guardian* is surprising to say the least as this scandal could be seen as one of the bigger stories that occurred in the UK during the second half of 2009 and especially when compared to the coverage provided by *The Guardian*. Out of the two articles published in *The Telegraph*, only *Firm’s Toxic Trail Exposed After Gagging Row*, dealt with Trafigura and Twitter, while the second article, a feature published on page 30 of *The Telegraph*’s Saturday edition, titled *Don’t Laugh, Fry is Giving The Orders Now*, is an article about Stephen Fry and his antics and only includes one mention of Trafigura and Twitter each, as Stephen Fry was one of the Twitter users that contributed to the online Twitter onslaught of October 12th, 2009. Even after expanding the search queries to look for ‘social media,’ ‘social network,’ and ‘tweeting,’ as well as looking...
for these queries in connection with Trafigura, only these two articles were shown as having been printed in *The Telegraph*.

Online, *The Guardian* used an average of approximately 598 words per article, with the lowest being nine, which was a headline accompanied by a podcast. Article length rarely dropped beneath 300 words, with only 11 out of 56 articles being shorter. The longest article online, not counting the several live-blogs of parliamentary proceedings, was 1172 words long and focused on Trafigura. The newspaper is a slightly different story, although article length remained fairly unaffected, which is somewhat surprising, as it has often been seen that space restrictions in print, along with production costs, result in shorter articles and that online articles are not limited by these same restrictions, with articles online, even if they are similar in nature, often being longer. The shortest article posted in the newspaper was 305 words in length, while the longest was 1001 words, an article that was posted on the front page of *The Guardian* on the 14th of October 2009 and, just like its online counterpart, focused on Trafigura. An article with a similar topic, although with a slightly altered content was published a day earlier, with only 50 words less. Only three of the 16 articles focused directly on Twitter, while 12 articles dealt with Trafigura. Only one article had a different focus. This was one of the *Diary* entries, which are written by Hugh Muir on a variety of topics. Trafigura here was used as a stepping-stone to talk about freedom of speech, rather than a focus point. Six of the articles published in the newspaper also appeared online, most of them a day later.

The way in which the website of *The Guardian* is structured shows the user a landing page, filled with headlines and other pieces of content, constantly updated and unless a story is ‘pinned’ to the front page because it is a developing story, old headlines quickly make room for fresh ones. This also means that most of the articles, save blogs and comment pieces, appeared on the homepage of the website. This allows a user to see most of the content published when visiting the website. Skimming headlines, the articles published online were all featured on the homepage at one point in time. This increases the potential readership because of the increased visibility. When it comes to the paper edition, the first article published dealing with Trafigura was published on page 32 on October 14th. That same article was also posted online with the same content; the increase in words can be explained because of the longer decks that *The Guardian* uses on their website. The online articles have a higher degree of prominence because of the visibility granted by the website. Whether dealing with
Traficura or Twitter, headlines are constantly refreshed on the homepage of *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. In the paper editions, most stories are ordered by relevance and importance. Big stories make the front page, as we saw with *Oil firm drops bid to gag Guardian over MP's question* and *Traficura abandons attempt to keep scientific report secret*, the only two articles that were featured on a front page, published by *The Guardian* on the 14th and 17th of October, 2009, respectively. Neither of these headlines mentions Twitter and both, not surprisingly, focused on the case of Traficura. Only the first article fleetingly referenced Twitter in the article.

Traficura proved far more interesting than Twitter to the media studied, with the keyword making 17 headlines on the website of *The Guardian*, being mentioned 19 times in the lede, with 48 articles mentioning Traficura in the main body of the article, out of which 42 articles mentioned the company more than once. Just as with *The Guardian*, all of these stories appeared on the front ‘pages’ of the respective websites, but *The Telegraph*, when they published their sole print story did not put it on the front pages of the newspaper, with the story being relegated to page number twelve, although the story was quite lengthy, with 634 words. The BBC used an average of 423 words per article, putting it well below *Telegraph.co.uk*, with 516 words per article, although this was mainly thanks to an article posted on the 16th of October, which tallied 1108 words, over 400 words longer than the second longest article, which was posted on the 13th and was 677 words long.

*The Telegraph* did not match *The Guardian* in output of articles. This is not surprising however; *The Guardian* was the only media outlet directly connected to the scandal through the court case against Carter-Ruck and thus was far more involved with the scandal than any of the other outlets. Out of the six articles the *Telegraph* posted, two contained Twitter as part of their headline, while three made mention of Twitter in the lede of the article.

### 4.4 Twitter: Importance and sourcing.

Variables A2, A3 and A4 were designed to study the importance of Twitter as a platform to the developing Traficura story. With the amount of coverage about the case on Twitter by the audience, it seemed that Twitter was a vital piece of the puzzle. This importance would translate into extensive coverage with regards to Twitter, but after analyzing all the pieces of content, Twitter was only explicitly mentioned as being of
vital importance in seven articles, five of these appearing on the pages of *The Guardian*, two of them in print. As the story developed, Twitter slowly faded into the background and was only described as vital in the content published during the first two days after the story broke. Going down a step and looking at Twitter being mentioned as important (A3), there is more coverage. Again, this coverage mostly stems from *The Guardian*, who classified Twitter as being important in thirteen of their pieces and eleven of these were published on the website. This could be explained by the fact that there was more room to elaborate and dedicate items to the platform and the selection process is done with less scrutiny than selection for online content. *The Telegraph Online* and the BBC combined for pieces of content. Even though Twitter was mentioned scarcely, it was still important, as there is far more coverage classifying it as important that there is where Twitter is only mentioned in the grander scheme of the Trafigura story.

What we see here is very much in line with previous research carried out by Arceneaux and Weiss (2010) who saw that Twitter was explained in news coverage between 2006 and 2009, rather than being explored. There was no need for this, as the audience did not seem to be too interested in Twitter itself. Hermida (2012;2013) only observed increased interest and coverage on the topic of Twitter post-2009, with the first ‘big’ year for Twitter being 2010, the year in which the platform started growing exponentially.

4.4.1 Headlines

Twitter, in itself, was mentioned fairly consistently throughout the two weeks studied. Although it rarely made headlines, with eight articles having Twitter in its headline, it came up in 31 articles, with ten articles using it in the lede and 21 articles mentioning Twitter more than once in the same article. When looking at the dates of articles published, it is safe to say that Twitter appeared at least once a day, if not more. Even though Twitter only made a few headlines, Twitter did make it to the opening pages of *The Guardian* on the 19th of October, when it was mentioned multiple times in a story on page 2 of the paper. Due to the way in which the websites of the respective media work, Twitter appeared on many media landing pages multiple times, as it not only appeared in headlines, but also in the ‘most read’ sections of both *The Guardian* and the BBC websites.
When Twitter made headlines, the content of the article was directly concerned with Twitter. However, these articles were not always tied to the Trafigura case. Sometimes, these articles were rather concerned with the mechanics of Twitter, explaining how the platform works with regards to retweets, mentions, trending topics etc. In *Tools of the Trade*, published online on October 26th, the focus of the article is on trending topics, what they are and the different ways in which trending topics can be followed. This observation is in line with Arceneaux and Weiss (2010), who looked at Twitter coverage in the press from 2006 – 2009 and came to the conclusion that the majority of coverage concerning Twitter was explanatory in nature. Due to the ‘new’ nature of the platform, a majority of the audience still seemed to be lacking knowledge about Twitter, hence why content published on the topic mostly contained explanations, rather than digging deeper into the usability of the platform for gathering or publishing information when mainstream media might be indisposed.

4.4.2 Importance

In 2009, Twitter was significantly smaller than it was in 2013, as has been made evident in the theory section of this thesis. Searching for just the keyword Twitter on the website of *The Guardian* shows a little less than 4000 hits in 2009, which includes article content and multiple uses of the word in the same article. Comparing this to the years 2010 – 2013, search results show 6860, 11,392, 16,342 and 9545 hits on the phrase ‘Twitter,’ showing how much Twitter has been in the news since 2009. This observation is in line with what Arceneaux and Weiss (2010) observed while conducting their study. The coverage on Twitter as a main topic during the two weeks that was focused on in this research was fairly minimal. There were only a handful of articles that specifically dealt with Twitter and how it contributed to the Trafigura case, while articles dealing with Trafigura and simply mentioning Twitter, if at all, were abundant. Twitter provided an anchor for these articles, while Trafigura was the main topic.

In 37 of the articles published, Twitter was of importance to the story (variable A2). When these articles are tied to Trafigura featuring in the headline or the lede, this number drops. In an article in which Twitter was of importance and Trafigura was

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19 Numbers found on http://www.theguardian.com/search?q=%22Twitter%22&target=guardian, consulted on 01/09/2013.
mentioned in both headline and lede, only six articles remain, four of which were published on Guardian.co.uk. When looking at Trafigura mentioned in the ledes of articles where Twitter was deemed of importance, this number increases slightly, to a total of nine articles. When looking at these numbers only related to Twitter’s importance, they hover at anywhere between 16.2 and 24.3 percent, but when looking at the entire picture this, in all cases, accounts for less than ten percent of all the articles published by the media outlets studied. Seventeen articles included Twitter, using it as a backdrop (variable A3) to the Trafigura story, recognizing that Twitter played an important role in the development of the case. The platform was only mentioned nine times when relating it to the larger issues at hand, being the toxic waste scandal in general or the freedom of press/speech (variable A4), often only mentioning Twitter once in each of these articles.

This is partially in line with the findings of Arceneaux and Weiss (2010) who concluded that content on Twitter was explanatory in nature more than anything else. However, considering what role Twitter played in this scandal, at least as an outside observer, the small amount of articles that had Twitter as its focus or as a major point is lower than expected. Twitter was in the news fairly consistently during the first few days, but quickly faded to the background. Trafigura, not surprisingly, was front and center during the two weeks studied, but was also rarely connected to Twitter.

The biggest takeaway from this research should be whether or not Twitter was really vital to the uncovering of this scandal. At the outset of this research, Twitter appeared to be of great importance to both the audience and the established media. It could be said that this story might have stayed buried had it not been for Twitter. Rusbridger’s tweet set of a chain of events that was unprecedented through a platform that was still relatively ‘unknown,’ at least to the majority of the audience, when comparing it to 2013. However, this vital role did not carry through in the reporting done by The Guardian and The Telegraph. Twitter was mentioned, and was discussed, both in online and in print, but only one article truly talked about the contributions that Twitter had in the uncovering of the scandal, being A Few Tweets and Freedom of Speech is Restored, published on Oct. 13th, 2009.

When it comes to how Twitter was perceived by traditional media, a duality can be observed. Skoler (2009) looked at whether Twitter would be the savior of traditional media, concluding that it is neither the savior, nor the platform that will lead to its downfall. Broersma and Graham (2012) observed an increased reliance on
Twitter by journalists, both to disseminate and access information. Twitter brings together the audience and is a filter for the ‘noise’ that is ambient news (Hermida, 2010) and is bringing a certain degree of stability to the information explosion (Hayes, 2007).

4.4.3 Sourcing

Following the notion of the smaller scope of Twitter in 2009 as identified by Arceneaux and Weiss (2010) and the growth of the platform since then, as identified by, for example, Hermida (2012; 2013), the platform inherently had a smaller reach than it does in 2013. This has led to the limited amount of times Twitter was used as a source. Out of the 80 pieces of content coded, there was only one article that contained quotes from Twitter. This article, Trafigura: A few tweets and freedom of speech is restored, appeared both on- (October 13th, 2009) and offline (October 14th, 2009) and contained the following quotes;

"Any guesses what this is about? My money is on, ahem, #TRAFIGURA!"; "Very interested concerned about this #trafigura / Guardian story the LibDems are planning to take action on this" and “Can it be true?” he wrote. "Carter-Ruck caves in! Hurrah! Trafigura will deny it had anything to do with Twitter, but we know don't we?"

The first tweet was published by political blogger Richard Wilson, the second by Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat Leader and the last was posted by comedian Stephen Fry. Out of the three quotes used, The Guardian only followed up with Wilson, arguably because he was one of the first to ‘break’ the story. These three tweets were added to the story to add color, as they really do not add crucial information to the story. This is in line with the conclusions given by Broersma and Graham (2013) who showed that well over 60% of tweets studied during their research were mostly added to stories to add color or express opinion. What is surprising here is that The Guardian chose to go with a political blogger as their primary source to add information to the story, rather than choosing politician Nick Clegg, as a politician traditionally holds more gravitas with the established media than a blogger does. One of the first articles published, Twitter can't be gagged, published October 13th, 2009, also substantially dealt with
Twitter, but did not source from it. Rather, it contained a video that showed the popular hashtags on the night of Rusbridger’s tweet.\textsuperscript{20}

Only six times was a source mentioned directly in the headline and only online; five times a source adorned the headline of \textit{The Guardian} and it occurred once in the Telegraph. Neither of the two print publications referred to sources in their respective newspaper headlines. When looking at ledes, this number is succinctly higher, with fifteen sources being mentioned by the publication, with \textit{The Guardian} again accounting for well over half of these mentions. These numbers on their own are fairly impressive, but when they are compared to the total number of articles published by each outlet, they are fairly small. Out of the 56 articles published online by \textit{The Guardian}, exactly 25\% made mention of a source in headline or lede. Only on two occasions were sources mentioned in both headline and lede. When looking at the rest of the articles, sources were mentioned far more frequently. \textit{The Guardian} mentioned a source in 38 of the articles, not counting headline and lede. Nine of these were in their print publication. The \textit{Telegraph} referred to sources four times in both of their outlets, three of these occurring online. The BBC mentioned sources in a majority of their articles, with sources being referred to nine times in a total of thirteen articles. These sources could all be considered to be expert sources. An example of this is \textit{Harriet Harman: Freedom to report the proceedings of the House of Commons is of 'great importance,'} published online by \textit{The Guardian} on October 15\textsuperscript{th}, 2009. Harman is a British Labour Party politician and was involved in the parliamentary discussions taking place. In this instance, \textit{The Guardian} directly referred to their source for their content in the headline as well as using a quote from her. Twitter, or twitter users, never made an appearance on any headlines, and were scarcely used as a source throughout.

Even though Twitter received some coverage, I had hoped for more extensive coverage on the topic of Twitter and the role that it played during the Trafigura scandal. This is because of the high volume of tweets sent and discussed by the Twitterati on the night of Rusbridgers’ tweet, as well as later into the timeframe. Next

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to this, there was only one article in which Twitter was used as a source, but even in that article, mentions of Twitter were limited. Other sources, such as politicians, biologists and environmental experts were more prominent. This is again explained through the smaller scale of Twitter in 2009. This bias towards expert, or established sources is one of the traditional values that is still upheld, and even though Broersma and Graham (2012) have shown that sourcing practices are changing to a more Twitter-based practice, this was not yet the case in 2009.
5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a succinct summary of the research will be given, the main findings and ideas will be outlined, limitations will be discussed and recommendations for further research will close off this chapter.

Previous research into social media showed that Twitter still occupies somewhat of a grey area when it comes to how it is used by traditional media. User numbers and the explosive growth of the platform show that the platform is gaining a solid foothold in the digital media landscape. To see how Twitter was portrayed in the media during the Trafigura toxic waste scandal in 2009, The Guardian and The Telegraph were the two outlets studied. By looking at the articles published in the newspaper as well as online, I set out to answer the following question; How did traditional media report on the use of Twitter during the uncovering of the Trafigura scandal? On the basis of this question, I formed a few sub-questions; how prominently was Twitter mentioned when compared to the prominence of other sources; what role did the audience play in the uncovering of the scandal; in what context was Twitter mentioned?

To answer this question, the on- and offline content of The Guardian and The Telegraph was analyzed within a two-week timeframe. A quantitative content analysis was carried out, analyzing 80 pieces of content as published between October 13th, 2009 and October 26th, 2009. The content was analyzed on the basis of 30 variables that ranged from the frequency of Twitter/Trafigura appearing in headlines and ledes, the context in which they were mentioned and what the focus of the published content was.

The analysis showed that Twitter was not widely covered in traditional media. At the outset of this study, simply by looking at what Twitter had achieved, I hoped for more coverage on Twitter, not only in connection to the case, but also in general. This, however, is in line with Arceneaux and Weiss (2010) and looking at growth numbers of Twitter leading up to 2009 and afterwards, 2009 seems to be the watershed year. From observations made during coding and the studying of article content, when there was coverage on Twitter, there was a lack of detail or the connection to the Trafigura content was unclear.

There is a mixed image present when trying to shine some lights on the results. The main part shows that Twitter was not that important or vital to the story, but the
facts show otherwise. Within hours of the Twitter barrage that resulted from Rusbridger’s tweet on the 12th of October, 2009, law firm Carter-Ruck had withdrawn its court summons and lifted the super-injunction. This, however, did not shine through in the coverage given to the case, neither by The Guardian nor The Telegraph. Twitter was mentioned, yes, and in some cases, such as Twitter can’t be gagged: Online outcry over Guardian/Trafigura order21, the importance of Twitter to the Trafigura case was mentioned, but this occurred only a handful of times.

Sourcing, in 2009, was not yet an everyday practice, and research done more recently still shows that there is a degree of hesitance when it comes to using Twitter as a news source (Broersma and Graham, 2013). Twitter has been partially normalized by professional journalists (Lasorsa, 2012) but is still looked at as a tool. Bruns showed how Twitter is used by individual journalists to garner attention to the media organization they work for (Bruns, 2012) and Kwak et al. see it as operating a grey area between social media and news media, a platform in an identity crisis that will have to choose what it wants to be if it wants to realize its true potential (Kwak et al, 2010).

What Twitter did succeed in though, looking at the content published, is providing the backdrop for tackling two larger issues in the media. One, the toxic waste dumping by Trafigura and two, it sparked a debate about the freedom of speech and press. Questions were raised in the media about how it was possible that a law firm could pose restrictions on the press with regards to regarding developments in British parliament. Questions such as this can show how a small amount of people can affect journalism and daily life in a significant way by means of social media, especially once platforms such as Twitter and Facebook become a bigger part of the digital media landscape.

The Trafigura case also showed that a small amount of people can affect journalism and daily life through social media. Citizen reporting was very small-scale during the selected timeframe, but had a tremendous impact, shown perfectly by Carter-Ruck lifting the super injunction on the night of Rusbridgers’ tweet.

It is clear, both from past research and this study, that Twitter was a lot less ‘important’ to traditional media than it is nowadays. Traditional media preferred to paint a broader picture with regards to the toxic waste scandal, providing their audience with stories of Trafigura, politics and freedom of speech rather than about Twitter and its contribution to the uncovering of this scandal.

5.1 Reflection and Recommendations

This study could be called a highly specific study. The timeframe was limited and the sample was limited to the content published by two media organizations. This study tried to look into how Twitter could/did play a role in the uncovering of the Trafigura scandal. However, to get a complete picture, more research is needed.

This research focused on content published during a two-week timeframe. It would be interesting to see the grander scope of things by incorporating interviews with persons directly or closely involved with the events as they transpired. Speaking to Alan Rusbridger or Richard Wilson could have shed a lot more light on the case, also with regards to how Twitter is reported on in the traditional media. This would incorporate a qualitative angle on the quantitative research carried out in this study.

What curtailed this research strongly is the lack of possibility to talk to/interview the audience members who were a part of that first Twitter barrage about their motivation for tweeting, retweeting stories and joining the discussion in the first place. Was the audience following a herd-mentality when retweeting a story because they saw it was trending or were there more elaborate reasons behind their Twitter behavior. This is an example of a question that could be asked for further research. This is also the reason why S.RQ 2 could not be answered in full.

While at the outset, it was hoped that Twitter would be used as a source in abundance, this proved to not be true. Coding for the different types of sources, traditional and social, would have given a more in-depth look into this research, however there was a lack of social media sources throughout the samples. Out of the 80 articles, only one article quoted directly from Twitter, with three short tweets being the result. These three tweets were recognized in the analysis.

There was also a structural limitation present in this study. At the outset of this study, Twitter seemed far more important than it turned out to be in the end. I pegged social media as the future for journalism, one of the only ways in which it could survive was to become one with social media, so to speak. The role of the audience...
was presumed to be far greater in the uncovering of the Trafigura scandal, but it proved to be, at least on the basis of the research carried out here, that the audience played a minor part.

There are a number of recommendations I have in order to improve this research and the case therein presented. The first suggestion to make this research stronger is to mirror the case of Trafigura against something more recent of similar nature. While not of the same caliber, the Arab Spring is a case to which this, or research of a similar nature, can be compared. Twitter at least partially replaced the role of journalists on the ground as it became one of the primary means of getting news into the country after the government enforced restrictions on the media.

This research could be expanded and strengthened by also focusing on material produced by the audience, either appearing on the website of The Guardian and The Telegraph or in the newspaper in one form or another. Next to that, blogs also could have played a large role in this case. Consulting those could yield valuable information with regards to how the audience responded and reacted.

Another way in which this research could be expanded is by comparing how Trafigura was covered in the news over a longer period of time, and not just during the two weeks chosen for the purpose of this research. Looking at the search results found during the coding stage of this research, Trafigura has been in the news numerous times and not always in a positive light.

5.2 Wrapping up: what is in store

Twitter has grown tremendously since hitting the market less than ten years ago. It is slowly becoming an intrinsic part of the social media landscape. 2009 was arguably the watershed year. However, even though social media use is increasing among journalists (Broersma, 2013), it still has a long way to go. Twitter is not ‘the’ future of journalism and not the only way in which the traditional media will be able to survive in the digital expanse, but it is one of the ways in which it can. The platform is neither the destroyer, nor the savior (Skoler, 2009), but it is at the forefront of a changing media world.

Due to the information explosion mentioned in this thesis, there is an overflow of information, leading to a change in the way news is produced. There will be, as Broersma and Graham look to the future, less time and money available for newsgathering and reporters have increasingly become aggregators, rather than
original producers (Broersma and Graham, 2012, 403). Social media platforms will be increasingly used as a source for stories, not only because it saves time, but also because of the multitude of sources available with the click of a mouse.

Social media is the current big thing, the talk of the day, but will it make all other means of news publishing obsolete? Not necessarily. The death of print and radio has been spoken about many times and the death of the newspaper is a topic that was already being discussed in the 1960s. Yet printed publications are still here, so is radio. The future will tell what kind of impact social media has and will have on traditional media. Right now, in 2013, social media is finally starting to play a part in media production, but these are only the first steps.
REFERENCES


Nah, Seungahn and Deborah Chung. (2012): “When citizens meet both professional and citizen journalists: Social trust, media credibility, and perceived


Appendix 1: Categorized Coding Scheme

Category 1: General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Date of article published</td>
<td>The date of the publishing of the article is important to this research to see how the story evolved over time.</td>
<td>First article in <em>The Guardian</em> was posted on October 13\textsuperscript{th} 2009, just after noon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Published in print</td>
<td>Some articles were published both in print and online, while others were exclusive to one platform. Aim of this is to see which platform focused on what topics.</td>
<td>“A few tweets - and within hours, freedom of speech is restored: Twitter users claim historic victory for the power of the internet after gagging attempt on routine act of journalism triggers race among bloggers to reveal all” (This article was also posted online, albeit in a little different form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> Published online</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>See above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> Length of article (in words)</td>
<td>The length of the article is important to see how much space was given to Twitter, Trafigura and the case surrounding it and what sub-topics were given more space both online and in print.</td>
<td>The shortest article online published on <em>The Guardian</em> website was 288 words long, the shortest in the newspaper; 305 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example Text</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td><strong>Twitter mentioned in headline</strong></td>
<td>If Twitter is mentioned in the headline, it is judged to be important by the media outlet/editor/journalist. ‘Twitter can't be gagged: online outcry over Guardian/Trafigura order’ – title for an online article published by <em>The Guardian</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td><strong>Twitter mentioned in lede</strong></td>
<td>If it is mentioned in the lede, the topic is still deemed highly newsworthy, even without being mentioned in the lede. With Twitter being mentioned in the lede, Twitter is a main part of the story. “Twitter users claim historic victory for the power of the internet after gagging attempt on routine act of journalism triggers race among bloggers to reveal all” published on October 13th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td><strong>Twitter mentioned in rest of article (apart from headline or lede)</strong></td>
<td>Even though not mentioned in the headline or lede, Twitter is still mentioned as part of the developing story and is still awarded a degree of importance. Twitter was mentioned several times outside of the lede and the headline. “On Monday evening, blogs and the social networking site Twitter buzzed as users rushed to solve the mystery of who was behind the gagging attempt…” October 13th, <em>Guardian.co.uk</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td><strong>Twitter or any derivative thereof mentioned more than once</strong></td>
<td>The frequency of Twitter or derivatives being mentioned shows how important Twitter is to the story (if it is Twitter, twitterverse, twitterati.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mentioned multiple times, the likelihood of it being important increases).

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Social media mentioned in headline</td>
<td>See Twitter variables. Social media is the general collective term. Its more ambiguous, but can still guide a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Social media mentioned in lede</td>
<td>See Twitter variables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Social media mentioned in rest of article (apart from headline or lede)</td>
<td>See Twitter variables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 3: Trafigura**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Trafigura mentioned in headline</td>
<td>If Trafigura is mentioned in the headline, it is judged to be important by the media outlet/editor/journalist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Trafigura mentioned in lede</td>
<td>If Trafigura is mentioned in the lede, it could be considered to be less important than when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Trafigura mentioned in rest of article (apart from headline or lede)</td>
<td>Trafigura still deemed important enough to be part of the story, but not important enough to be in the headline or lede.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The story of the Guardian, the oil trader Trafigura, the law firm Carter-Ruck and its super-injunction threatened to override centuries of parliamentary sovereignty.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Trafigura mentioned more than once in article</td>
<td>Frequency of Trafigura mention determines focus of story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On multiple occasions, Trafigura was mentioned multiple times in an article, especially when the focus of the article lay with Trafigura.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 4: Content**

<p>| P | Links to other related stories by means of hyperlinks | Links direct readers to other pieces of content. This is to see whether digital platforms use the means at their disposal to make sure the audience has easy access to other stories dealing with the same topic. (ONLINE ONLY) | Neither website linked to other content directly within the article, rather making use of the ‘tag’ functionality to recommend other articles in a sidebar of the website. |
| Q | Links to other related stories | See above, but link to outside sources, such as other | Neither website linked to other content directly |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>outside of own platform</strong></th>
<th>newspapers and blogs. (ONLINE ONLY)</th>
<th>within the article, rather making use of the ‘tag’ functionality to recommend other articles in a sidebar of the website.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>R Other type of media included in article (audio/video)</strong></td>
<td>With audio or video added to the article, other parts of the story are often highlighted within the same space. (ONLINE ONLY)</td>
<td>Several articles on both The Guardian and BBC websites have podcasts, radio pieces or video attached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S Focus of article on Twitter during case</strong></td>
<td>The focus of an article will allow to observe whether or not Twitter was deemed an important factor in the Trafìgurà case, according to traditional media.</td>
<td>‘Tools of the Trade: Twitter tracking’ as published on October 26th on The Guardian website is obviously about Twitter and what it means nowadays, connected to the Trafìgurà case by both time and topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T Focus of article on Trafìgurà and surrounding case</strong></td>
<td>The case is about Trafìgurà but this will allow the researcher to observe how the two different angles were used.</td>
<td>“How the Trafìgurà story came to be told” as published on October 16th on The Guardian website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U Focus of article elsewhere</strong></td>
<td>Some articles use Trafìgurà or Twitter and the case as a stepping stone, but focus on something else, such as the broader theme of freedom of speech.</td>
<td>“Free speech in parliament is precious, says Lord Chief Justice” published October 20th, 2009, dealing with the larger issues at hand rather than Trafìgurà or Twitter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V Page of article</strong></td>
<td>The page number on which The Guardian had two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the article was printed determines the newsworthiness of the case as judged by the editorial desk. (PRINT ONLY)

front page articles about Trafigura during the two weeks of the chosen timeframe.

### Category 5: Prominence of other sources (not Twitter)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>W</strong> Source in headline</td>
<td>If a source is mentioned in the headline, it is likely that this will be one of the only sources in the article, as the media outlet attributes great value to the source mentioned. Only sources that were not attributed to Twitter will be considered.</td>
<td>A few articles made mention of a Member of Parliament as a source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Source in lede</td>
<td>Sources in the lede often imply a story will go with one major source (just like with the headline) but it has the potential to include other sources as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y</strong> Source in rest of article (apart from headline or lede)</td>
<td>If a source is not mentioned in the headline or the lede, often it is a single quote, or even multiple, in order to add flavor to the story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Z</strong> Single source</td>
<td>A story with a single source (in this case traditional) runs the risk of being biased or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Multiple sources</td>
<td>Possibility of multiple angles inside one story. Sources considered were social and traditional sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 6: Context – How was Twitter Mentioned**

| A2 | Twitter classified as important in the article | In order to see whether Twitter was important to the Trafigura case, it is vital to see how Twitter was mentioned. | Outside of mentioning Twitter in the headline or lede, the content of the article itself can classify that the platform played an important part in the development of the case. |
| A3 | Twitter mentioned as backdrop | With this variable, Twitter was still deemed of importance, just not vital enough. | Twitter was occasionally used as a form of an anchor to discuss other topics, for example in *Trafigura, Twitter and Public Interest*, a letter to the Editor published on October 15th, which talks about multiple things, including the coverage of *The Guardian* on the subject of Twitter. |
| A4 | Mentioned because part of larger issue | Twitter mentioned in passing because journalist feels it belongs in the story, but does not give it any more attention. | In *Between the lawyers and the mob*, published on October 21st on *Guardian.co.uk* Twitter is only fleetingly mentioned |
while dealing with the topics of freedom of information etc.
## APPENDIX 2: EXCEL SPREADSHEET SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Link (ONLINE ONLY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Parliament and free speech: the right to know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Toxic Trail: How the Trafìgura story unfolded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>A few tweets - and within hours, freedom of speech is restored: Twitter users cl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Carter-Ruck: Firm that aims to 'nip in the bud' hostile press coverage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oil firm drops bid to gag Guardian over MP's question: Web users publish details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Brown calls for reform of super-injunctions: Justice secretary said to be investig</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>The lessons of Trafìgura: A mix of old media and the Twittersphere has blown aw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Carter-Ruck in new move to stop debate in parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Diary: It will be no holds barred; head to head, toe to toe. Even so, Jack, take it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>