

The Impact of Social Media on the Collection and Distribution of News in Ireland

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Television & Radio Journalism, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

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ABSTRACT

The advent of the internet and the smartphone have resulted in a paradigm shift in the way people communicate with each other and how they access and share news and information. The available data for Ireland shows that fewer people are getting their news from newspapers and TV since 2015. This downward trend shows no sign of changing.

This dissertation analyses how an event was treated on the different media platforms of a number of Irish news publishers over a one month period in 2019. The purpose of the study is to develop a greater understanding of the impact of social media on the collection and distribution of news in an Irish context. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted in addition to an interview with a media professional from Kinzen to accomplish this.

The research findings show that News publishers have a clear understanding of the altered social media landscape and have adapted by making use of new mobile technologies to deliver their news across many social platforms, all of which are available on smartphones. This is reflected by the significant increase in coverage on social media platforms. Only 15% of the articles reviewed could be seen to be content directly derived from social media sources.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CGI - Computer-generated Imagery

IPO - Initial Public Offering

M2M - Machine to Machine

MSM - Mobile and Social Media

RIDNR - Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of social media on the collection and distribution of news in Ireland.

The technical protocols behind the internet were built to support one-to-one and many-to-many communication. This is very different from the broadcast models (radio and then television) that had swept the world throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. It has taken almost twenty years for the full potential of those new technical realities of the internet to be realised and, even today, we do not know what further potential the internet holds. “Too much has changed already, both in infrastructure and adoption by the public, to ignore the inevitable paradigm shift looming on the horizon.” (Kalas, 2015) Fuelled by the growth of powerful platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, individuals are now able to create, collaborate and share their own media – often to the bemusement and sometimes to the annoyance of traditional news organisations, governments, and lawyers.

Social media has evolved to support the one to one and one to many communications channels. The aim of the research project is to explore the impact of social media on the collection and distribution of news.

The research approach is to consider this question from several perspectives:

1. How news is presented on social media
2. How one single event is reported across different platforms
3. Comparison of online and print headlines with social media posts (Facebook posts and tweets) across the content providers' platforms
4. The chosen event's news values

A secondary objective is to understand:

Timing of posting of articles on social media and print media

In his foreword to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (RIDNR) 2019, Professor Rasmus Kleis Nielsen discusses how journalism and journalists must navigate an ever-changing environment, "Journalism exists in the context of its audience". (Nielsen, 2019) For journalists and others engaged in the media business to survive they must first understand and then steer a path through the complex modern environment. To have any chance of success they must "have access to relevant, robust, independent evidence and analysis on how people across countries engage with and use news". (Newman, 2019)

HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN IRELAND

Social media has had a dramatic and lasting impact on the publication of news in Ireland. "As media technologies evolve, so do our methods of storytelling and delivery." (the *Irish Times* Trust | History & Values, no date) In 1994 the *Irish Times* became the first newspaper in the British Isles and one of the first of 30 worldwide newspapers to 'go digital' by establishing a web presence. In 1999 they began publishing their online edition on *Ireland.com*. In 2008 the paper integrated the print and online editions and moved from *Ireland.com* to the *Irishtimes.com*. The *Irish Times* has kept up to date by conducting analysis of their audience and how they should respond to changing demands from that audience. "To ensure a successful future, it is critical that the newspaper and website are developed as independent but complementary platforms". ('Irish Times' launches new epaper, no date) During 2012, the *Irish Times* launched a new look: they made changes to the paper including narrower pages, changed the font, colour-coded sections, greater use of photographs and graphics and more extensive, original journalism.

the *Journal.ie* was set up as an online-only news source in 2010, since then, the *Journal* has become the number one online news source in Ireland. The *Journal* group includes other online news sites including The42, and Fora, are among the most iconic of Ireland's digital brands. The *Journal's* Media family expanded in 2018 when Boards.ie, Ireland's largest online community forum, joined. Soon after, in 2019 the *Journal* launched Noteworthy, this platform works through crowdfunding and publishes in-depth investigative journalism based on ideas from members of the public.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE GATEKEEPERS

The main question is how social media has changed the collection and distribution of news. The classic view is that editors are the gatekeepers of information consumed by the general public, so how has social media changed the way the gatekeepers and journalists operate and how have they adapted to this.

Today journalists face challenges caused by new technologies. Journalism is experiencing considerable changes linked to social, cultural, economic, and technological transformations. The rise in citizen journalism, online commenting, and use of social media has meant that the traditional one-way journalistic communication stream is turning into a two-way conversation. Citizen journalism can be defined today as the collection of news by ordinary people who then use social media and the internet to distribute this news. “‘Citizen journalism’ refers to a range of web-based practices whereby ‘ordinary’ users engage in journalistic practices.”(Goode, 2009) This makes citizen journalism on social media a relatively new phenomenon that is enabled by the availability of technology, particularly smartphones. People do not see themselves as acting as citizen journalists when they post pictures and videos on the internet. These posts may not be newsworthy when posted at first but they can become newsworthy if they spread virally. This phenomenon can be seen where media organization now use footage and information gathered and offered by

citizen journalists. When an unexpected event happens it is often the case that the only live footage available of the event is from citizen journalists.

The research for this topic commenced with an examination of the influence of social media on journalism. The research explored the end-to-end process for journalism under various thematic headings. This research included topics from how journalism is taught as a subject in college/university to how the news is published. The approach was to break down the process of how news is gathered and published into its component parts (themes) and look for academic papers that explored each theme.

WHAT IS NEWS

While researching material for this dissertation the following question was considered; what is news? This question is not easy to answer as the concept of what constitutes news is changing. News can be described in many ways, such as; what people want to know as opposed what people need to know, or anything that is interesting, or something that tells you what is happening. A more formal way of describing news might be that news is information that is provided by professionals that are not advertisers or have a vested interest. One view is that news is the information that people need so that they can function in a democracy. The news media is often viewed as a body that is concerned with what is in the public's interest and that they serve as a watchdog and that their job is to expose deceit and wrongdoing in high and low places.

Mark Fowler, the former chairman of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) said "The public's interest, then, defines the public interest". (Fowler, 1982) Fowler's description is driven by the view that stories that have a greater market value could displace stories that have more news values.

The public sphere is an intangible concept that just helps us to think about and describe how 'news', in the broadest sense of the word, is distributed in the global society. McKee describes the public

sphere as “ a metaphor that we use to think about the way that information and ideas circulate in large societies.” (McKee, 2005)

In his article on how the public interest is served in the digital era, Kalas describes how (in 2015) television and radio were the more dominant technologies than social media and online publications. The Communications Regulator in Ireland (ComReg) produces a quarterly key data report on, among other statistics, the rate of take up of mobile subscriptions per head of population. This is called the ‘mobile penetration rate’. As of the end of quarter 1 of 2019 this rate stands at 129.1%, see ComReg Key Quarterly Data Q1/2019 in (Appendix 4) However this 129.1% includes mobile subscriptions, mobile broadband subscriptions as well as machine to machine (M2M) subscriptions. The pure ‘mobile’ penetration rate in Q1/19 was 101.3 %, up 0.3% from Q1/18. This means that, in Ireland, almost everyone has a mobile phone subscription, with some people having two. This is not to be confused with mobile phone devices, of which there are vastly more, sitting in desk drawers throughout the country. Therefore, we can probably say that the market is saturated. Many mobile subscription packages come with generous data allowances. The rate of acceptance of social media through the availability and adoption of mobile technology means that the media environment has changed and, as a consequence, dominance has probably shifted. “As the dominance shifts, so does the responsibility to serve the public interest.” (Kalas, 2015) He argues that the changes in technology coupled with changing media habits by the public will require new policies to be developed by those who are involved in the media business.

The data for Ireland in the RIDNR supports Kalas’ shift away from TV towards digital platforms, “the use of TV news has continued to decline by almost 10 percentage points over four years to 67%.”. (Newman, 2019) Meanwhile there is evidence that people in Ireland are more likely to use their smartphones than a computer or laptop. “In line with international trends, the use of smartphones continued to increase over the past five years, rising from 52% to 68%, while the use

of computers and laptops continued to fall". (Newman, 2019) These shifts will impact on students of media and on how journalism is taught in Ireland today.

The data in the RIDNR is derived from surveys of over 75,000 people in 38 markets including Europe and the Americas. Reuters has been producing this report since 2012 and the report has expanded more than sevenfold since its creation, from five countries in the first issue to 38 this year, since 2015. The data in the reports indicates that a high proportion of people in the more technologically developed parts of the world are using Facebook and Twitter as primary sources of news and information these days. "The opportunities for media consumption have expanded dramatically and become fluid, entering all social spaces and becoming an intimate part of our daily life". (Croteau, Hoynes and Hoynes, 2006) Fewer people than ever before buy newspapers and journals and, instead, get their news from social media and other online platforms.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be described as an internet platform that lets the users interact with each other with the help of user profiles, visual contents and writing. Safko and Brake describe social media as referring to "...activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media.". (Safko and Brake, 2009) In recent times social media platforms have been upgraded to include integrated calling systems as well as texting and other 'live' features. Gerbaudo explains how social media platforms were originally designed for personal media, where people could connect and chat with friends and acquaintances. The original purpose and core values of social media platforms were to facilitate people's engagement with their families, friends, and communities. Over the years social media has become an extension to the existing information systems of TV, press, and journalism. Gerbaudo even goes so far to say that the social media is used by the political system to manipulate

the information system for its own ends and is used “for all sorts of political ‘pseudo-events’.” (Gerbaudo, 2018) It is the place from which proclamations are launched, initiatives are announced, political speeches are recorded and broadcast, and all sorts of political controversies are instigated.

The following *Table 1* shows the various platforms that are used for social media and non-social media (digital platforms)

Social media platforms		Digital platforms
Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)		Online News Services (IrishTimes.com, Examiner, Her.ie, Joe.ie, Lovin Dublin)
Professional Networking Sites (Linked in)		Netflix
Facebook Messenger		Online News
WhatsApp		E-Mail
Viber		Spotify
Dating Applications (Tinder, Bumble)		Pinterest

Table 1: Social media and digital platforms

Because social media has evolved from a simple platform become an open and interactive public sphere, the traditional and “formerly distinct roles between sources, producers, and consumers of news and information are eroding.”. (Paulussen and Harder, 2014) Because social media is evolving so quickly governments and States struggle to put legislation in place to manage and regulate social media and so the “continuous streams of content can no longer be owned or controlled”. (Paulussen and Harder, 2014)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS ON THE COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS IN IRELAND.

The initial thoughts were to investigate whether the use of social media as a vehicle for collecting and distributing news has changed the way journalism is taught at third level and to explore if there was a correlation between the influence of social media on how news is collected and distributed (published). As the investigation progressed the scope of the literature review was expanded to include several other aspects such as the development of mobile phone technology, the Internet and Internet 3.0, the evolution of social media platforms, the rise of citizen journalism, fake news and the credibility of news derived from social media, news values, both old and new and the application of Audience Theory to social media content, among others.

This year, in the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019, it was pointed out that “..the government continues to examine the role of platforms in disseminating misinformation and over political advertising..” (Suiter, 2019) in the context of the Abortion Referendum and the Presidential Election

HOW JOURNALISM IS TAUGHT

Kothari and Hickerson explain how social media use had become essential for journalists. They explored how journalists use social media, and how mass communications programs incorporate social media into their course work. They completed a survey of 323 students and 125 faculties in various American universities to compare the use social media among faculty members and students for their personal lives and their college work. Their survey report showed that both students and faculty members used Facebook more for personal reasons. They also found that the main social media platform used by faculty members for class assignments was Twitter. A key

finding from their study was “that students' majors and faculty's experience in the industry influenced not only how they evaluated the utility of social media in coursework but also how they utilized various platforms in classes.” (Newman, 2019)

Mulrennan discovered through her research that journalism schools are under pressure to look beyond traditional teaching methods to prepare students for the post-internet, rapidly-evolving news landscape. As technology has evolved, “Journalists have used technology to achieve speed and increased efficiencies in the production of news since the 1850s”.(Mulrennan, 2018a) Mulrennan determined that there had been a paradigm shift, “radical shifts” (Mulrennan, 2018a), in both the way news was collected and the rapidity of the collection and assembly of the news. She considered that the wide availability of mobile technologies coupled with online platforms and a ubiquitously present internet had meant that journalists could go about their business in dramatically different ways. Journalist and media organisations could use these online platforms and mobile communications devices to gather news more quickly, create reports and transmit to their media headquarters where they could be quickly distributed via online platforms and social media. The media organisations are in a constant struggle to maintain revenues by developing new ways to distribute content against a background of falling print circulation figures. “The latest industry reports continue to paint a common picture of job losses, cost cutting and falling print revenues, against further adoption by advertisers of online platforms and news devices that are largely supplementary to broadcast but frequently at the expense of print.” (Mulrennan, 2018)

This led Mulrennan to undertake a study of journalism education and how it was responding to the changes in technology. She examined how AUT University, New Zealand was responding to technology changes by developing new social media course for journalism students. Heutagogy is the study of self-determined learning. The AUT University applied Participatory Action Research theory in a self-determined learning (heutagogical) (Hase and Kenyon, 2007) framework in order to redevelop a social media course for the students of journalism. “The findings form the basis of

recommendations across the wider journalism curriculum, and there are also implications for other areas of communication studies, public relations, and online or broadcast media.” (Mulrennan, 2018)

Mulrennan concluded that technology and media platforms were evolving so quickly that universities and other third level institutions teaching journalism could not keep up to date. A net-centric “heutagogical” (Hase and Kenyon, 2007), or student-determined, teaching approach enables students to acquire the skills they need to produce journalistic content using mobile and social media (MSM) for practical application when they transition into industry practice. This meant that institutions had to adapt or cease to be relevant because, by the time the curriculum was updated it was out of date. She goes on to recommend that the Journalism curriculum needs to be adapted by adopting self-determined learning as an integral part of the curriculum and a recognition given to the importance of MSM tools for evolving journalism. “These findings form the basis of recommendations on the adoption of a heutagogical framework across the wider journalism curriculum, where MSM are an essential requirement of the contemporary journalism practitioner.” (Mulrennan, 2018)

In her academic paper Hujanen looked at theories of journalistic ideals and critical discourse analysis. She gathered data through a series of interviews with European and African students studying journalism. She conducted case studies to investigate how journalism students redefine journalism ideals in the era of social media. What she found was that the students were redefining journalism in the conversations about open and collaborative journalism, accountable digital journalism, and challenging the ethics of journalism. This renegotiation of journalism meant a realisation that a previously self-governing journalism profession was moving more towards a more collaborative effort that included citizens. “An accountable and transparent news process and public awareness of the need for journalism ethics are vital.” (Hujanen, 2018) She concluded for the African students who participated in her study, in particular, that a significant result was

that journalism was a profession that was open to citizen journalists and people who had not studied to be journalists or had received any journalistic training.

ADVANCES IN TELEPHONE TECHNOLOGY

The changes in the way journalists gather and report news and the way this media content is distributed have been made possible and continue to evolve and improve because of technology enablers like smartphones, the Internet and social media platforms. "...more than any prior technology, the Internet has revolutionized communications".(Caroline, 2013) The telephone, and before that, the telegraph, have been used as tools by journalists since they were invented back in the 1800s. But, before the advent of smart phones, the telephone was just a passive tool that journalists used to convey the news, gathered by traditional journalistic methods, to the publisher. The Aborisade article gives a good insight into how telephone technology in a country that does not have an advanced communications network as might be seen in a more developed country has provided an enabler for people who are not professional journalists (i.e. citizen journalists) to spread truthful news. This is done without reference to mainstream media reporting of the same news events.

Aborisade's research explored telephone technology, he asserts that this technology stands the test of time. Since it was invented in 1876 by Alexander Graham Bell, it has remained the communications technology of choice. Originally the telephone was just a voice platform and the SMS (Short Messaging Service or text message) was added as an afterthought to the voice channel when the international standards for mobile voice technology platforms were being written and agreed. Since the advent of the internet and the development of other social media platforms the hand-held device we know as a mobile phone has become one of the most powerful enablers of citizen journalism. This article reports the major findings of a recent research, 'How Technology Transforms Citizen Journalism Business in Nigeria'. According to the research, Telephone

technology has over the years emerged a major tool with which ordinary citizens in Nigeria (without journalism and media background or affiliation) participate in the process of news gathering, reporting and distribution. Guided by the recent use of telephone around the world by ordinary citizens to make 'live' reports during protests through different social media outlets - Facebook, Twitter, Youtube. The article illuminates the evergreen nature of the telephone. The paper concluded that telephone technology has survived the test of time. Instead of becoming obsolete, the telephone has been used to blend emerging communications technology and social media platforms to improve the performance of both. (Aborisade, 2012)

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNET, WEB 3.0

The Internet is relatively young from a communications network perspective. It was being developed as a network for computers to 'talk' to each other in the 1980s and the World Wide Web was invented in 1990. But it was not until Facebook was launched in 2004, Twitter in 2006 and the first iPhone was released in January 2007 that we started to see social media having a real and direct impact on shaping (gathering) and sharing (distribution) of the news. In their article, Kolodzy et al, explore the emergence of the Internet, social media platforms, and digital technologies in the twenty-first century. This happy coincidence of technology and platforms has acted as a catalyst for an accelerated evolution in journalism and communication that fits under the broad term of convergence. The evolution changed the relationship between news producers and consumers. Kolodzy et al assert that the geographical boundaries in communities were broken down, and this change forced new organisational and economic models for news and information. They determined that, by looking back at the convergence that had taken place over the previous 12 years that there were valuable lessons to be learned, notably that there was "collaboration across media outlets to the integrated use of multiple media in collecting and delivering information" (Kolodzy et al., 2014) and that convergence facilitated the formation of new groups

of people who were not necessarily geo-located, "...the rise of emerging neo-communities not confined by place." (Kolodzy et al., 2014) They concluded that mass media had adjusted well to the changing environment but, in order to persevere and compete "those who teach and practice journalism and mass communication must implement sustainable innovation." (Kolodzy et al., 2014)

To understand the behaviours of journalists Gillis and Johnson conducted a national survey of how journalists used social media. They determined that older journalist were more inclined to use phone calls, interviews and emails and that "Social media use ranked lower as a newsgathering tool". (Gillis and Johnson, 2015) By contrast the younger journalists used "social media tools in newsgathering more often than did their older colleagues". (Gillis and Johnson, 2015) Nevertheless journalists give greater credence to the credibility of the source and their position in the hierarchy. Their respect stems from the news values that all journalist are trained to know and apply to stories derived from sources "such as known experts and representatives of political and business institutions, than to unofficial sources, such as ordinary citizens". (Paulussen and Harder, 2014)

Moore's Law is an observation made by Gordon E. Moore in 1965 about the way in which the number of electronic components (transistors) on a circuit board doubled every two years. Moore went on to become a co-founder of Intel, the giant computer chip manufacturer. His observation has held true up until about 2013 where there was a slight slowdown and now the number of transistors double every three years. These advances in chip technology has meant that the power of computers also roughly doubled every two years. The same speed of evolution applies to technology that supports media and the internet. Today, people speak about 'Web3.0'. The third stage of development of the Internet is said to be characterised by a change from people viewing static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content. The term Web 3.0 refers to websites that facilitate content generated by end users, they are easy to use and encourage people to participate and strive to have good interoperability with other systems and websites.

In his study, Revers describes how some of the most basic divides among professional journalists are brought out in to the open by Twitter. He explores what is news and how there is tension among journalists about what constitutes news, he discusses professional identity and public service. He argues that the tension between journalists arises from a need to exercise professional control over their material and a need to comply with an ethic of transparency. In his conclusion he discusses how journalists that he refers to as traditionalists and light tweeters and that "Traditionalists did not regard tweets as news.". (Revers, 2014) The tension among professional journalists arises because "Intense tweeters, on the other hand, saw a tweet as a segment within a flow of news discourse, which they assessed holistically." (Revers, 2014) Revers' research concentrated on a political press corps and included interviews, observation, and the analysis of tweets. He examined how reporters adopted Twitter as part of their everyday life. Because the Traditionalists and light tweeters thought of journalism as being subject to single set of rules, regardless of what platform is appeared on they felt that "Deviation from these norms on one level (or platform) meant undermining journalism as a whole." (Revers, 2014) His conclusions describes reasons why Twitter has been so successful in journalism, mainly because Twitter has been adopted into the everyday working practices of reporters.

Web 3.0 was facilitated by the advances in computer platforms and enabled the growth of social media. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter are all examples of media platforms that utilise Web 3.0. Liu et al. argue that the rapid advances in Internet technologies coupled with the increased number of users and resources means that Web 3.0 has become a favoured social media. Blogospheres are an increasingly popular social media that people use to voice their feelings and show their preferences. They (Liu et al.) were trying to understand and propose, through their study, a means for people to get access to useful information which might be either beneficial or of interest when faced with mainly new information or news pieces about popular issues. This is all the more difficult for the viewers where there are many more contributors and sources than previously. As an attempt to resolve this dilemma Liu et al. proposed the development of a new recommendation

approach that was event based. This approach would take into account a user's personal preferences as well as considering new and emerging events. This is an event-based approach to recommending article which considers event trend analysis as well as personal preferences. "Our recommendation methods improve recommendation accuracy by enhancing content-based filtering (CBF) and item-based collaborative filtering (ICF) with the event-based preference analysis." (Liu et al., 2015) Using this approach the event blogs that a user is offered are ones that have been analysed for both blog popularity and Google Insights-based popularity trend analysis. The result of their experiment showed that their suggested approach could choose blog articles to be recommended to users based on personal interests and event popularity.

CITIZEN JOURNALISTS

The next topic that was explored was that of citizen journalists and how they use social media. Citizen journalism has been around since people learned to communicate, "people have been chronicling activities since cave dwellers pictorially depicted bison on their cave walls and technology has facilitated mass communication since the Guttenberg press". (Caroline, 2013) An alternative definition for citizen journalism is the collecting and reporting of information via social media, public platforms and traditional news outlets, either by non-traditional sources or by the public. "'Citizen journalism' refers to a range of web-based practices whereby 'ordinary' users engage in journalistic practices." (Goode, 2009) Citizen journalists can therefore be viewed as a direct response to lapses in the performance of the traditional mass media role in the public sphere. Tools that were once exclusive to media professionals are now available to any member of the general public. Even though news organisations that use this 'direct response' get millions of eyes and ears on the ground, citizen journalists present a host of challenges for media outlets. Citizens' contributions pose a difficult, time-consuming and potentially risky process for publications.

Over the last few years websites and platforms are being used by people to create blogs and share their own content, anyone can become an author in these times, publishing articles and sharing their own content. The same trends were seen by Gillis and Johnson in the way younger journalists gather news and stories. Kothari and Hickerson explained how social media use had become essential for journalists. They explored how journalists use social media, and how mass communications programs incorporate social media into their course work.

The research conducted by Mills et al., explored how citizen journalist and social media influences the global media landscape. "The study comes as increasing numbers of news organizations and citizen journalism tools harness the power of smartphones to both collect and publish editorial content." (Mills et al., 2012)

The article examines how students and professional reporters collect and distribute media via a tailored publishing platform and asks whether this platform can create a seamless link between smartphone content production and newsroom-based operations. The paper considers how future platforms might develop and what new design methodologies could be used to facilitate improved content capture methods. They argue that this makes the case for ongoing and collaborative co-design. They outline that UCLan's School of Journalism, trialled Nokia Research Centre's technology with community users, professional journalists, and student reporters between 2009 and 2011. They used test locations such as Fort Bastion in Afghanistan, one in rural Kenya, and two locations in the UK, Preston and Manchester. This paper also looked at the tension that was created when new platforms were introduced to existing news flows. They also speculated on the development of a newsroom ecosystem where mobile phones could be integrated within standard working practices.

One of the conclusions that Mills and his colleagues came to was that the full capabilities of smartphones could be extracted when they were used as a communications and content generation hub. This would allow users to move forward from merely gathering content to being

able to edit, publish, and then establish some dialogue around the content when in the field and being away from the newsroom. They concluded that smartphones, with a data connection could perform all the functions of the newsroom, but independent of the physical newsroom. They found that the largest barrier to uptake was the lack of alignment between the development of the technology workflow and the integration (or lack thereof) with editorial processes.

In his article, Goode seeks to make a contribution to the research agenda for the effects that citizen journalism and social news has on democracy. He set out a broad concept for what citizen journalism was and was not. He describes it as; “(1) not an exclusively online phenomenon, (2) not confined to explicitly ‘alternative’ news sources, and (3) includes ‘metajournalism’ as well as the practices of journalism itself. Goode uses the term ‘code’ to refer to the “digital substrate underpinning these developments”. (Goode, 2009) This ‘digital substrate’ is the new media forms and various platforms in and on which news and journalism now increasingly circulate. Goode concluded that citizen journalism needed “new forms of gatekeeping and agenda-setting power within social news and citizen journalism networks”. (Goode, 2009)

Dr. Ylva Rodny-Gumede was interested in exploring the effects on journalism of social media through new technologies and the many available social media platforms. Her context was an emerging democracy with a new government in post-colonial South Africa. In this society there are large percentages of the population that do not have access to mainstream news outlets. She says that this emerging combination has “fundamentally changed the way in which the news media interact with their audiences and ultimately the role that the news media play in a democracy”. (Rodny-Gumede, 2017) In her paper, she went on to say that “questions must be raised as to what the real impact of social media is with regard to broadening the public sphere and in facilitating access to a wider audience and a more diverse set of debates.”. (Rodny-Gumede, 2017) She surveyed a mixed group comprised of South African journalists, and civil society and media advocacy groups. The survey indicated that there was potential for widening the public sphere but

it would depend for its success on how well the traditional news media and emerging media platforms could work together and how this alliance could reach a broader audience with a greater diversity of views.

Rodney-Gumede was of the opinion that access to social media was crucial to expanding the public sphere and without access to social media the debate may be confined to only those who have access to social media. She believed it was clear that traditional news media had an important part to play for a quality control in a new media sphere by the application of ethical standards and established codes of conduct. She also believed that social media could perform a balancing function through allowing different views and diverse voices, thus making it possible for ordinary people to have access to public debates that they might otherwise be denied.

She concluded that journalists and journalism in emerging democracies faced a multitude of problems ranging from reduced access to media caused by colonial language barriers, socio-economic effects and lack of investment “and the political will to provide access to new media through lower costs, and education that provides new media literacies.” (Rodny-Gumede, 2017)

In his article, Ionuț Suciuc discusses how emerging social networks and their evolution as sources of information has created the general feeling of a greater freedom of expression. He suggests that, because of the availability of social media and associated networks, “journalists are finally free because they no longer depend on media owners and the public has new options generated by these networks.” (Suciuc, 2018) He argues that the reduction of dependence on print and broadcast media has facilitated the distribution of information that is not fettered by traditional media sources. In his estimation social media has enabled “the ability to select information from a much wider range of offers; and the opportunity to make its voice heard by broad masses of people without the mediation of traditional media sources.” (Suciuc, 2018) Later in his article he goes into greater detail about citizen journalism and how it can have wide-reaching effects under certain circumstances. “The fact that social media networks have transformed any citizen into possible

journalists is no longer a novelty.” (Suciu, 2018) He describes the civil unrest and protests that took place in Ferguson, Missouri, USA following the shooting of an unarmed black man by a white police officer in August 2014. There were many demonstrations and police and protesters faced each other off. During the confrontation a citizen journalist captured footage of the events and “manage(d) to reach a live audience comparable to that of CNN, which would have been impossible without the distribution via social media networks.” (Suciu, 2018) This individual was not a journalist and had no journalistic training. He had bought equipment so he could show live music from local bars. He feared that the “mainstream media would not objectively cover the unfolding of the event” (Suciu, 2018) and so he decided to record the events and broadcast them himself via social media. When people lose confidence in mainstream media because of governmental interference or excessive control by an media owner who they perceive has an interest in serving large companies or politicians they may turn to social media, “social networks can be a useful instrument against censorship and that freedom of expression has reached limits unimaginable so far”. (Suciu, 2018)

He concluded that, while there are certainly benefits to social media, notably that restrictions on information imposed by the traditional media can be circumvented, there are also potential downsides. These risks include that social media networks may get to control and influence the news.

Suciu has not fully come down on the side of social media as being a replacement for the traditional media, despite all its failings. “the press remains the main source of accurate and in-depth information.” (Suciu, 2018) He is convinced that the best understanding of a subject can only be achieved by the thorough research and analysis that a professional journalist is trained to do rather than the more immediate but possible less researched outputs from enthusiastic social media contributors.

FAKE NEWS

Fake news is not a new phenomenon. “The creation and spread of fake news is a problem that seems ingrained in human nature.” (Burkhardt, 2017) Fake news has been around for as long as humans have been able to communicate with each other. Once the printing press was invented it became easier for people who had a particular agenda to create and distribute fake news for their own ends. In times of war, propaganda can be a powerful weapon used by each side. The capability to be able to manage what people know is a valuable asset in societies with less than democratic political systems and is probably just as powerful an asset in democratic societies. Because the Internet is an open public sphere with no moderation we are dependent on the owners of platforms to moderate content. Widely used platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram expend large amounts of money and commit huge resources to moderating, monitoring and ‘taking down’ content that does not comply with their standards. Even with these types of controls, content on the internet should be treated with caution. The technology exists today to edit direct messages (DM), videos, messages, audio files, photographs, computer generated imagery (CGI), etc. People used to say ‘the camera does not lie’. Now it does. The result of all of this is that people now believe that almost everything is fake.

“Fake news online is difficult to identify, its source is difficult to identify, and the means of making it stop are not yet known.” (Burkhardt, 2017) In the era of ‘fake news’ the credibility and accountability of news is increasingly important. In his article, He explores how media accountability to the public and professional stakeholders has been improving in recent years because of the increased use of digital platforms including online news portals, blogs and social media outlets. Acharya reviews media accountability literature and his article gives an overview of media accountability on digital platforms from various perspectives such as concept, evolution, current practices, key challenges, and role of audiences to make media accountable to the public. He asserts that digital platforms make news media more accountable to the public

because of their inherent characteristics such as; immediacy, transparency, global access, and interactivity. He also examines the question of whether these platforms do indeed provide improved accountability. He argues that media audiences who are citizen journalists use news media tools to engage with digital platforms “ help make online media accountable to public and professional stakeholders.” (Acharya, 2015)

In Bjarin’s article, he explains that one of the most significant threats to our democracy is so-called ‘Fake news’, he goes on to explain that this is not a new phenomenon. “It has been used for centuries to influence people’s thinking during elections, business deals, and more.” (Bjarin, 2018) He provides us with his ideas on how to deal with fake news, or as he called it: “propaganda that consists of hoaxes and intentional disinformation distributed in several media including newspapers, websites, and social media.” He is particularly interested in the ‘News Literacy Project (Bjarin, 2018) as this teaches young students concepts about news literacy with the use of the “Checkology virtual classroom”. (Bjarin, 2018)

Gerbaudo explores how social media and the internet is used in a political communication aspect, and goes on to explain why we should pay more attention to the emotions brought on from the reactions of social media, rather than fake news. (Gerbaudo, 2018)

In their essay Mason, Krutka, and Stoddard discuss fake news, democracy, and media literacy education . They describe how fake news is not a new phenomenon and that it has been around for a long time. They highlight that, today, fake news cannot be disassociated from the media platforms and technologies such as social media. “The issue of fake news has become very prominent in recent months. Its power to mislead and misinform has been made evident around the world.” (Mason, Krutka and Stoddard, 2018) In her essay, Burkhardt explains how fake news is far from being a new phenomenon but that the advent of new technologies and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram means that the way in which fake news is spread has changed in both magnitude and speed. These social media platforms are a quick and novel way

of spreading fake news but with very little control. “Algorithms known as bots are increasingly being deployed to manipulate information, to disrupt social media communication, and to gain user attention.” (Burkhardt, 2017)

New software programmes that can help to identify fake news are being developed. But this is sphere of programming is very new and “it will take time for programmers to create software that can recognize and tag fake news without human intervention.”(Burkhardt, 2017) Even if technology can help to identify fake news in the future, those who seek to create and provide fake news will also be creating the means to continue, creating a loop in which those who want to avoid fake news are always playing catch up. Individuals have the responsibility to protect themselves from fake news. It is essential that Society, as a whole, is taught to be critical consumers of news. Joanna Burkhardt’s article is specifically aimed at librarians who serve all age levels. “Library instruction in how to avoid fake news, how to identify fake news, and how to stop fake news will be essential.” (Burkhardt, 2017) The aim is to better inform librarians so that these librarians can help students to be aware of fake news and instruct them on how to heighten their awareness of fake news. Burkhardt says that, in the past, people were taught not to believe everything they read in the papers nor to believe everything they saw on television. She concludes with a new warning; “Don’t believe everything you see, hear, or read on social media.” (Burkhardt, 2017). In other words, a healthy degree of suspicion and a meticulous appraisal of the sources of news, including authors, publishers, and content will help the reader avoid the worst excesses of fake news.

Allcott and Gentzkow, explored fake news in the environment of political elections and the effects of fake news on US presidential campaigns. “Following the 2016 US presidential election, many have expressed concern about the effects of false stories ('fake news'), circulated largely through social media.” (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017) They assessed the economics of fake news through web browsing data, archives of fact checking websites and a survey. They came up with

several conclusions about fake news. One conclusion was that 14 percent of Americans used social media as their top source “social media was an important but not dominant source of election news”. (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017) They also found that stories that were known to be false were shared more, depending on which candidate was involved with “those favouring Trump were shared a total of 30 million times on Facebook, while those favouring Clinton were shared 8 million times”. (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017) Adult Americans saw, on average, one or more fake news stories prior to the election but “just over half of those who recalled seeing them believing them”. (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017) Finally, they concluded that people with ideologically segregated social media networks were “much more likely to believe stories that favour their preferred candidate”. (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017)

In their research article, Grinberg et al examined the spread of fake news during the 2016 election because of the concerns expressed by the public about social media and particularly, Twitter. They looked at registered voters to see how they shared fake news and they found that only a small percentage of these registered voters engaged with and shared fake news. The registered voters that were most engaged with fake news tended to be Individuals who “were conservative leaning, older, and highly engaged with political news.” (Grinberg et al., 2019) They determined that 80% of exposures of fake news stories could be accounted for by 1% of the sample examined and 80% of shared fake news sources came from just 0.1% of these voters.

Brummette et al explored the way the term ‘fake news’ had been politicised by the main and opposition parties. They considered how the term ‘fake news’ had been used through a combination of social network analysis, content analysis, and cluster analysis. What they found was that the term ‘fake news’ was applied in such a way that the conversation about whether an item was ‘fake news’ clouded logical discussions of the term. The study also showed that like-minded social media groups for opposing parties “use ‘fake news’ to disparage the opposition and

condemn real information disseminated by the opposition party members.” (Brummette et al., 2018)

Walters wrote in his article, about the then recent efforts by Russia to influence the American political system and particularly the presidential election through social media and fake news. He describes fake news as a vile creature that has “slithered out from the recesses of the web to ultimately become one of the greatest threats to civil political discourse.” (Walters, 2018) He places the blame for this threat on two factors. Partially to blame is the trend for consumers to move away from traditional news media to the increasing trend for news consumption from social media sites. He also holds up the First Amendment as a contributor to this threat. He states that the First Amendment contains many restrictions “including broad protection for false political speech, significantly limits the viability of most potential statutory and regulatory solutions to fake news”. (Walters, 2018) He decries the fact that it is difficult to fight against something that “even scholars cannot agree on a consistent definition for” (Walters, 2018) and that there is an amount of confusion about what fake news actually is. In his conclusion he suggests that the more recent fake news attacks “serve as a reminder that technology can develop in dangerous ways we do not foresee.” (Walters, 2018) Walter’s article is about creating a workable definition for fake news. Once this fake news definition and falsity standard has been agreed, courts and other media organisations will be able to apply the standard objectively and judge if news is fake or real. He describes a three part definition where fake news is content that sets itself out as news and which makes false claims, claims that can be checked, that events have happened and, finally, that these claims are made in a false manner. The combination of these three allow a falsity standard to be created. He also proposes changes to the federal Communications Decency Act to enhance its role in society's defence against fake news. He suggests that the “immunity that this statute grants to website providers allows them to wage the constant battle online against fake news.” (Walters, 2018), while simultaneously not violating any First Amendment restrictions.

AGENDA SETTING AND FAKE NEWS

Agenda Setting means the ability of the mass media to bring issues related to politicians to the attention of the public. The media devote more attention to an issue; the public perceives the issue as important. When the media take up a specific topic, such as an election they make the public think about it. McCombs and Shaw introduced the theory in 1972, in their study of the role of the media in the 1968 Presidential campaign in the US. They claim that since the mass media are a major source of political information for voters. The media can shape public opinion by bringing particular issues to the forefront of their reporting. "The mass media set the agenda for each political campaign influence the salience of attitudes towards the political issues." (McCombs, no date) They focused on two elements: Awareness and Information. They conducted a survey among undecided voters, asking them what they thought the key questions were in the campaign. Investigating the agenda-setting function of the mass media, they attempted to assess the relationship between what voters in one community said were important issues and the actual content of the media messages used during the campaign.

McCombs and Shaw found a correlation between public opinion and newspaper reporting the mass media exerted a significant influence on what voters considered to be the major issues of the campaign. Public opinion lagged behind media coverage and followed the issue importance that the media prescribed. "In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues – that is, the media may set the 'agenda' of the campaign." (McCombs and Shaw, 1972)

Agenda setting theory and fake news are closely related. Agenda setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. There are two basic assumptions underlying most research on agenda setting. These are that: the press and the media do not reflect reality, but that they filter and shape it, and; when the media concentrate on a few issues and subjects it leads the public to perceive those issues as being more important.

One of the most critical aspects is the concept of an agenda setting potential. Agenda setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the persuasive role of the media in generating and distributing fake news. “The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” (Dearing and Rogers, 1996)

NEWS VALUES

Although their research is now viewed as largely outdated, Johan Galtung and Marie Holmboe Ruge are credited with developing and codifying the concept of news values. Galtung and Holmboe Ruge were media researchers who, in 1965, set out “a systematic presentation of factors that seem to be particularly important (for news)”. (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) In their paper they analysed how crises in Cuba, Cyprus and the Congo were reported in four Norwegian newspapers and drew up “a simple theory and the deduction of some hypotheses”. (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) They isolated a series of conditions which have to be fulfilled before an event is deemed worthy of being selected, some of these are general conditions which have to be fulfilled before an event is selected for attention. They did this by looking at international news stories to establish what common factors they shared, and which of these factors put the particular news items at the top of the news agenda worldwide. The values they identified fall into three categories: Impact, Audience Identification, and Pragmatics of media coverage. Their set of news values were well used for many years for news-selection the world over but have largely been supplanted by newer theories. Harcup and

O'Neill's start off by reviewing their own 2001 updating of Galtung and Ruge's authoritative classification of news values from 1965. In this new study they propose a revised and updated set of contemporary news values that can be identified in published news stories. Table 2, below, shows the older and newer news values side by side.

Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965)		Harcup and O'Neil (2000)
Threshold		Entertainment
Frequency		Follow Up
Negativity		Bad News
Unexpectedness		Surprise
Unambiguity		Relevance
Personalisation		Magnitude
Meaningfulness		Good News
Reference to Elite Nation		The Power Elite
Reference to Elite Person		Celebrity
Consonance		Newspaper Agenda
Continuity		
Composition		

Table 2: List of 1965 and 2000 of News Values

In his book, John Hartley outlines how news depends for its effect on a culturally shared language and his book describes how to decode messages in the news without just reproducing the underlying assumptions. "Events don't get into the news simply by happening, no matter how frantically".(Hartley, 1982) For events to be classified as news they have got to be known and recognised, they have to fit in with other, existing news events. They should come from a representative source that is known and trusted. To be newsworthy these events must fulfil a certain number of criteria and therefore be seen as being seen as newsworthy. In summary he suggests that "newsworthy events must jostle for inclusion in the limited number of slots available." (Hartley, 1982)

NEWS VALUES REVISITED

In their study, Harcup and O'Neill explore the question 'what is news?' in the context of the future of journalism in the digital age. They explore news values in modern mainstream journalism and try to determine if and how news values have changed since they were first codified by Galtung and Ruge in 1965. Harcup and O'Neill found that, in general, potential news stories shared one or more common characteristics. When we compare Harcup and O'Neill's taxonomy to the original codification by Galtung and Ruge there are some similarities and, obviously, some differences can be seen in Table 2. It is worth noting that these values or criteria can be challenged. There are many other factors at work that include time and the availability of resources. News values for particular journalists and editors can be influenced by their education, social background, political ideology as well as the culture of their working environment. The target audience for the media as well as the Journalists position in the pecking order. All of these factors affect the ebb and flow of news, events that may appear to have similar news values may get different treatment and prominence. This is particularly the case for online news. In the online media world stories must get clicks and shares to improve advertising revenues, as this is what online platforms live off, very few people are willing to pay for news. This idea is explored in greater detail in the qualitative and quantitative analysis to follow. Harcup and O'Neill's produced an updated set of news values in 2017. All three sets are compared with the 1965 and 2000 sets of news values in Table 3. This table shows how news values have evolved from the earliest codification right through to the current taxonomy of contemporary news values that can be identified in published news stories.

In summary, "who is selecting news, for whom, in what medium and by what means (and available resources), may well be as important as whatever news values may or may not be inherent in any potential story". (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017) Harcup and O'Neill concluded that their new news value taxonomy could be seen and used as a tool for analysis and further research

Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965)	Harcup and O'Neil (2000)	Harcup and O'Neil (2017)
Threshold* ¹	Entertainment	Shareability** ²
Frequency	Follow Up	Exclusivity
Negativity	Bad News	Bad News
Unexpectedness	Surprise	Surprise **
Unambiguity*	Relevance	Relevance**
Personalisation*	Magnitude	Magnitude**
Meaningfulness*	Good News	Good News
Reference to Elite Nation	The Power Elite	The Power Elite**
Reference to Elite Person*	Celebrity	Celebrity**
Consonance	Newspaper Agenda	News Organisation Agenda* *
Continuity*		Follow Up **
Composition*		Entertainment**
		Drama**
		Conflict
		Audio Visual **

Table 3: Comparison of all News Values

They did not see their taxonomy as the definitive article in terms of news values but hoped that it would stimulate debate and further research. However, Harcup and O'Neill's assert that the answer to the question as to why a particular story is newsworthy may be that "It just is!" (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017)

SOCIAL MEDIA AND AUDIENCE THEORY

Everybody absorbs media differently but receive and process it in similar ways. Although the media in question in Audience Theory was probably intended to cover print and visual media, the same statement can probably be applied to social media. Over the years sociologists have tried to understand how people interact with the media and how those people make sense of the information presented. Various audience theories have been developed to try to characterise in some structured way what is happening when an audience is exposed to a particular piece of media. These theories are relevant when trying to understand how Audience Theory can be applied to interaction with social media. Before exploring the newer theories it is worthwhile taking a little

¹ News values that are starred * can be applied to the Maria Bailey case using the Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965).

² News values that are starred ** can be applied to the Maria Bailey case using the Harcup and O'Neil (2017) definitions.

time to understand how audience theories have evolved from the earliest known theory, the Hypodermic Needle or Silver Bullet Theory. With the advent of social media the audience have a far greater capability to shape what a piece of media becomes and, therefore, they are the most important component of any development process. The audience is constantly changing and adapting and becoming more active. Looking back to the earliest of audience theories it can be seen that, in the 1920s, the Hypodermic Needle Theory was one of the original media theories. This theory was developed in an attempt to explain how an audience might react to media. The Hypodermic Needle Theory postulates that individuals absorb media directly and passively with no thought of their own. It also proposes that the audience do not change or alter the message. It is as if it is just injected into them or fired into them as if by a bullet. Whatever the media suggest the audience believed to be true. The Hypodermic Needle Theory was developed in an era where radio and cinema were a new things. The Hypodermic Needle Theory is now generally held to be outdated, mainly because audiences have the ability to become more active. Paradoxically, there is an argument that the Hypodermic Needle Theory is very relevant to how people react to social media today.

Hall's reception Theory may well be applicable to social media audiences. Hall developed the theory of encoding and decoding. His approach to textual analysis focuses on how the audience may adopt negotiation or opposition to a piece of media. The Reception Theory has its origins in literature. It was in the 1970s that Stuart Hall adapted this theory to media communications. The idea of the theory is simple; media producers encode their texts with meaning. This is done through many different schemes. In the same way social media content producers may encode their texts with meaning.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview of research approach

In order to investigate the impact of social media on the collection and distribution of news qualitative and quantitative content analysis was conducted around a particular event over a period of one month on different media platforms that included print, online presence and social media in order to gain a micro level view. It would be difficult to gain an in-depth understanding of how social media impacts news publishing in Ireland from the study of a single event. Therefore, to better understand the impacts at the macro level a number of reports were reviewed, these include the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019 and financial reports from the *Irish Times* 2018, among others. By examining the available information at both the micro and macro levels this study facilitates inductive analysis in order “to generate patterns and themes, the fruit of qualitative research.” (Patton, 2005)

SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective involves performing a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the online and social media platforms from the perspective of:

1. How news is presented on social media
2. How one single event is reported across different platforms
3. Comparison of online and print headlines with social media posts (Facebook posts and tweets) across the content providers' platforms
4. The chosen event's news values

A secondary objective is to understand:

Timing of posting of articles on social media and print media

THE CHOSEN EVENT

The event that was selected for the study related to Maria Bailey's case for damages taken against the Dean Hotel as a result of alleged injuries involving a swing in the hotel lift lobby. The event became popularly known on social media as 'SwingGate' and got its own hashtag, #swinggate. A total of 60 articles were reviewed from three selected publications over a one month period from 22nd May to 22nd June 2019: in the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Examiner* and *Journal.ie*. For the same period the following social media platforms were analysed; Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. To get a spectrum of material for analysis a range of media content providers were examined. One of the publications that was considered in the earlier part of the analysis, but subsequently eliminated, was the *Irish Daily Mail*. This publication is a print based daily newspaper. The *Irish Daily Mail* has Twitter and Facebook accounts but no free online presence specifically for Ireland. Their free online platform is for the UK and USA. Their tweets show an image taken from the newspaper of the day, when a user clicks on the link to see more they are brought to a subscription page. This is called the paywall. Other online-only content providers like *Her.ie* and *Joe.ie*, both founded in 2010, were also considered for the analysis as they are clearly a product of the transformation of the content media by social media. However, the volume and content of articles relating to the Maria Bailey event on these platforms was not sufficient to have a material impact on the analysis.

WHY WAS THIS EVENT SELECTED?

The Reuters report shows that 64% (RIDNR) of those surveyed in Ireland use Facebook on a weekly basis and 21% use Twitter (RIDNR), this includes use for news over the period since 2014. During this period there have been many events or cases in the media that have had an increased level of interest and longevity due to social media. Prior to the advent of social media events like the Maria Bailey case had less exposure, probably because the avenues for people to make comment and show their outrage were restricted. These avenues were confined to: letters to the editor, making

representations to TDs, and, in extreme cases, some form of protest. Today, hardly a day goes by where there is not some newspaper article about an 'outrageous' claim for damages in the courts that is settled for multiple tens of thousands of euros. Most of these settlements have a single article across many platforms and then disappear from view. The Maria Bailey case continues to generate news articles, some from social media and some through the normal news channels. "...tweets do trigger news stories and are being used to add flavour to background stories ..."

(Hladík and Štětka, 2017) At the time of writing, some 2 months after the event, new articles are still being generated. The impact on social media was significant and images and videos about the event have been made into memes. Satirical signs have been put up beside a swing at the Taste of Dublin festival that mocked the Maria Bailey event.

The study involved a detailed comparative analysis of media reporting of the single event. The analysis was used to mine insights and determine findings about how social media was and is used in the collection and distribution of news in Ireland. The main part of the investigation involves the analysis a particular event to understand how it was reported on a mix of media outlets that have both print, social media, and digital presence and those news providers with exclusively online news presence by comparing the event on social media and the other news outlets. The comparison involved exploring how the event was reported in terms of the headlines and their social media posts and the relationship to the content of the piece as communicated on social media and other news outlets. This part of the research will allow an understanding how the same story is reported on different platforms of the same media content provider.

The specific comparisons included:

- How the content of the article relates to the social media posts and tweets
- Comparison of online and print headlines with social media posts (tweets and Facebook posts) across the Content provider's platforms

Qualitative research involves naturalistic inquiry by examining real life situations to develop “rich narrative descriptions and construct case studies.” (Patton, 2005) By means of inductive analysis across different cases the qualitative researcher is able to generate “patterns and themes, the fruit of qualitative research.” (Patton, 2005)

Qualitative content analysis is normally unstructured however the analysis was undertaken in a systematic manner through a review of academic papers on the subject, as well as a detailed examination of articles on the print and social media platforms. To place a structure on the qualitative data gathering the analysis looked for patterns that related both to the collection and distribution of news. The analysis examines data on where people get their news as well as a review of current and recent (within the previous five years) trends in how news consumption has shifted from newsprint to Facebook, Twitter, the *Journal*, and other exclusively online news sources.

ABOUT KINZEN

An interview was conducted with a media professional from Kinzen. Kinzen is a start-up technology company that helps citizens engage with the publishers who inform, inspire and empower them. “Kinzen originally started out as an IOS app.” (Appendix 5) Like most start-ups, Kinzen launched with a customer facing IOS app but since then it has pivoted in different directions, following “gaps in the market and scalable opportunities.” (Appendix 5) The original purpose of the app was to develop a customer service that would “aggregate news and information for the reader.” (Appendix 5) It is important to note that Kinzen is a content aggregator rather than a media content source. They do not have any journalists on their payroll who produce content, although they do use their journalistic experience. Kinzen employs a mix of machine and human curators to source and filter content to suit the users express preferences. They build tools for individuals and publishers to access and present personalised news and information. The aim was to allow users to “engage with news and online information in a holistic and healthy way. “The founders’ intention

was to deliver the “best quality news from trusted sources.” (Appendix 5) Their mission is to give back control of a daily media experience improving quality, relevance and productivity. Kinzen have a news distribution app, and are currently working on developing personal news products for publishers. They believe in generating engagements, trust and loyalty using only explicit intent signals from users and respecting their data and privacy.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The literature study focusses on academic material and studies that reference the impacts of social media. Although there is an amount of academic material available, a lot of it refers to the USA and the greater European markets, with less academic material that is specific to Ireland. The volume of data available that is specific to Ireland is relatively small. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019 provides a rich source of data across Europe and several other continents and contains a specific report for Ireland. A substantial portion of the qualitative and quantitative data content came from the social media and online news platforms.

From a methodology perspective, the qualitative and quantitative analysis asks two sets of questions; one targeting the use of social media from the collection perspective of news gathering and another set that concentrated on distribution aspects. A key challenge at the outset was selecting sufficient media outlets that had the range of print, social media and online platforms in Ireland.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

“tweets do trigger news stories and are being used to add flavour to background stories or analyses of the campaign”. (Hladík and Štětka, 2017)

The following is a list of articles reviewed across each platform during the research analysis:

the *Irish Times* :

- 33 articles reported in the *Irish Times*
- 16 tweets by the *Irish Times*.
- 11 tweets by the *Irish Times Political*
- 16 posts on Facebook.

the *Irish Examiner*:

- 15 articles published in the *Irish Examiner*
- 17 tweets with links to the article
- 11 tweets without links to the article.
- 12 posts on Facebook.

the *Journal.ie* :

- 12 articles on the *Journal.ie*
- 15 tweets by the *Journal*.
- 8 posts on Facebook.

HOW NEWS IS PRESENTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The research methodology included an analysis of the content media providers and their performance metrics in Ireland. This is to allow the detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of a particular media event to be considered in the context of the bigger picture. Social media provides platforms for individuals to share their passions and interests, comment, and give their opinion on

relevant topics and allows for readily available free content. With the rise of popularity of social media it was only a matter of time before the traditional news media took notice as they were seeing a steady decline in the circulation numbers for the print media, (Suiter, 2019) and Figure 1.

Print media, online presence, and social media have very different characteristics when viewed for the end user's perspective. In the first instance print media, which has had the longest life to date is a passive medium. The user must take an action to interact with the media. The user must purchase the newspaper from a location or have it delivered to their home or place of work. This is described as a 'pull' from the user's perspective and both the medium and the audience are passive. This form of media has been in steady decline worldwide and the trend is the same in Ireland as is shown in Figure 1 from the Reuters report. A drop of 12% from 2015 to 2018 (it was flat at 37% from 2018 to 2019) is the most dramatic representation of the decline of this medium.

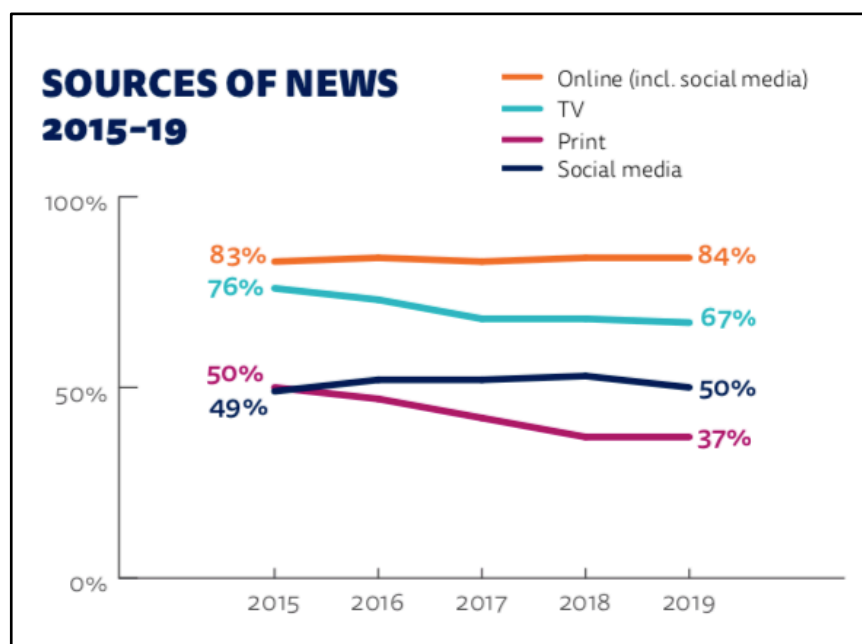


Figure 1: Sources of news in Ireland

(Source RIDNR'19)

the *Irish Times* was one of the first newspapers in the world to set up a digital platform in 1994 and has evolved this platform to a full online presence as well as the ePaper – a full digital version of the printed edition and a searchable archive. The *Irish Examiner* has a similar online presence and

an archive that can be searched back to 1841. The *Journal.ie* started life as an online newspaper in online-only news in 2010 , since then, the *Journal* has grown to become the number one online news source in Ireland. In the last few years the *Journal* group expanded to include other online news sites. From an end user perspective the online presence still requires the user to go to the website and seek out the content. The online medium is considerably more advanced than the print medium and easier for the user to access the content from any location with a mobile or fixed device coupled with a broadband connection. “The use of smartphones (as devices for news) continued to increase over the past five years, rising from 52% to 68%, while the use of computers and laptops continued to fall”. (Newman, 2019) See Figure 2.

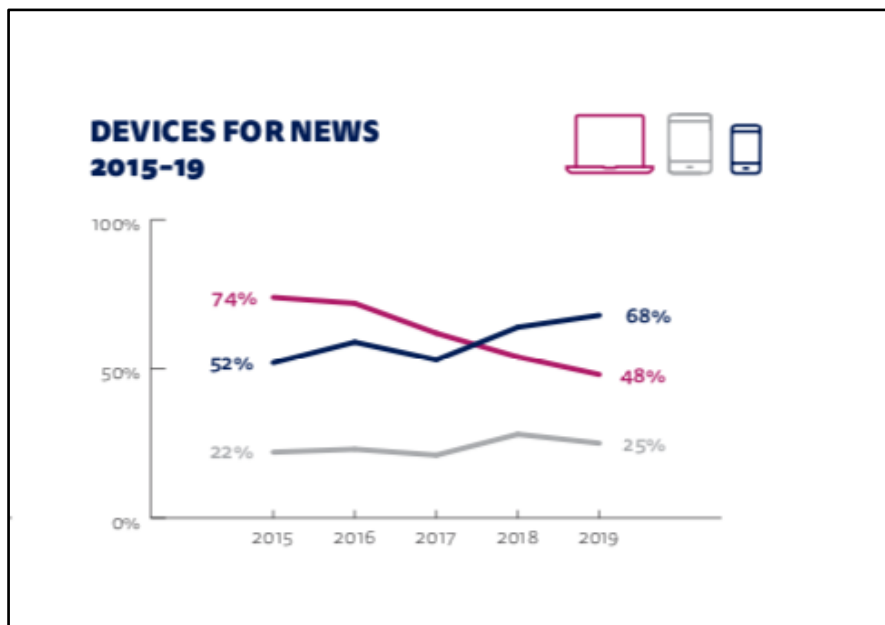


Figure 2: Devices for news in Ireland

(Source RIDNR'19)

Figure 1 shows that online consumption of news is mainly flat with a 1% increase from 83% to 84% over 5 years. Nevertheless the model from the user's perspective is still 'pull' and the medium is passive. The *Journal* had added a comments feature so the audience is now evolving from passive to active.

With the advent of social media the end users perspective of the medium morphs from passive and pull-only to active and push/pull. The progression of social media platforms starts when Facebook was created in 2004, YouTube arrived in 2005, Twitter came on the scene in 2006. Then there was a short gap of three years before WhatsApp was launched in 2009 and Instagram followed in 2010. These various platforms allow the user to comment on and share the news. The rise of social media has revolutionised how news is consumed. Social media in its short history has changed the way news is created and consumer. "social media not only added to the spaces where citizens can gain information, they are also sites that allow for political marketing, mobilisation, discussion, opinion formation, and sources news production and agenda setting." (Skogerbø and Krumsvik, 2015)

Social media has also created a situation where individuals are now getting news for free, they don't have to pay. The Reuters reports says that only 12% of people pay for online news whereas 36% of people share news. (RIDNR) Subscriptions are low but Ireland is slightly above the 9 country average³ of 11%. (RIDNR) This has impacted on traditional news publications who now have digital presence and social media to engage with their readers in the way readers want in order to drive increased revenues. "What we've discovered is that people are so used to getting news for free, people don't even pay subscriptions for newspapers, that trying to compete with free sources of news for an app that was not free, and no one had ever heard of, there was just no market or it, so we are going to have to open up that paywall at some point." (Appendix 5). Social media has become a popular, if not indispensable, tool for newsgathering whether it's political, sports, breaking news or celebrity style news. While social media is not the most credible source it is used now on a constant basis for breaking news and attracting readers to news stories. "news organisations are particularly interested in social media as a platform to market their news content, increase traffic to their websites and strengthen customer relationships, individual journalists take a more informal and personal approach: rather than promoting links to their published articles,

³ 9 country average includes US, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Japan, and Finland (from 2014 onwards) Source RIDNR 2019

they primarily use social media to talk about what they are working on, share opinions and ideas or for live-blogging.” (Paulussen and Harder, 2014)

News organisations that use a variety of social media platforms can present their product to the audience by diverse paths. These different methodologies allow the media content providers to deliver news to their audiences and interact with them in different ways. The primary news delivered by Twitter is based on who you follow and what they tweet and retweet. With Facebook the news you receive is based on what websites you look at, as well as what your Facebook friends view, like, share, and comment. Facebook also looks at who you follow and what they like, share and post. On Facebook you are offered a broader selection of news based on the criteria above. Facebook calls this ‘suggestions for you’.

Kinzen , who is a news aggregator, tried to change this approach and offer personalised news based on personal choices but found that the public were not ready for this and not willing to pay. Social media has allowed for more instant coverage of news. Breaking news is actually breaking news, instead of people having to wait for the newspaper/broadcast news to come out each day. People can now get news on the go and minute by minute updates.

The article entitled *Swing fall TD Maria Bailey says she won't 'bow down to keyboard warriors and bullies'* posted on the *Journal's* Facebook page was shared 96 times and had 828 comments. An article⁴ in the *Irish Times* entitled ‘*Miriam Lord: Fall gal Maria Bailey sees dark forces at play in rivetingly mortifying radio interview*’ was shared 191 times and received 321 comments. the *Irish Examiners* article, ‘*'This is an internal party matter' - Taoiseach may not publish Maria Bailey 'swing-gate' report*’ was shared 183 times and received 195 comments. From the preceding data it is clear that a user who did not directly follow any of the publications that were analysed during

⁴ The headlines of all the articles referred to are contained in the appendices

the research are quite likely to have seen the event publicised on their newsfeed. This is due to the sheer number of likes, shares, and comments that the story received on each article.

HOW THE EVENT IS REPORTED ACROSS DIFFERENT PLATFORMS

For this part of the analysis the various social media platforms that are associated with the chosen publications were explored. Some publications, like the *Irish Times*, have multiple Facebook and Twitter accounts. For the period of time analysed the number of articles that each publication posted across their different platforms and social media accounts about the chosen event, SwingGate, were noted. The results from this research are shown in Table 4 below.

Publication	No. Articles written in the timeframe	No. of Tweets about the Event	No. Facebook Posts
the <i>Irish Times</i>	33	27	16
the <i>Journal</i>	12	15	8
the <i>Irish Examiner</i>	15	28	12

Table 4: Event statistics

Instagram is a popular application and was examined as part of the research, but the Instagram platform posted no material on the Maria Bailey case during the period examined.

The findings in relation to shares and comments is supported by *Figure 3*, which shows that Facebook occupies the lead position in Ireland for social media by a large margin.







TOP SOCIAL MEDIA AND MESSAGING				
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
 1	Facebook	37%	(-1)	64%
 2	YouTube	17%	(-1)	60%
 3	WhatsApp	15%	(+2)	58%
 4	Twitter	12%	(+1)	23%
 5	Facebook Messenger	9%	(-)	44%
 6	Instagram	7%	(+2)	31%

Figure 3 : Ranking of social media platforms in Ireland (Source RIDNR'19)

The chart shows that Facebook is in top position with 37% of respondents choosing Facebook for news in Ireland. The chart also supports (at 12%) the research finding of relative lower number of retweet activity on Twitter. The traditional means of delivering news (i.e. print and broadcast) have both fallen in real percentage terms since 2015, (RIDNR) meanwhile social media and online have risen slightly in the same period as shown in Figure 1.

The research shows that the Maria Bailey event received far more coverage because of social media than if confined to print and digital presence. What differentiates the social media platforms from digital and print media is “the social aspect of it.” (Appendix 5) Social media has “changed the way in which people engage with news and information and has set the precedent for the ways which people expect to be able to engage with online news and information.” (Appendix 5)

True social media platforms allow people to comment in a public forum and by allowing this they can influence and change the news. This ability to comment allows people to express their feelings about a particular event. They can enter into conversations and debate with other online users

about a topic. In the Maria Bailey case a single post on the *Journal's* Facebook page got 823 comments. In her interview with Sean O'Rourke Maria Bailey said "The reason it took such great traction here is I am the subject of click bait, so it was trending so well and I have to say, 'well done' I handed them a fantastic headline. I accept that." (Clarke, 2019)

In this instance the level of activity on social media actually changed the news. It is clear to see from the research the way in which Maria Bailey was influenced to drop her proceedings against the Dean Hotel was because of the “hugely distressing, intrusive, abusive week.” (Clarke, 2019) this directly related to the comments on social media platforms.

The RIDNR for 2019 states that 21% of people in Ireland comment on news via social media or website. Perhaps the most attractive and compelling characteristics of the *Journal* for their audience is this ability to make comments and this is reflected in the fact that the *Journal* has a weekly online reach statistic of 32% , placing it in second place after RTE News online, See Figure 4. This is despite the fact that the *Journals* scores 6.27 out of 10 for brand trust in 2018, see Figure 5. This places it below the median value in the table at tenth out of fifteen.

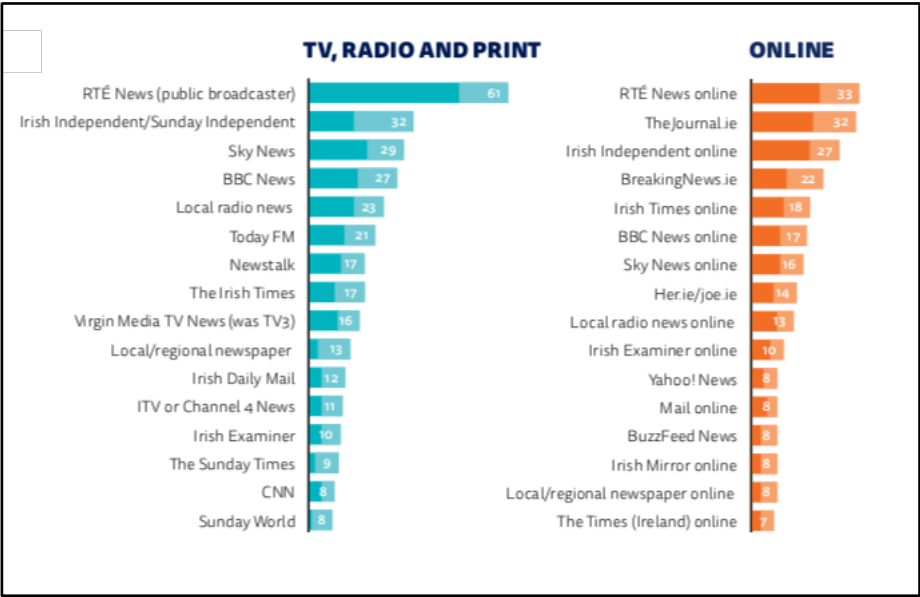


Figure 4: Weekly reach offline and online in Ireland (Source RIDNR'19)

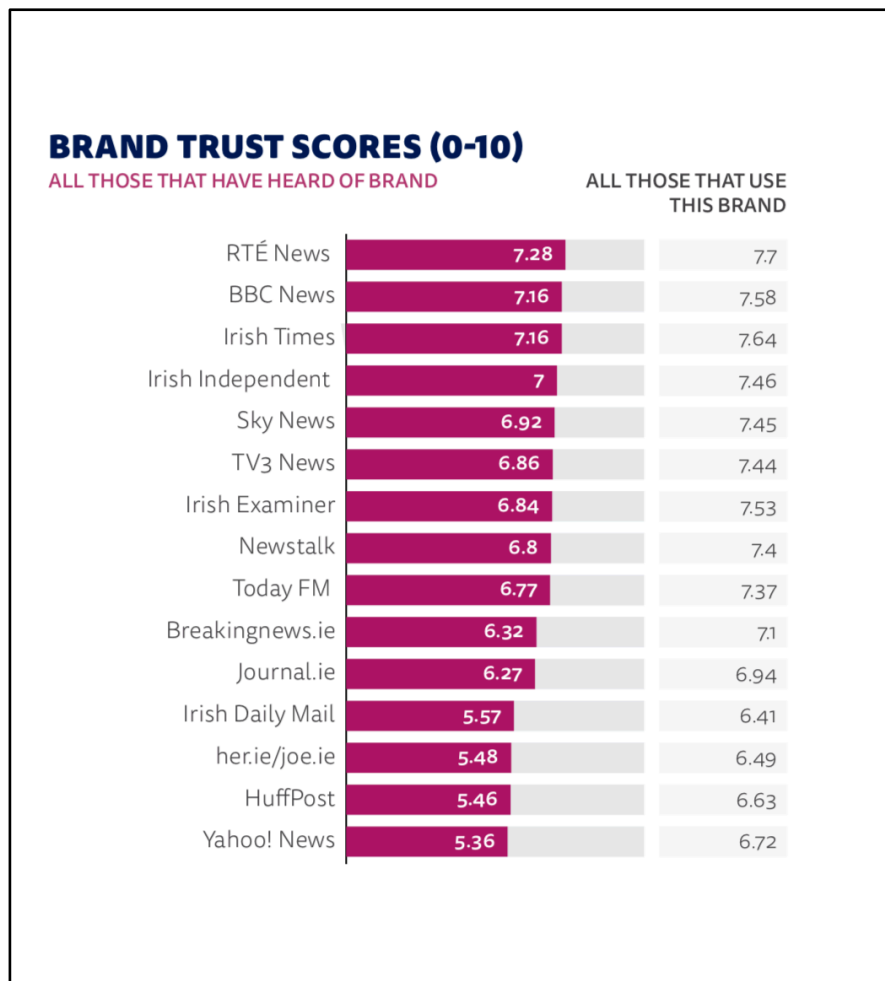


Figure 5: Brand Trust Scores

(Source RIDNR'19)

From the analysis of the research the *Journal* posted the least number of articles about this event. This study has concluded that the addition of a comment function provides a powerful driver for people's usage. This conclusion is possible because it can be seen from the Reuter's report that the *Journal* is the online platform with the greatest reach, i.e. most used by people in Ireland and a low brand trust score, see Figure 5. The metrics in the research and the Reuter's report shows that people find that being able to comment and shape the news carries more weight than the concerns they might have about trust values for the news platform.

COMPARISON OF ONLINE AND PRINT HEADLINES WITH SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS (FACEBOOK POSTS AND TWEETS) ACROSS THE CONTENT PROVIDER'S PLATFORMS

MEDIA PLATFORMS

Before the study was undertaken, a question was: why does one article have so many different titles to headlines, tweets, and posts across the same media content provider's platforms. Why does the *Irish Times* post 3 three different social media posts for the same article when there are four articles to choose from? In conducting the research for this analysis the social media accounts that are associated with the online presence for the particular publication were reviewed. The journalists who authored the articles may also have posted under a different article title but these were not examined as the purpose of the exercise was to understand the behaviours of the publisher across their various media content platforms and not the behaviour of the individual journalists. Journalists who post separately from the publishers website can voice more opinions about a particular stories which they might not have been able to write about in their published article. "Twitter is increasingly used by journalists as a personal news wire" (Paulussen and Harder, 2014)

Case 1: Irish Times, 27th May 2019.

Two tweets and a Facebook post, all with different titles, appeared at different times in the @IrishTimes Twitter account and Facebook account that were linked back to a single article on IrishTimes.com on one day. The first tweet referred to former Minister Michael McDowell and a comment he had made in the Seanad. The second tweet referred to the current Minister for Health, Simon Harris, and this tweet inferred what looked like a different article/context. The Facebook post was different again in that this post referred to a statement by Maria Bailey herself. The timing of these social media posts could lead the user to believe that there were different articles to be viewed. On the same day, the 27th of May the *Irish Times* had actually published four different

articles relating to the event, yet they chose to make multiple postings of one single article. The four headlines in question are set out below. When the content of the article is examined relative to the posts and tweets the relationship varies. In some cases the post/tweet would have been more appropriate to one of the other published articles.

Headline: The article headline on *IrishTimes.com* linked to the Twitter post was: *Maria Bailey says leak of swing case was 'planned' to maximise damage*

Tweet 1 @ 12.01 pm; *Former minister for justice and attorney general Michael McDowell has rejected the suggestion that he 'should have known better' than to comment on Maria Bailey's personal injury case in the Seanad*

Tweet 2 @13.15 pm; *An interview given today by Fine Gael TD Maria Bailey regarding her withdrawn "swing" case claim "very much seemed to be in the space of blaming lots of other people", according to Minister for Health Simon Harris*

Facebook post May 27th; *Recounting the incident, Ms Bailey said she sat on the swings: "I had my beer in my hand and then I was reaching for my friend's, she had a bottle of wine... I then found myself on the floor."*

This repetition of multiple social media postings that relate to a single article elsewhere on *IrishTimes.com* is not a one - off event. The research analysis found that a second such series of repeated postings on social media for a single article occurred on 3rd June 2019 in relation to this event. The headline in the *IrishTimes.com* for this second multiple posting event is *'Hotel hands over file on Maria Bailey swing case to FG reviewer.'*

Case 2: *Irish Examiner*, 27th May 2019.

In conducting this piece of research the *Irish Examiner* social media platforms were analysed to determine if a similar pattern of repetitive posting that related to a single article was present.

Online Headline; *"I will not be ... bullied by keyboard warriors": Maria Bailey defends position in withdrawn swing case*

Tweet May 27th; *"I will not be ... bullied by keyboard warriors": Maria Bailey defends position in withdrawn hotel swing case*

Facebook May 27th; *Fine Gael TD Maria Bailey has vigorously defended her decision to sue the Dean Hotel for injuries she received after she fell off a swing.*

In the case of the *Irish Examiner* the tweet is almost identical to the article headline. The research shows that this is the normal pattern for the social media platforms associated with the *Irish Examiner*. The Facebook post, on the other hand, has a different headline but it is clear that the difference in the posts related to Maria Bailey's perspective. The content of the article in this instance related to the chosen headline in the Facebook post. This Facebook post is a statement relating to the article's content which was a radio interview between Maria Bailey and Sean O'Rourke. This means that, for the *Irish Examiner*, the posts are substantially the same as the target article.

Case 3: *Journal.ie* 27th May 2019.

Headline; *Swing fall TD Maria Bailey says she won't 'bow down to keyboard warriors and bullies'*

May 27th tweet; *'That is an invasion of my privacy and humanity has been crossed' - Maria Bailey told @TodaySOR*

Facebook; 27th May : *"Due to the unbelievable abuse, I wasn't able to go home for three days last week because journalists were sitting at my home. That is an invasion of my privacy and humanity has been crossed."*

The pattern for the *Journal* is similar to that of the *Irish Examiner*. The *Journal* only posted one tweet and one Facebook post per article when issuing posts on social media. In these two cases the tweets and posts are substantially the same. The *Journal* tweet has less characters but the content is identical in nature. The Facebook post had significantly more detail than the tweet, but they relate well to each as well as to the content of the article. The research showed that this pattern was repeated throughout the *Journal's* Facebook posting, tweets and article headlines for the event during the measured time period.

From the analysis it is clear that the *Irish Times* places more emphasis on generating more posts on Twitter and Facebook. This would imply that more effort is being expended on the social media activity in order to drive more hits on their online platforms.

Where relationships between the headline and the content on social media is weak or non-existent this type of activity is called clickbait. The general purpose of clickbait is to generate clicks and hits on a website so that advertising revenues can be increased.

In the Reuters Institute Digital Report for 2019 Newman discusses the role of email and other mobile notifications (like Twitter) in driving loyalty, and consequently revenues. "Generating more direct traffic to websites and apps is an important priority for publishers....". (Newman, 2019) The table of top ranked social media and messaging platforms in Figure 3 shows that Facebook occupies the top position in Ireland with 37% of respondents choosing Facebook for news. The *Irish Times* has multiple Facebook pages for different topics including news and politics. The *Irish Times* published the most articles during the chosen period on the Maria Bailey event and posted many of these articles on Facebook. When a reader clicks on the Facebook page they are brought to the

Irish Times digital platform. The reader can only read five articles per day without a subscription. The increased social media activity may be a way to encourage users to sign up for a subscription to enable more articles to be read. Twitter occupies the fourth slot in the ranking and the *Irish Times* tweeted 27 times about this event. The tweets also bring you back to the digital platform when clicked. Newman says that “Different content is now selected for different day-parts and also at weekends, while readers are being targeted individually with relevant content driven by artificial intelligence algorithms.” (Newman, 2019) This may account for the multiplicity of postings for the same article.

Peter Hamilton, writing in the *Irish Times* about the group’s performance for 2017 said that *Irish Times* financial reports for 2017 showed a return to profitability and that “The group performed well in 2017 with continued development of the digital revenue base...”. (Hamilton, 2018) He points out that “Digital revenue showed further growth of 8.7 per cent with subscriber numbers of 68,078 at year end.” (Hamilton, 2018) In the same period advertising revenues fell by 11.9 per cent. The findings from considering these three aspects is that the *Irish Times* is successfully using social media to point readers at their digital platform in order to drive increased subscription revenues as the advertising revenues continue to fall. This finding is supported by Newman where he discusses how “News organisations are increasingly looking to subscription and membership or other forms of reader contribution to pay the bills in a so-called ‘pivot to paid’”. (Newman, 2019)

THE EVENT’S NEWS VALUES

The research shows that when the reaction to the event was analysed using news values it emerged that the Maria Bailey event was characterised as having at least 11 out of the 15 of Harcup and O’Neill’s revised (2017) news values (refer to Table 3, showing the updated news values). Whereas, when analysed using the original set of Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965) news values, there were

7 of the 12. This event scores highly using either Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965) or Harcup and O'Neill's revised (2017) set of news values. The critical finding in this case is that this event carries substantially more news values, probably because of the effects of social media, than it would have had prior to the existence of social media.

The 'shareability' of this event on different social media platforms was examined. On the 27th of May an article entitled "Swing fall TD Maria Bailey says she won't 'bow down' to keyboard warriors and bullies" in the *Journal.ie*'s Facebook page was shared 173 times and had 823 comments. The same article was only shared six times on *Journal*'s Twitter account. Similarly in the *Irish Times* on the 28th May one article was shared 191 times on Facebook. The *Irish Examiner* posted a Facebook article on 12th June and this was shared 183 times. Prior to social media, the shareability of such an event may have been limited to word of mouth, people sharing newspapers, or other newspapers picking up and repeating an article about an event. Because of the filtering effect of news organisations in the past an event like this may not have even made the evening news on radio or TV.

The series of articles relating to the Maria Bailey case during the time period were analysed to determine how many of Harcup and O'Neill's revised (2017) news values could be attributed to the collection of articles. The results of this analysis is shown below for the news values that applied to the event.

Shareability: *Stories that are thought likely to generate sharing and comments via Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media*⁵.

This news value is met and is possibly the most potent news value for this event. The amount of sharing, commenting, liking were major contributory factors as to why this event held the public attention for so long and generated such high feelings.

⁵ The definitions for these news values are Harcup and O'Neill's 2017 taxonomy

Surprise: *Stories that have an element of surprise, contrast and/or the unusual about them.*

Many people were taken by surprise that such a case was going to court in the insurance - claim related environment of Ireland.

Relevance: *Stories about groups or nations perceived to be influential with, or culturally or historically familiar to, the audience.*

Maria Bailey was a sitting TD in the ruling party in the Government when the case came to light.

Magnitude: *Stories perceived as sufficiently significant in the large numbers of people involved or in potential impact, or involving a degree of extreme behaviour or extreme occurrence.*

The story broke in the final week before a local election and generated a feeling of outrage among the population.

The Power Elite: *Stories concerning powerful individuals, organisations, institutions or corporations.*

A local TD in the ruling Government party is part of the Power Elite.

Celebrity: *Stories concerning people who are already famous.*

Maria Bailey was already well known locally and nationally

News Organisation Agenda: *Stories that set or fit the news organisation's own agenda, whether ideological, commercial or as part of a specific campaign*

Exposure of perceived incorrect or unfitting behaviour is on the agenda for most news organisations

Follow Up: *Stories about subjects already in the news.*

The story continues and is still generating news articles and content on social media.

Entertainment: *Soft stories concerning sex, showbusiness, sport, lighter human interest, animals, or offering opportunities for humorous treatment, witty headlines or lists.*

This event generated a significant amount of schadenfreude across social media and on the infotainment news platforms.

Drama: *Stories concerning an unfolding drama such as escapes, accidents, searches, sieges, rescues, battles or court cases.*

There was huge speculation about whether the case would proceed to court and then when the case was dropped the speculation was about whether Maria Bailey would be sanctioned by her political party.

Audio Visual: *Stories that have arresting photographs, video, audio and/or which can be illustrated with infographics.*

The event continues to be used to generate hilarious videos and memes on social media.

In addition the research confirms that the news values developed by Harcup and O'Neill's revised (2017) are a good fit with the social media context of today's news industry. These revised news values have adapted to the way in which the news industry had adapted to social media.

CONTENT DERIVED FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

“sources make the news” (Tiffen *et al.*, 2014)

When discussing social media as a source for material for a news aggregator like Kinzen the media professional who was interviewed said that the most credible thing about using social media as a source is the “social aspect of it.” (Appendix 5) She went on to elaborate by saying that social media has altered radically the way in which users engage with news and information and (it) has now

become the de facto way for people to consume online news and information. The fact that social media has become the “cultural norm” (Appendix 5) means that any (news aggregator) product or service has to take this into account in their development plans. Social media has altered the media content landscape for the better; there is increased social engagement, news is more democratic, and more people can access the news, as well as for the worse because publishers now both demand and rely heavily upon clicks and other quantifiable metrics like open rates.

This part of the analysis looked briefly at the credibility of content derived from social media and fake news, this also applies to the next section on timing of postings on social media and other platforms. Since the internet evolved to being the place where everyone looks for information on any topic people have been encouraged to not believe everything they read there. To combat this problem Bajarin encourages people to “start with the kids” (Bajarin, 2018), meaning that, as a society, people need to educate themselves not to “believe everything on the Web and share it widely.” (Leetaru, 2019) This new adage applies in particular to social media where speed and the ability to ‘go viral’ are highly prized attributes. In order for us to deal with fake news, consumers are to be encouraged to use a combination of healthy scepticism and technological assistance. To arrive at a situation where content derived from social media is acceptable and more commonplace we “must emphasize verification and validation over virality and velocity.” (Leetaru, 2019) Storyful was set up to act as a news verification site and say about themselves “Challenged by the speed of content creation and consequent disinformation, the world’s leading news agencies rely on us to verify and identify news and trends.” (*Storyful - The world’s social media intelligence agency*, no date) We saw in the literature review that younger journalists used “social media tools in newsgathering more often than did their older colleagues”. (Gillis and Johnson, 2015) Nevertheless journalists give greater credence to the credibility of the source and their position in the hierarchy. Their respect stems from the news values that all journalist are trained to understand and apply to stories derived from sources “such as known experts and representatives of political and business institutions, than to unofficial sources, such as ordinary citizens”. (Paulussen and Harder, 2014)

Part of the feeding frenzy that fuelled the social media activity around the Maria Bailey case, was that she had posted a photo of herself having run a 10 km mini-marathon some three weeks after falling off the swing in the Dean Hotel. This generated a lot of outrage that was highly visible on social media. This intense period of social media activity and the ensuing distress for Maria Bailey is one of the reasons that ultimately led to her decision to drop the case. In the interview on RTE the following passage was broadcast; “Sean O’Rourke: Why have you decided to drop this case? Maria Bailey: ... this has been a hugely distressing, intrusive, abusive week that the family and I have succumbed to, completely unwarranted...”(Clarke, 2019)

Many articles were examined over multiple platforms and, of these, only three of the sources for the content could be clearly identified as having come from social media. The three instances are described below.

If it were not for social media, this item would probably not have surfaced or have been reported on. Maria Bailey herself uploaded the photo on to one of her social media accounts, Twitter. The members of the public would probably not have learned about this 2015 run if social media was not involved.

The research showed that Shane Ross, the Minister for Transport, uploaded a photo of himself on a swing in a Dublin bar on the 31st of May with the caption *‘Enjoying a safe swing in the Goat Bar yesterday after canvassing’*. This was then reported across all the news platforms. This content was clearly drawn from social media.

One of the articles reviewed as part of the qualitative analysis of content can be seen to be a direct result of Sophie’s social media account. Sophie’s, the rooftop restaurant in the Dublin-based hotel at the centre of the Maria Bailey case, uploaded a tweet in response to photos of the swing being removed and added; *‘The picture taken of the swings being removed yesterday was for a private hire event. We have no intention of removing the swings from Sophie’s, don’t worry.’*

This analysis concluded that there were only three specific instances where content derived from social media became the source for a news article that followed. “news is produced through a series of interactions between news organisations and their socio-cultural environments.” (Tiffen *et al.*, 2014)

TIMING OF POSTING OF ARTICLES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PRINT MEDIA

During the research portion of the investigation an important secondary finding for the impact of social media on the collection and distribution of news surfaced while comparing headlines, posts, and tweets across different platforms. This finding is specific to media content providers in Ireland that have multiple platforms including social media, online presence and print media. Since the *Journal.ie* does not produce a print edition this does not apply to them. The research analysis showed that articles posted on social media had linked to the online platform where the article could be read in full. The article then appears in the print edition the following day. The article is usually verbatim but with a slightly different headline. The substantive finding is that social media users gain access to breaking news in real time, whereas the print reader gets the news the following day. This is particularly important in the case of unexpected or traumatic events. The downside of this is that there may be a greater exposure to news that has not been treated with due diligence and verified properly. “Fake news online is difficult to identify, its source is difficult to identify, and the means of making it stop are not yet known.” (Burkhardt, 2017) People crave the speed and virality of breaking news which are the technological advantages derived from the internet and social media but in satisfying these needs they may sacrifice their want for truth. The question arises, does the immediacy and virality of social media content trump the traditional news values?

In the interview with the Kinzen employee this question was discussed. Kinzen had received criticism for the fact that they were not providing breaking news fast enough or the most current news. They quoted the example of a client who was satisfied with the news from Kinzen and that it was “always really interesting and it provided him with, insights into all different areas and different countries.” (Appendix 5) However, the client felt that he was missing out on immediate news that was happening locally in Dublin. The client gave the example that the climate strike in Dublin was not shown to him on Kinzen but that it was all over his social media. The consequence and the shortcoming is that validation of the item is being derived from other people tweeting about it. This is difficult for a news aggregator like Kinzen to compete with and they struggle to find a solution to this problem.

In the final analysis, digital falsehoods are not generated by social media platforms but by people who wish to spread false news for their own ends. “The creation and spread of fake news is a problem that seems ingrained in human nature.” (Burkhardt, 2017) To combat this, it is essential to educate people to question everything that they read online.

The fact that users who receive social media notifications can see and read breaking news as it breaks is one of the most significant impacts of social media on the distribution of news in Ireland but users of social media would be well advised to exercise caution.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

News is part of everyday life, the advances in technology has enabled people to consume news every minute of every day by different means. The research findings show that News publishers have a clear understanding of the altered social media landscape and have adapted by making use of new mobile technologies to deliver their news across many social platforms, all of which are available on smartphones. All of the publications examined have Facebook and Twitter accounts to support their online and print platforms. The *Irish Times* and the *Irish Examiner* have multiple social media accounts to provide news on Sport, Politics, etc. These adaptations have a direct correlation with the impact of social media.

From the literature review it can be seen that all aspects of journalism have been affected by social media and not just the collection and distribution aspects. The effects range from how journalism is taught (Mulrennan, 2018), through to the tension among professional journalists as to whether tweets are news, “Traditionalists did not regard tweets as news.” (Revers, 2014) Twitter has been adopted successfully by journalists, mainly because they have incorporated Twitter as a tool used in their everyday working practices, including for ‘live’ reporting.

The analysis showed that for the publications examined there was more social media coverage than other media types. A total of 60 articles generated 106 social media posts across their associated platforms. This level of activity for a single event in one month shows that the publishers are putting more effort into using social media platforms to respond to how their readers wish to consume news. In making more use of social media the publishers are changing their business model. This conclusion is supported by the literature review where “Digital revenue showed further growth of 8.7 per cent with subscriber numbers of 68,078 at year end” (Hamilton, 2018), despite a fall in revenues from advertising and an Ireland-wide drop of 12% for print media for the period since 2015. (RIDNR)

The results of this analysis show a significant impact that social media has had on both collection and distribution of news is the timing of when and how news is presented. By making greater use of social media the news publications have a vehicle where they are able to update news stories instantaneously using posts and tweets. The social media platforms also allow the reader to reply and comment immediately. The reach of a news story has increased as highlighted by Newman and Suiter in the literature review, the analysis of the data in the study supports this as seen in the numbers of shares (96) and comments (823) for a single article. News is now fast and instant, if you are not posting, tweeting or sharing at the moment a story breaks, you're probably going to miss it. The news organisations examined can be seen to have a clear understanding of this and have changed the way they distribute news, every story is treated as breaking news and people are encouraged to consume news the same way they consume social media posts. "Publishers (who) are learning how to use alerts more strategically – and not just for breaking news." (Newman, 2019)

From this study it is apparent that the ability for social media users to comment in real time on a news event confers on them the ability to change the direction of the news story. The level of activity on social media during the Maria Bailey event actually changed the news. It is clear to see from the research that Maria Bailey was influenced to drop her proceedings against the Dean Hotel because of the "hugely distressing, intrusive, abusive week" (Clarke, 2019), as evidenced by the number of comments and shares visible on social media. The fact that the case was dropped because of social media activity clearly shows that social media had an real impact in this case.

The research showed that only 12% of individuals in Ireland pay for their news (RIDNR). Social media has had a greater and more positive impact on distribution of news than on collection of news in Ireland. There are now a multitude of ways to consume news from a variety of platforms via a myriad of devices. Media content providers are trying to get news consumers to 'pivot to pay' but, for the moment, 88% of respondents choose not to (RIDNR). "most people are not prepared

to pay for online news today and on current trends look unlikely to pay in the future, at least for the kind of news they currently access for free”. (Newman, 2019)

The results of the analysis show that it is difficult to establish a concrete link between a social media source and a resulting article. In the research study only 15% of articles from a sample size of 60 across all platforms could be definitively traced back to a social media origin. Each publication in the review used the same three sources. The identifiable social media content was all from Twitter and consisted of a photo posted by the Minister for Transport, another was a photograph uploaded by Maria Bailey and the final one was a tweet from the Dean Hotel.

“The founders’ intention was to deliver the ‘best quality news from trusted sources’.”(Appendix 5)
In this instance the evidence shows that, although minor, social media sources contributed to the generation of news articles across all platforms analysed and influenced the eventual outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

An investigation into the newsworthiness of social media as a news source.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TABLES

Social media platforms		Digital platforms
Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)		Online News Services (IrishTimes.com, Examiner, Her.ie, Joe.ie, Lovin Dublin)
Professional Networking Sites (Linked in)		Netflix
Facebook Messenger		Online News
WhatsApp		E-Mail
Viber		Spotify
Dating Applications (Tinder, Bumble)		Pinterest

Table 1: Social media and digital platforms

Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965)		Harcup and O'Neil (2000)
Threshold		Entertainment
Frequency		Follow Up
Negativity		Bad News
Unexpectedness		Surprise
Unambiguity		Relevance
Personalisation		Magnitude
Meaningfulness		Good News
Reference to Elite Nation		The Power Elite
Reference to Elite Person		Celebrity
Consonance		Newspaper Agenda
Continuity		
Composition		

Table 2: List of 1965 and 2000 of News Values

Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965)	Harcup and O'Neil (2000)	Harcup and O'Neil (2017)
Threshold* ⁶	Entertainment	Shareability** ⁷
Frequency	Follow Up	Exclusivity
Negativity	Bad News	Bad News
Unexpectedness	Surprise	Surprise **
Unambiguity*	Relevance	Relevance**
Personalisation*	Magnitude	Magnitude**
Meaningfulness*	Good News	Good News
Reference to Elite Nation	The Power Elite	The Power Elite**
Reference to Elite Person*	Celebrity	Celebrity**
Consonance	Newspaper Agenda	News Organisation Agenda* *
Continuity*		Follow Up **
Composition*		Entertainment**
		Drama**
		Conflict
		Audio Visual **

Table 3: Comparison of all News Values

Publication	No. Articles written in the timeframe	No. of Tweets about the Event	No. Facebook Posts
the Irish Times	33	27	16
the Journal	12	15	8
the Irish Examiner	15	28	12

Table 4: Event statistics

⁶ News values that are starred * can be applied to the Maria Bailey case using the Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965).

⁷ News values that are starred ** can be applied to the Maria Bailey case using the Harcup and O'Neil (2017) definitions.

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES

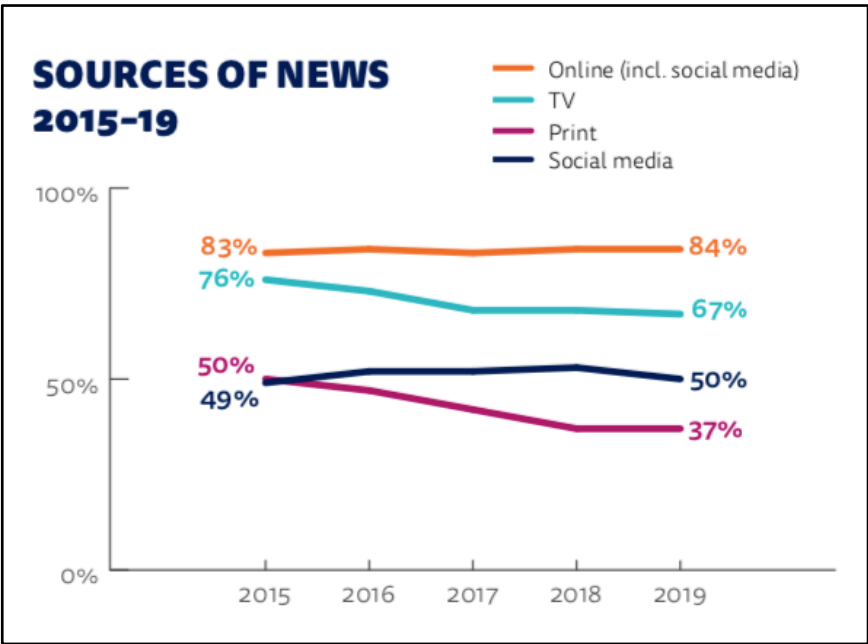


Figure 1: Sources of news in Ireland (Source RIDNR'19)

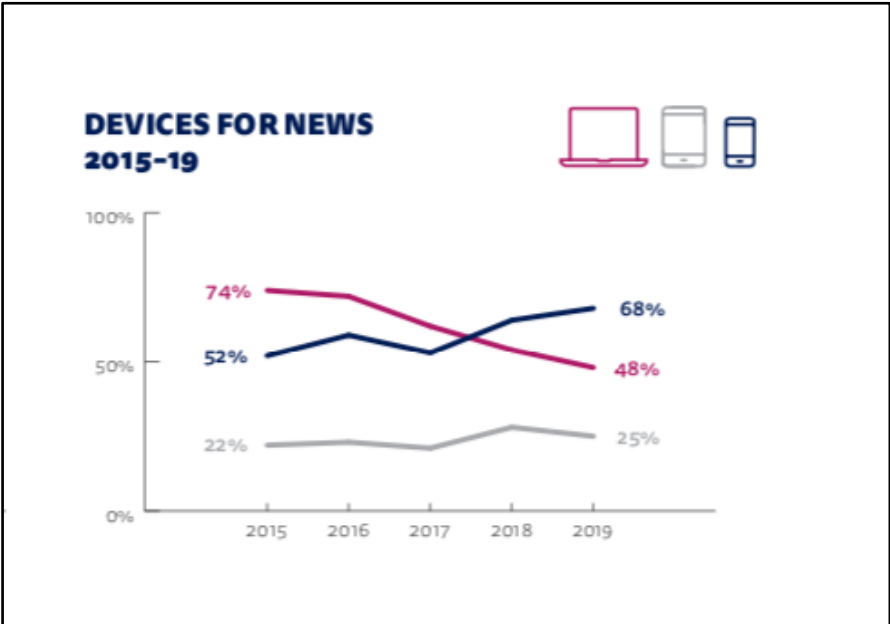


Figure 2: Devices for news in Ireland (Source RIDNR'19)







TOP SOCIAL MEDIA AND MESSAGING				
Rank	Brand	For News		For All
 1	Facebook	37%	(-1)	64%
 2	YouTube	17%	(-1)	60%
 3	WhatsApp	15%	(+2)	58%
 4	Twitter	12%	(+1)	23%
 5	Facebook Messenger	9%	(-)	44%
 6	Instagram	7%	(+2)	31%

Figure 3 : Ranking of social media platforms in Ireland (Source RIDNR'19)

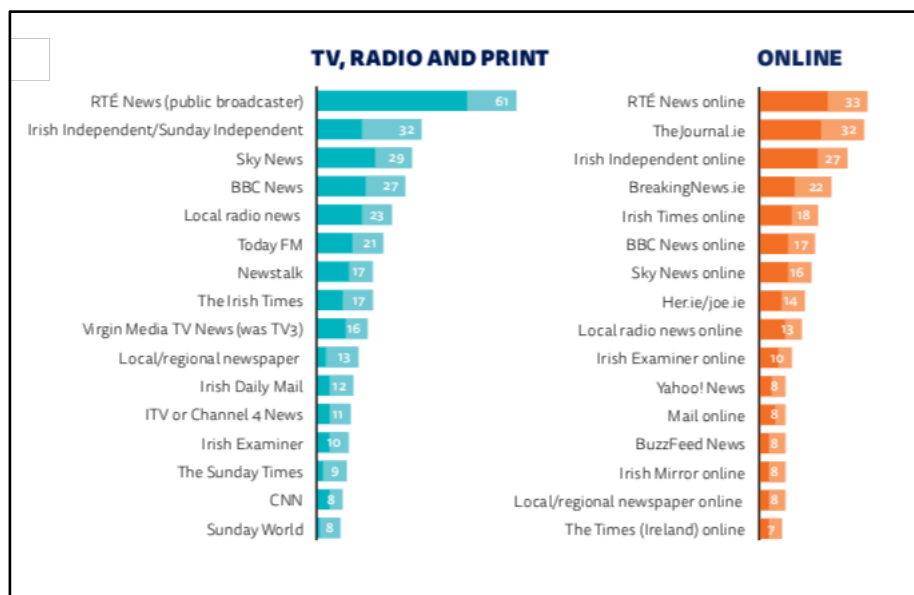


Figure 4: Weekly reach offline and online in Ireland (Source RIDNR'19)

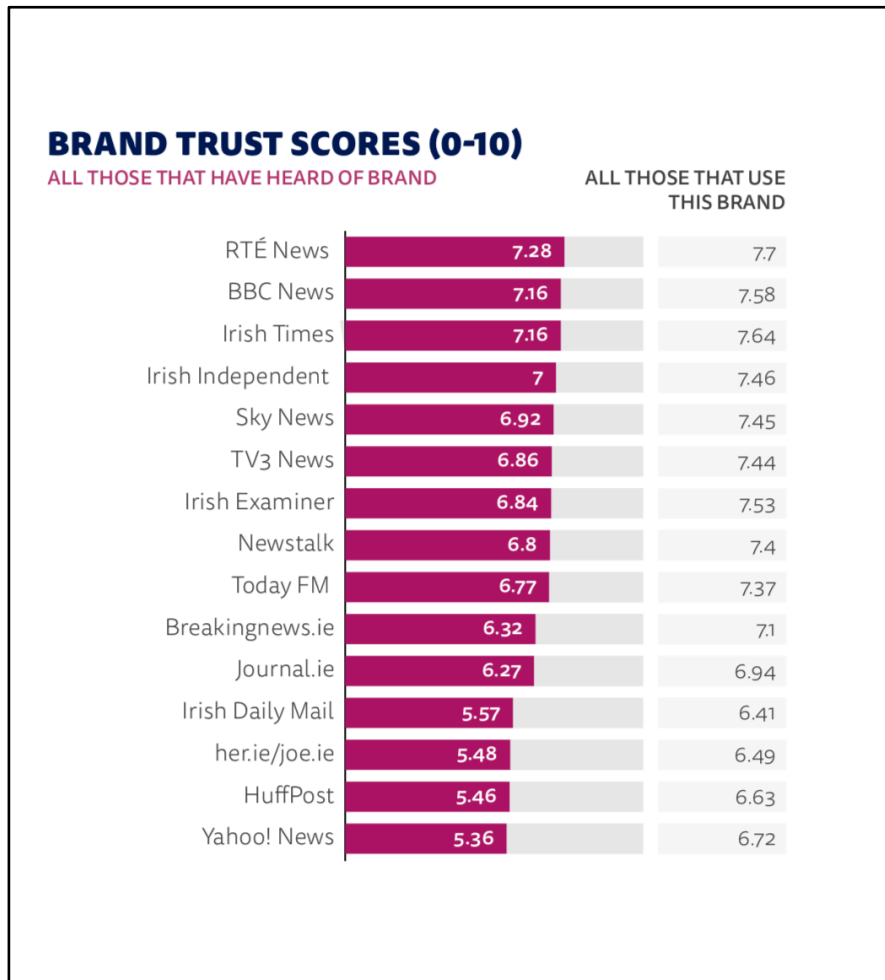


Figure 5: Brand Trust Scores

(Source RIDNR'19)

APPENDIX 3: HEADLINES, TWEETS, AND POSTS

THE IRISH *TIMES*

Headlines on Twitter *Irish Times* May 27th:

Tweet 1; Former minister for justice and attorney general Michael McDowell has rejected the suggestion that he “should have known better” than to comment on Maria Bailey's personal injury case in the Seanad

Tweet 2; An interview given today by Fine Gael TD Maria Bailey regarding her withdrawn "swing" case claim "very much seemed to be in the space of blaming lots of other people", according to Minister for Health Simon Harris

Headline :“Maria Bailey says leak of swing case was ‘planned’ to maximise damage”

Twitter on may 28th :Miriam Lord: Fall gal Maria Bailey sees dark forces at play in rivetingly mortifying radio interview

Headline Miriam Lord: Fall gal Maria Bailey sees dark forces at play

Twitter on may 28th ;"Milking the system," said one. "She should know better," said another. Maria Bailey's constituents react to the TD's legal action against the Dean Hotel.

Headline :Maria Bailey saga: Cold comfort for fall girl Fine Gael TD

Twitter on June 3rd

Tweet 1; The hotel sued by Fine Gael TD Maria Bailey is handing over its file on her legal claim over a swing fall to the lawyer reviewing the case for the party.

Tweet 2; The Maria Bailey swing case review is expected to assess Ms Bailey’s claim on radio last week that she was only seeking €7,000 from the hotel to cover her medical expenses incurred from the treatment of her alleged injuries as a result of the swing fall.

Headline Hotel hands over file on Maria Bailey swing case to FG reviewer

FACEBOOK

Facebook June 3rd : The hotel sued by Fine Gael TD Maria Bailey is handing over its file on her legal claim over a swing fall to the lawyer reviewing the case for the party.

Headline Hotel hands over file on Maria Bailey swing case to FG reviewer

Facebook post may 30th: "The membership are going bananas. They don't want her running again."

Headline ;'Sword of Damocles' still hanging over Maria Bailey

Facebook post may 27th ;Recounting the incident, Ms Bailey said she sat on the swings: "I had my beer in my hand and then I was reaching for my friend's, she had a bottle of wine... I then found myself on the floor."

Headline ;Maria Bailey says leak of swing case was 'planned' to maximise damage

Facebook post June 1st ;We have some neck, writes Fintan O'Toole. Indeed, the Irish neck is a many-splendored thing

Headline ;Fintan O'Toole: Maria Bailey and the snapping of the Irish hard neck

THE IRISH *EXAMINER*

Twitter 25th may :Maria Bailey dropping legal 'swing' case against Dublin hotel, reports

Headline :Taoiseach will speak with Maria Bailey TD over legal 'swing' case next week

Tweet may 27th :“I will not be ... bullied by keyboard warriors”: Maria Bailey defends position in withdrawn hotel swing case

Headline :“I will not be ... bullied by keyboard warriors”: Maria Bailey defends position in withdrawn swing case

Tweet may 30th :Shane Ross denies 'having a go' at Maria Bailey with swing snap

Headline :Shane Ross denies 'having a go' at Maria Bailey with swing snap

Tweet June 12th :‘This is an internal party matter’ - Taoiseach may not publish Maria Bailey 'swing-gate' report

Headline :‘This is an internal party matter’ - Taoiseach may not publish Maria Bailey 'swing-gate' report

FACEBOOK

May 28th :Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and party bosses were left “blindsided” by Ms Bailey’s car-crash appearance on Today With Seán O’Rourke on RTÉ Radio 1 yesterday morning.

Headline ; Penalising TD for swing-gate is ‘impossible’

May 28th :Maria Bailey's car-crash interview with Sean O'Rourke was meant to repair the damage done by last week's swing claim controversy, writes Daniel McConnell.

Headline ; ‘Injured party’ tone helps radio interview to backfire spectacularly

June 12th :Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said he cannot commit to publishing the awaited report into the Maria Bailey 'swing-gate' controversy.

Headline ; 'This is an internal party matter' - Taoiseach may not publish Maria Bailey 'swing-gate' report

May 27th :Fine Gael TD Maria Bailey has vigorously defended her decision to sue the Dean Hotel for injuries she received after she fell off a swing.

Headline ; "I will not be ... bullied by keyboard warriors": Maria Bailey defends position in withdrawn swing case

JOURNAL.IE

Tweet May 26th ; *Taoiseach to speak to Maria Bailey over dropped swing claim against Dublin hotel*

Headline ; *Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to speak to Maria Bailey over dropped swing claim against Dublin hotel*

May 27th tweet; *'That is an invasion of my privacy and humanity has been crossed' - Maria Bailey told @TodaySOR*

Headline ; *Swing fall TD Maria Bailey says she won't 'bow down to keyboard warriors and bullies'*

May 29th Twitter : Maria Bailey will not chair the meeting of the Oireachtas Housing Committee this morning, as she's set to meet the Taoiseach to discuss the fallout from her swing fall claim.

Headline; Maria Bailey won't chair Oireachtas meeting this morning as talks with Taoiseach loom

Tweet may 29th; *Fine Gael to launch internal review into Maria Bailey swing fall case*

Headline ; *Fine Gael to launch internal review into Maria Bailey swing fall case*

Tweet May 30th : *'We're satisfied with the result': Dean Hotel confirms Maria Bailey has officially withdrawn case*

Headline; *'We're satisfied with the result': Dean Hotel confirms Maria Bailey has officially withdrawn case*

FACEBOOK

May 27th : "Due to the unbelievable abuse, I wasn't able to go home for three days last week because journalists were sitting at my home. That is an invasion of my privacy and humanity has been crossed."

Headline : Swing fall TD Maria Bailey says she won't 'bow down to keyboard warriors and bullies'

May 28th :The Taoiseach is set to meet with Maria Bailey to discuss her swing fall insurance claim - with some sources suggesting the meeting would take place as early as tomorrow.

Headline :Taoiseach to meet Maria Bailey 'as early as tomorrow' to discuss swing fall insurance claim

May 29th ;Maria Bailey will not chair the meeting of the Oireachtas Housing Committee this morning, as she's set to meet the Taoiseach to discuss the fall out from her swing fall claim.

Headline; Maria Bailey won't chair Oireachtas meeting this morning as talks with Taoiseach loom

May 29th :Maria Bailey won't chair Oireachtas meeting this morning as talks with Taoiseach loom

Headline : Fine Gael to launch internal review into Maria Bailey swing fall case

May 30th post : Fine Gael announced yesterday it will launch an internal review of the case.

Headline ; 'We're satisfied with the result': Dean Hotel confirms Maria Bailey has officially withdrawn case

HEADLINES FOR ALL ARTICLES ANALYSED

the Irish *Times* articles

May 22nd ; Maria Bailey injury claim contradicts FG stance on claims culture – Micheál Martin

May 22nd ; Miriam Lord: Swings and roundabouts for Fine Gael as it seeks to tackle compo culture

May 22nd; Michael McDowell criticises TD over injuries claim

May 23rd ; Varadkar ‘trusts court’ to make right decision in TD swing fall case

May 25th ; Miriam Lord: Down with this particular sort of swing!

May 25th ; Maria Bailey faces call for clarification over swing claim case

May 27th ; Varadkar: ‘Reputational harm’ to FG from Maria Bailey case

May 27th ; Maria Bailey says leak of swing case was ‘planned’ to maximise damage

May 27th ; Transcript of Maria Bailey interview on Sean O’Rourke show

May 27th ; Miriam Lord: Fall gal Maria Bailey sees dark forces at play

May 27th ; ‘An unfortunate interview’ - Simon Harris on Maria Bailey radio appearance

May 28th ; the Irish Times view on Maria Bailey: a question of judgment

May 28th ; Dean Hotel owners dispute aspects of Maria Bailey’s media interviews

May 28th ; Pressure grows on Maria Bailey to step down from Oireachtas committee

May 28th ; Maria Bailey: Minister calls for ‘common sense’ approach to compensation

May 28th ; Una Mullally: It’s okay to feel sorry for Maria Bailey and Theresa May

May 28th; Maria Bailey saga: Cold comfort for fall girl Fine Gael TD

May 28th ; Maria Bailey and her swing case: questions that remain

May 28th ; Miriam Lord: No tripping up Heather Humphreys on insurance issue

May 29th ; Maria Bailey controversy: Taoiseach expected to meet Fine Gael TD

May 29th ; Maria Bailey and the swing: just because we can, doesn't mean we should

May 29th ; Maria Bailey agrees to Fine Gael 'internal review' on swing case

May 29th ; Miriam Lord: Leo calls for counsel as swing story refuses to die

May 30th ; 'Sword of Damocles' still hanging over Maria Bailey

May 30th ; Hotel at centre of Bailey swing incident confirms case is withdrawn

May 30th ; Maria Bailey absent for key Oireachtas meeting

June 1st ; Cliff Taylor: Too much talk and too little action on insurance reform

June 1st ; Miriam Lord: PR man takes a swing on behalf of Maria Bailey

June 1st ; Sean O'Rourke gave Maria Bailey a generous length of rope, then yanked it sharply

June 1st ; Fintan O'Toole: Maria Bailey and the snapping of the Irish hard neck

June 3rd ; Hotel hands over file on Maria Bailey swing case to FG reviewer

June 3rd ; Many personal injury awards being reduced or dismissed

June 4th ; the Irish Times view on insurance reform: urgent need for an overhaul

*June 15th ; FG candidates will have to disclose involvement in legal proceedings after Bailey case –
Taoiseach*

the Irish Examiner articles

May 22nd ; 'Who are the y to be complaining about claim culture?' - Martin hits out at TD taking action against hotel

May 23rd ; 'This is a case before the courts' - Varadkar refuses to comment on TD's compensation claim

May 25th ; About time claims were on the slide

May 25th ; Josepha Madigan says TD's swing compensation case 'nothing to do with me'

May 25th ; Taoiseach will speak with Maria Bailey TD over legal 'swing' case next week

May 27th ; A closer look at Maria Bailey: Who is the controversial 'swing case' TD?

May 27th ; "I will not be ... bullied by keyboard warriors": Maria Bailey defends position in withdrawn swing case

May 27th ; Leo Varadkar will met Maria Bailey to discuss controversial dropped personal injuries claim

May 27th ; TD withdraws compensation case: The right call

May 28th ; Penalising TD for swing-gate is 'impossible'

May 28th ; Leo Varadkar endorses Minister's criticism of Maria Bailey over 'swing-gate' case

May 28th ; 'Injured party' tone helps radio interview to backfire spectacularly

May 29th ; Taoiseach: Review to 'establish the facts' in Maria Bailey swing case will take two weeks

May 31st ; Shane Ross denies 'having a go' at Maria Bailey with swing snap

June 12th; 'This is an internal party matter' - Taoiseach may not publish Maria Bailey 'swing-gate' report

the **Journal.ie** articles

May 23rd; Micheál Martin: Fine Gael TD's injury lawsuit 'flies in the face of everything being done to keep insurance costs down'

May 25th; 'A private matter': No comment from Taoiseach as TD drops swing claim against Dublin hotel

May 26th; Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to speak to Maria Bailey over dropped swing claim against Dublin hotel

May 27th; Swing fall TD Maria Bailey says she won't 'bow down to keyboard warriors and bullies'

May 27th; Fine Gael reacts to 'car crash' Maria Bailey interview: 'I think she did herself a disservice this morning'

May 28th; Taoiseach to meet Maria Bailey 'as early as tomorrow' to discuss swing fall insurance claim

May 29th; Maria Bailey won't chair Oireachtas meeting this morning as talks with Taoiseach loom

May 29th; Fine Gael to launch internal review into Maria Bailey swing fall case

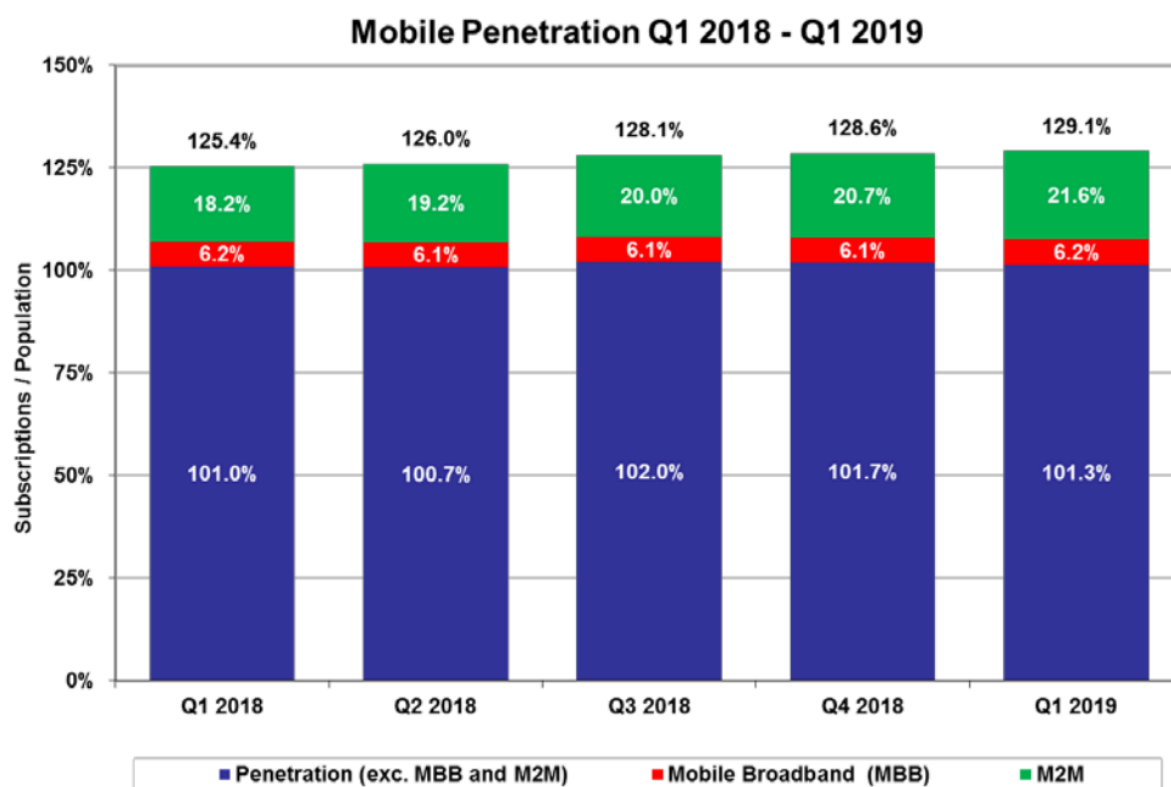
May 30th; 'We're satisfied with the result': Dean Hotel confirms Maria Bailey has officially withdrawn case

May 31st; 'I wasn't sneering': Ross says he wasn't 'having a go' at Maria Bailey with swing photo

May 31st; Leo says it wasn't 'a bad day at the office after all', but swing-gate and co-living did real damage to FG

June 15th; Leo Varadkar says Maria Bailey case 'wasn't a plus' during election campaign

APPENDIX 4: COMREG QUARTERLY KEY DATA REPORT,Q1/2019



Source: Quarterly Key Data Questionnaire

*Irish Mobile Penetration Rate (ComReg Quarterly Key Data Report Data as of Q1 2019,
Reference number ComReg 19/57 (R))*

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Dissertation topic:

The impact of social media on the collection and distribution of news in Ireland.

My research approach is to consider this topic from several broad headings.

How exactly does Kinzen work?

We are (a) startup and I guess the nature of a start-up is that it is constantly changing according to the market and where you can fit in and where revenue will come from. But I guess the good things is that we've tried to maintain our ethos and our mission. The app is where we started off and that's where we hold most of our ethos. You'll go in one week and it will be like this is what we are doing and then the next it will be different. So essentially I got on board Kinzen when this time, a year ago and they were starting off with a consumer facing app and their app essentially, they wanted it to be a news aggregator (2:13). Whereby they would, through AI machine learning, would pull from different sources from the web and what they were essentially trying to do was they were trying to be a competitor to, like, Twitter and Facebook and they wanted to be the app. that people would go to for their news. So that was their main intention, we have kind of come away from that in the past year but that's where we started off. (and) The reason it came about was because, before I came along, there was the whole Cambridge analytics scandal, fake news and just this mass cultural movement away from social platforms being people's source of news. (and) So my bosses saw a gap in the market and not so much a gap in the market but a culture need for something different because their backgrounds are journalists. So they came from a place of wanting to bring back sort of a democratic news and fair news and they thought this would be the way to do it.

Is the app free?

There is a fee when downloading for the premium features. What we've discovered is that people are so used to getting news for free, like people don't even pay subscriptions for newspapers that trying to compete with free sources of news. For an app that was not free and no one had ever heard of, there was just no market for it. So we are going to have to open up that paywall at some point. (4:39)

How do you select the news that you distribute to clients based upon their preferences?

What we do is; we've done machine learning mixed in with human curation so essentially all the sources that exist within our database have been selected by our curator. (and) He basically scours the internet looking for legitimate sources that are not known to be fake, not had any controversy in the past, and don't give a platform to people who are known for fake facts or slanderous (material). So he tries to take on the fairest sources that there are. They go into our database and then the sources that we show to people are primarily based on an open algorithm. What we wanted to do was, we wanted to make something different than from the online platforms. (that) When you go onto them (online platforms) you log in and within seconds they know who you are, what your interests are, or they have an idea of what you might like, based on your friends' groups. So we wanted to create a place where people could come without any bias. You'll be given a complete ??diplomatic ?? sources that weren't influenced by anything they'd done before. But then over time it's up to the user to tell kinzen the app. what they want to read about. So let's say you have an interest in Irish politics, what we will do is instead of anything based on your previous searching history we will just poll the web for news sources that are talking about Irish politics.

Do you use social media as a news gathering tool?

No, we wouldn't. No, not within our own tech (7:22) , yeah we would rely on Twitter or our community editor and everyone in the company would rely on Twitter because that how we find out about news sources or breaking news but we don't rely on any kind of social news platforms to help us populate our app. with news. NBED Conclusion: Twitter is a source of sources

How credible is social media as a source in your opinion?

I think it is extremely credible, mainly because it is everyone's go to for a form of news. Like, no matter if you are a really high caliber journalist or if your just a really casual news reader everyone uses social media. (and) In like, Kinzen, I do User Research so it's my job to work with news readers, anyone we are creating a product for, and finding out their behaviors around news, and like their previous ways of sourcing news. (and) There is no denying that social media is the way anyone gets news these days as much as they want to claim that they don't rely on social media or as much as they want to not rely on social media. It is their fallback. I'd say 80% of the people I've talked to have said that they would rather not go to Twitter every morning but, without fail, they do (8:53). And I also think that people are aware that there is a lot of bias and misinformation and echo chambers on social media news but I think that there is a cultural movement for people to think beyond that and try to burst those bubbles and challenge themselves. But I think that they struggle to do that just because it's difficult when people are quite lazy. (9:26) .

Do you have a minimum set of fact-checking criteria for social media content: for example; are there multiple different sources; timing of 'news item'

No, as we don't pull stuff directly from social media.

Asked them about fact checking for the source they do use and breaking news etc.

So that's something that we did dabble with when we were trying to design the app (10:30). In that we were trying to design, so we wanted to firstly provide people with unbiased sources and to broaden their minds. So give them sources that weren't based on their previous searching or like what they usually read from. But then we began to realize that people, by doing that, were missing out on breaking stories. So we actually struggled with that because for us, because our news isn't based on like augmented social validated (11:09) views, like what your friends like, what you, people's likes and shares. It was really difficult to figure out how you would bring in breaking news if you didn't have those indicators. So what we did was: we would, using the tech, the back-end tech, we would scan all the data that was coming in so all the sources that were coming in topic terms and what words that were kind of peaking in the shortest amount of time, so that would indicate that there were that that was possible a breaking story or that was big news at the time. So it's pretty much based on quantitative data, that's kind of how we break our news to people as oppose to what's trending.

Does the immediacy (or other attribute) of social media content trump the traditional news values?

Yeah, so that was a lot of the criticism we got with the app. was the fact that we weren't providing like, breaking news, fast enough or like the most current news. So, for instance, one time I was testing with a guy who came in and he was saying that the news we gave him was always really interesting and it provided him with, like, insights into all different areas and different countries. But it also meant that he was missing out on immediate news that was happening in Dublin. So I was talking to him the day of the climate strike and he said, because that was a big event in Dublin, there was nothing on Kinzen that told him about it. But you know, Twitter, the minute something happened it's instantly on your radar then it's validated by everyone else tweeting about it. So yeah we really have to compete with that and I don't know how. We are still trying to figure that out. How you do compete with that kind of news? (and) I also think that like, the publishers that point

of view, social media sites give them instant validation and confirmation of their writing about the thing. If one of their journalists writes a piece and it gets shared for the right reasons, they know that instantly that they are doing the right thing and writing about the right thing.

How did the idea for kinzen develop?

Which had a bigger impact on the creation of kinzen was digital presence or was it social media.

(14:14)

I think it kind of fell between the both because I think it came about, the inspiration came about, as a backlash against social media and news on social media because they were motivated by how journalism was getting ruined on Facebook and Twitter. And you know valued journalists were getting devalued because of saturation of news in social media or on social media. But I think then the driving force was probably the fact that tech is huge, it's a huge massive industry and as a start-up they are looking to make things and revenue and the tech sphere was just bigger so they kind of, I think survived, in a way, from being like, the anti-social media news source towards more so being like a tech company. Just because that ?and also I think over time they realised that the back end like the AI and the machine learning and the tech that was being used to pull sources and recommend sources to people could be transferable to other products in a way. So therefor they were like, if you design a tech or a digital tool, you're more likely to grow in scale. As opposed to trying to grow or create another social platform and also that's probably because the social platforms are kind of dying, people are kind of trying to come off them or turn away from them.

How does your organisation's social media following compare to circulation numbers, etc.?

Definitely yeah, Twitter is still like, the best advertising platform like, we haven't put any money or any good money towards marketing. A lot of companies would do a huge big launch marketing

campaign where as well just rely on what small startups can afford on Twitter and Facebook with like sponsored ads. and that's probably how we still get in most of our new users and do the numbers compare? I would say yeah I'd, say the amount of people who follow us on Twitter on Kinzen I'd say the majority of them would have downloaded the app. Whether they use it every day, I don't know

What is your view on how social media has impacted on how news is reported in general?

I think I don't have a background in journalism but like I'm in the same room as a whole bunch of journalists. But I can tell that what used to be a really esteemed , valued profession/career is being practically diminished by social media. (and) We are doing a lot of work now with publishers and newspapers and they are now, its clear that they have now, just become a data and numbers and that means that they have to sacrifice the caliber of the stories that they are doing. You know, not saying that they are all working towards click bait but they all are aiming to bring in footfall and clicks because their models are based on revenue from ads. (and) Then a lot of the ads companies will be, I think, the structure is that if they advertise on your page and your page gets say 100 clicks they pay you per click so publishers are under pressure to bring in footfall and only very few of them like the big players, like Financial Times and the Economist, who are really highly esteemed that are able to put paywalls on their sites because they know they have a really dedicated audience. Whereas, if you think of the Irish *Times* they have increasingly become more clickbait. Publications like the Irish *Times* struggle without subscriptions and publications had like a Heyday when social media kicked off and Facebook started putting news articles on and Twitter likewise. But now that the platforms are becoming less popular and people are trying to distance themselves from getting their news in that way because it's being so poorly regulated. I think publications are really struggling now because they've moved off print into digital and now they are almost in this limbo where they don't have much impact on the social platforms because people are trying not

to read that but yet they still exist online, just struggling to bring in engagement. So that's where social media did them well and now has, kind of, left them in a loop.

Do you feel pressurised to embrace social media?

No, I don't think it feels pressure to embrace social media, I think it feels pressure to like publishers because when we talk to publishers, so we did an App., but now we are talking to publishers about trying to do different products and different routes. (and) When we talk to publishers they are so used to the way in which their news is put on social media. So the metrics that they are looking for, like footfall and clicks and like, their idea of what engagement is, is so static that whenever we come into a conversation with them they expect, we almost have to kind of adapt to what they think digital news and media is. (and) Even though we are trying to come out with ideas that's almost challenging where they are coming from it's really hard for them to hear that so it's less about adapting to social media but more so adapting or trying to translate the norms of social media and slowly trying to change publishers ideas. Which is harder said than done.

How do you think your news organisation would fare if you just ignored it?

So we have learned from the app that people aren't really ready for that like with us we designed the app and we thought we were designing an app that people would it was going to be the new go to news source for people they would wake up and go to kinzen as appose to twitter or Facebook but people are just too embedded in their ways I think we have to accept that is the cultural norm now so if you want to try and change that norm you have to take baby steps so for instance within the app one of the features we designed was we would only have a limited amount of articles presented to people on their homepage and the idea behinds that was we would limit that kind of idea of endless scroll a natural relief for people to have to keep scrolling but you know people don't

intuitive understand that they had to be explained and that was a lot of my job was watching people use the app and them not understanding the features we designed into it and then me having to explain it to them and then when you do explain it to them they are like o cool but like I'm not going to be there with every used when they open the app so one of our lessons is you have to embrace everything that exists on social media and slowly try and change it.

How much of a threat are digital-only news outlets?

Publications like her.ie and joe.ie are so used to churning out stuff like almost every minute just like extremely dumb articles that are usually paraphrased from another source or even a source they wrote like half an hour ago, their algorithm is designed so that they constantly turn out pieces and that's just with our algorithm because we are scraping the internet for relevant and new stories and were looking at the frequency and that there being published and what source they are coming from (27:40) trying to pick up on new and interesting stories where as their algorithm is like throwing spewing shit out at us so there was a while at the beginning when we would end up overpopulating our app with their stories just because we hadn't figured out how to block off like repetition stories so there was a while when the Irish sun was like the only source you would see on kinzen because I think do you know Celtic or something had played a match that night, and I think also that that's how they challenged us or were competitive to the caliber to the stuff we wanted to publish and I think for other bigger publications obviously there probably less ashamed about writing clickbait articles but I also think the smaller publications they I think they are more likely to take in 3rd party advertising sources like you know recommendations articles at the bottom, but when there's a network of publications that use all those that have been passed from one to another and like any network the more people involved the bigger it gets so the footfall from the internet is within that network of clickbait kind of crappy articles on web based digital publishers so it takes away the space for the more credible publishers like the Irish times.

What do you see happening in the future in this space?

So we are we have realized that the app has struggled to reach the masses that we thought it would, and also because we had to bring in revenue and people just don't want to pay for news, we were being too ambitious thinking the best of people and that people would pay for news so we've had to sort of now look to different routes, the app was sort of our B to C business to customer whereas now we are looking at routes like B to B business to business so like how we can work with publishers and in the way that the app was going to be a solution for disillusion news readers we are trying to figure out what is an option for, what solution is there for disillusioned publishers what is the solutions that we can provide to you know the more high Calabria publishers who are competing against primarily digital publications. We have got a technology that is based on a really fair way of accessing sources and providing sources to users and reader and we are now trying to pitch that to publishers and we are trying to get publishers to see the value in that but it's tricky because they are, they just don't really have time and space to think about new or innovative ideas unless it's going to bring them in immediate revenue or clicks so that's where we are at the moment

Have you anything else to add?

One of the things we are thinking about is the idea of news quality and if you think about what social media did it almost for a long time validated pieces of journalism and gave them like a quality mark dependent on like how many likes they got and share so what we are trying to do like this is all very on the drawing board, there is a growing culture for what does news quality mean like what's a more holistic (33;30) and encompassing idea of news quality that isn't just based on shares and likes and like passive activity so thinking about the idea of how do we get people to, is there a way that we can signal to a publisher that someone thinks that there piece is bias or they think its

conflicting or clickbait, because I think that's what people are from the research that we've done it is that there is a culture among news readers those who are moving off social platforms are moving away because they feel that they don't have enough of a valid voice they feel like their likes and shares don't have the same impact that they used to because there are spots now that are gaining all that so I think that's possible where a new phase of digital media is going to go it's like a deeper understanding of like news quality and what that means for a news reader what do they have to do and also what will that mean for a publisher. So that's one of the projects that we are looking into

APPENDIX 6: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Researcher: Sadbh Maguire

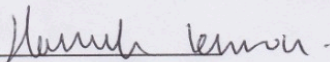
- The aim of this study is to examine the impact of social media on journalism and how News is collected and distributed.
- You will be asked 20 questions about your work as a journalist working either online or in print. The interview should last around 45 minutes.
- This research will be of benefit as it draws on the experience of journalists who are working at a time of change in the media industry. It will be beneficial to get first-hand experience from journalists who worked in the field before social media blew up and became the phenomenon it is today. This research provides an opportunity to hear a group of working journalists' perspectives.
- All information will be anonymised with the key kept in a password protected computer.
- Personal participant information will not be used for any reason and participants will not be identifiable in any published material.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Student : Sadbh Maguire (sadbhmaguire12@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Ellie O'Byrne (ellie.obyrne@griffith.ie)

This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature



Researcher Signature

