

THE FUTURE NEWSROOM OF RTÉ

A video documentary exploring how the RTÉ Newsroom is adapting to changing trends in news production and news consumption

BY

ELEANOR MANNION

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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 Journalism & Media Communications, 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

News consumption trends around the globe have changed significantly with the arrival of online and social media platforms. As the consumption of news has changed so too has the production of news. Traditional media such as newspapers and television news now must compete with new media platforms. How has the growing popularity of online and social media platforms changed news production at Ireland's public service broadcaster? How is the structure of RTÉ's newsroom evolving to compete with digital born publishers? And what is expected of a journalist now as they produce content not only for radio and television but also for online and social media?

Through the medium of video documentary this dissertation explores these questions by focusing on RTÉ's online and social media coverage of the recent Irish General Election 2016. With a greater than ever focus on a 'mobile mentality' RTÉ endeavoured to create bespoke content for its online platforms by using iPhone apps. Its audience, RTÉ identified, is not only migrating to online and social media platforms they are viewing this content less on desktop and increasingly on smart devices and tablets.

As this dissertation is exploring changing news production and news consumption trends the method of mobile journalism was employed to produce the 15-minute video documentary. It was filmed on an iPhone and edited on an iPad. Several different IOS apps were used to film, edit and create graphics and motion picture effects for the final piece.

Within the RTÉ newsroom online and social media are now seen as the third platform alongside radio and television. However, RTÉ is a traditional broadcasting organisation trying to change into a media organisation and the path to change is not always direct. RTÉ finds itself constrained financially, socially and culturally. While the newsroom needs to cater for a growing online and social media audience it still needs to cater for its television and radio audience.

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Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

“Just as the music industry has had to adapt to digital disruption so too has the news industry, with digital-born publishers growing increasingly popular” (Kirk, 2015).

With this dissertation by practice I explore how the RTÉ Newsroom is evolving to meet the changing trends in audience news consumption. The documentary examines how the RTÉ Newsroom is adapting to ‘digital disruption’. How is the growth of online news consumption affecting where resources, such as staff, are concentrated within the newsroom structure? How will this restructuring affect the traditional news delivery platforms of television and radio? What, if any, new staff roles will develop from the evolution and growing popularity of smart devices and news delivery platforms such as, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook? These are the main questions that are addressed during this 15-minute video documentary.

While this video documentary is about the evolution and growth news consumption via online and social media platforms it also explores how this content is being accessed predominantly through smart devices such as smartphones and tablets. In the recent Irish General Election 2016, 80% of RTÉ’s online and social media news content was accessed via smartphone or tablet (O’Callaghan, 2016). To compliment this I decided to invoke digital journalism’s mantra of “made on mobile for mobile” and in doing so shoot this documentary using an Apple iPhone 6s and edit it using an Apple iPad Pro (Bromwell, 2016).

Using dedicated iPhone apps to film and edit the documentary I also used apps that the interviewees of the documentary employ as journalists to tell their stories for their online and social media audiences. I felt this was the best medium to showcase what the documentary is about. Also, using smart devices to film and edit my material afforded ease of location and time by having the technology at your fingertips on highly portable devices.

The aim of the documentary is to inform as well as educate. As well as being relevant to people in the news industry, it will be of interest to all media

professionals, journalism students, media lecturers and those simply curious about life behind the scenes of the newsroom of Ireland's public service broadcaster.

Through this supporting document, I will chart the process by which this documentary has achieved these goals and how I created an informative piece by weaving together the varying contributors of the RTÉ Newsroom making the information simple, explanatory but interesting for the viewer.

In Chapter two, I will provide evidence of the research that was involved in the planning and execution of this project. The chapter will elaborate on research undertaken on the digital disruption of the news industry both at home and abroad, the preparation involved for the interview process and the research, which would inform the design and editing of the documentary.

Chapter three will deal with the production design, construction and editing of the documentary itself. It will cover decisions that were made in the technology used, the editing process, smartphone app use, as well as reasons for the choice of graphics, motion titles, subtitling and music used throughout the project. It will also cover editorial decisions that were made in choosing who to interview and why.

Chapter four will discuss how the product came to completion from the initial stages (consulting with supervisors) to addressing the final edit – what worked well and what subjects were eventually omitted as well as why they were not used.

The final chapter will offer my perspective on the finished product and will reflect my views on the formulation and execution of the documentary, where it would be suitable for broadcast and further documentaries that could result from this area of news production.

Chapter Two: EVIDENCE OF RESEARCH

The following chapter will examine the research undertaken to complete this documentary. This includes academic textbooks, online journals, newspapers articles, websites, reports of media organisations and other material relating to this subject. The research will be presented under the following subheadings: *Digital Disruption and the Newsroom*, *Traditional Newsroom*, *Newsroom in Transition*, and *The Future Newsroom*.

DIGITAL DISRUPTION AND THE NEWSROOM

There has been much research undertaken by organisations such as Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Pew Research Center and Nieman Lab, which highlight changing news consumption trends. Social media, as described by the Pew Research Center is the ‘local TV’ for the millennial generation (2015b). *The Digital News* report conducted by the Institute for Future Media and Journalism (FuJo) at Dublin City University shows where Irish audiences are consuming their news. In Ireland, the impact of the digital shift has resulted in 43% of news consumers mainly using digital news sources (Reuters Institute, 2015).

The migration of audiences to online news consumption has caused many traditional newsrooms around the globe to adapt to the changing trends as digital-born publishers like Vice News, BuzzFeed (Nieman Lab, 2014a) and Vox.com become increasingly popular (Pew Research Center, 2015c). Digital strategies such as the innovation report of *The New York Times* (2014; Nieman Lab, 2014b), *Gannett’s Newsroom of the Future* (Lin, 2014) and the *Future of News* report of the BBC (2015) show how resources are being pulled away from traditional media in favour of online and social media platforms.

The practice of journalism itself is also changing to adapt to the digital disruption. Studies by the Tow Center for Digital Journalism (2015) explore the ways in which technology is changing journalism, its practice and its consumption. However, comprehensive research has not been conducted on the changing newsroom structure within Ireland’s public service broadcaster. How is RTÉ integrating a digital

newsroom with its traditional one? A documentary on this topic is timely in light of the recent findings by the Institute for *FuJo* (Reuters Institute, 2015) as well as the unprecedented online coverage by RTÉ of the 2016 Irish General Election (McBennett, 2016).

TRADITIONAL NEWSROOM

The emergence of new technologies has brought a complex, high level of competition to today's news media market. These changes have been a significant challenge to the continued future of the public service broadcasting of RTÉ News in Ireland. For the Irish audience choice of outlets for their news consumption has never been greater. With this video documentary I explore how RTÉ News is evolving to try to remain relevant to Irish people.

RTÉ is Ireland's national public-service media organisation. It is a leader in Irish media (Reuters Institute, 2015), and aims to provide comprehensive, free-to-air multi-media services to the public in Ireland and interested audiences internationally (Bakhurst, 2013; Curran, 2011). RTÉ News has changed greatly in recent years in terms of the level of output, types of news delivery platforms and technologies it utilises to generate and broadcast this output. The new delivery platforms include RTÉ.ie, RTÉ News Now digital channel and RTÉ News Now smart device app (Stephens, 2013).

RTÉ News covers content across a variety of platforms including television, radio, online and smartphone/tablet devices. Its long-running traditional output is comprised of three main television news bulletins on RTÉ One every day, including RTÉ News: One O'clock, RTÉ News: Six One, and RTÉ News: Nine O'clock. The last two regularly rank in the top 10 programmes of the day among Irish Adults (TAM Ireland, 2014).

In 2008 RTÉ News launched its first exclusively online channel, RTÉ News Now. This is a rolling news channel featuring live news bulletins and current affairs programmes throughout the day. RTÉ News Now's availability began as being exclusively online and as a mobile service or app on iPhone, iPad, and Android but

is now also on television subscription services. The app service has received over one million downloads since its inception (Stephens, 2013). “According to recent B&A research, RTÉ News Now is the leading news app in Ireland with 12% of adults (aged 18+) having used it. International users account for 21% of downloads” (Stephens, 2013).

The output of RTÉ News is one of the primary and especially important functions of the public-service broadcaster in this democratic society. “Mass media ... are presupposed to act as intermediary vehicles that reflect public opinion ... make the electorate cognizant of state policies, important events and viewpoints” (Klaehn, 2005, p.1). In a lecture to Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Kevin Bakhurst, the Managing Director of RTÉ News & Current Affairs, described how the public service broadcaster perceives its role in Irish society saying it “reflects the country to itself – and reports the world to Ireland ... We bring major national moments and events to our audience – hold the powerful to account – and our investigative journalism challenges shady practices and wrongdoing” (Bakhurst, 2013, p4).

Television news is not popular viewing amongst young adults. Emerging digital technology has changed news consumption choices, and habits. In a report released by AGB Nielsen (2013) it was found that RTÉ television has experienced viewership declines in the last several years, most acutely among young adults. There is, however, a move toward online news consumption (ComScore Data Mine, 2013).

The obstacles to the public service broadcasting of RTÉ “could almost look like a perfect storm” (Bakhurst, 2013, p.1). The emergence of new technologies has brought a complex high level of competition to today’s news media market. The arrival of the World Wide Web and the opportunities that followed with smart devices has brought wave after wave of change. Also, for RTÉ, “technology swept away the protection offered by the Irish Sea and delivered multi-channel television to Ireland, with digital switchover complete last year” (Bakhurst, 2013, p.1).

For the Irish audience, choice has never been better or greater. You can choose to consume your news through newspaper websites, smartphone and tablet apps, radio, and/or a variety of rolling news television channels. In this crowded market

place, RTÉ News has to fight for audience and revenue. “As a media organisation that is funded by both licence fee and by commercial income, that poses a real challenge to the organisation” (Bakhurst, 2013, p.2).

According to the Institute for *FuJo* report (Reuters Institute, 2015) online is now the most popular source for news for Irish people, with 83% using it in a given week. The Irish are also at the forefront of smartphone device use and are above average users of social media for picking up news (Reuters Institute, 2015). Furthermore, Irish journalists are among the heaviest users of social media in the world, according to study findings by the *Insight Centre for Data Analytics* at NUI Galway (The Irish Times, 2015). All this has led to a period of transition as the RTÉ newsroom continues to integrate its digital newsroom with its traditional one.

NEWSROOM IN TRANSITION

How does RTÉ News rise to this challenge? It needs to continue to be a focus of considerable interest and play a significant part in the political, social, and economic life of Ireland on both a national and international stage. RTÉ News needs to continue to move faster, constantly creating new services as well as continuing to innovate existing ones such as the RTÉ News Now channel and app. As the Irish audience moves from television to desktops and onto mobiles and tablets, RTÉ News need to respond with new ways of delivering news content.

Declan McBennett, the Editor of RTÉ’s Online News and RTÉ News Now is leading the RTÉ Newsroom’s shift in focus to a digital-only and digital-first approach to its news stories. This was particularly so during the recent Irish General Election 2016. “We must have a mobile mentality during the election and results weekend” (McBennett, 2015). The RTÉ online news team was created in the last 10 years but only in the last 5 years was incorporated under the RTÉ News and Current Affairs umbrella (O’Callaghan, 2016). Since then the team has expanded and become integrated into the ‘centralised news desk’ system within the RTÉ Newsroom. New types of journalism roles such as *Social Media Champion*, *Mobile Journalist* and *Multimedia Producer* are included on this team. In addition to the RTÉ News Now app and RTÉ.ie, other platforms the online team feeds into include *Facebook*,

Instagram and *@rtenews* - the most followed media account in the country with 350K followers (McBennett, 2015).

“The emerging image of Irish news consumers is that of a broadly engaged and interested audience who are digitally immersed but with a substantial allegiance to traditional sources” (Reuters Institute, 2015).

Currently, the RTÉ Newsroom’s traditional output includes two resource-heavy television bulletins - the *Six One News* and *Nine O’clock News*. These bulletins continue to enjoy healthy ratings although, as already mentioned, the audience profile for these traditional news media is an aging one (TAM Ireland, 2014). Along with the growing strength of online news, the RTÉ newsroom must also consider that despite the context of an overall international decline in television as a news source as a platform in Ireland it has seen the most significant growth and development in Ireland in recent months (Pew Research Center, 2015c). The industry has seen the launch of *UTV Ireland* and *Irish TV* as well as expansion of *TV3* with its launching of additional digital channels. While online is now seen as being the best for breaking news and analysis and comment, TV is more valued for overall trust, accuracy and reliability (Reuters Institute, 2015).

RTÉ stills boast a far greater reach with its traditional outlets than its digital offerings (Reuters Institute, 2015). Crucially though, as mentioned earlier there is a generational difference that emerges when looking at the audiences of RTÉ’s traditional platforms (AGB Nielsen, 2012; TAM Ireland, 2014).

THE FUTURE NEWSROOM

What makes social media of particular interest to journalism and the structure of a newsroom is its influence as a communication and news-breaking tool. In 2014 the Gannett Company, the largest newspaper publisher in the U.S., announced plans to radically change its newsroom structure. This initiative included the creation of new roles, what Gannett called the ‘Newsroom of the Future’ (Kirkland, 2014). Job descriptions for *Gannett’s* “Newsroom of the Future” include:

- Community Content Editor

Researches audience needs and obtains community content for all platforms, such as stories, photos, videos, news briefs and blogs. Oversees the smooth editing and production of this content into both print and digital products.

- Content Coach

Coaches, supervises and directs the work of reporters and ensures that they create high quality content that fulfills the newsroom's strategy across all platforms. Areas of focus include: investigative reporting, narrative writing, photography and videography and digital content.

- Engagement Editor

Plans and executes engagement opportunities to maximise impact on the audience and resonance of the story across all platforms. Should possess expertise in social media, marketing and events planning.

- Photographer/Videographer

Creates and develops visual storytelling across multiple platforms, using both photography and videography to inform, engage and entertain audiences. Collaborates with content strategists and audience analysts to shape storytelling that will meet audience interests and needs.

- Digital Planning Editor

Oversees the planning, programming and production of newsroom content. Acts as a customer-experience expert and newsroom project manager. Ensures that there is the right volume and quality of content across platforms for the daily needs of the audience.

- Reporter

Researches, reports and writes compelling journalism. Works with the content coach, content strategists and audience analysts to shape storytelling to meet audience needs and interests on every platform.

- Digital Producer

Manages the delivery of content to digital platforms. Works with planning editor, content coach, reporters and photographers to best display content on all platforms and maximises social media presence (Lin, 2014).

As one can discern from the job descriptions above journalism itself is adapting to include more of the following skills: multimedia (photos, graphics, video), video editing (Adobe Premiere, Apple Pro) and digital narratives (constructing stories with info-graphics). Journalists now have to learn to work with an info-graphic team or a news visual design team to reinvent how to tell stories for digital platforms (Alejandro, 2010).

Areas of focus for The Tow Center for Digital Journalism include:

- Data
- Impact and metrics - using technology tools and data to explore which stories have impact and ways to reproduce these effects
- Audiences and engagement - study of the new relationship between the journalist and the audience (Knight Foundation, 2015).

Recently, *The Financial Times*, announced it was developing a digital data dashboard to help journalists and editors in the newsroom better understand their audience and how people interact with stories on their website (Ciobanu, 2015). With this dissertation I examine the impact of the new demands of online news consumption on the RTÉ Newsroom. The video documentary explores if there is an appetite for reinvention within the newsroom. The video documentary shows how the RTÉ Newsroom is trying to adapt and reinvent itself in order to continue to reach Irish audiences and remain relevant to the audiences of the future.

Having established the research that informed the documentary, the following chapter discusses the pre-production planning, design, construction and conceptual development of this project.

Chapter Three: CONSTRUCTION/DESIGNING THE VIDEO DOCUMENTARY

This video documentary is 15 minutes in duration. It is divided into self-contained chapters and so rather than being aimed at television broadcast it is aimed at online publishing and social media platforms. It can be broken into three short accessible parts the durations of which are a better fit for an online audience. It does however, work as a 15 minute cohesive whole. Also, as it is aimed at online and social media platforms it does not have voice over but has titles explaining each chapter. Audiences this video documentary is aimed at include mobile journalism online forums, journalism students and media professional. I explore further my design of this video documentary later in this chapter.

ACCESS TO RTÉ NEWSROOM

One of the more important aspects of this project was to ensure I had access to the RTÉ newsroom and its employees. In February, during the pre-production phase of this documentary, I asked for and received approval in writing from Hilary McGouran (Managing Editor, RTÉ Television News), Kevin Bakhurst (RTÉ's Assistant Director General/Head of News & Current Affairs), and Michael Good (Managing Editor, RTÉ Radio News) to proceed with this dissertation by practice (see Appendix A). I then proceeded to identify who my main contributors could be and asked for their collaboration on the project.

POSSIBLE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

While I obtained written approval granting access to the RTÉ newsroom as an employee of the organisation there are ethical implications that I needed to be mindful of. As Deacon (2002) highlights the exchange relationship between researcher and sponsor is important, as too is ensuring the sponsorship doesn't take the form of gate keeping.

Due to the time I have already spent in the RTÉ newsroom as an employee a potential challenge for me could be the lack of distance between me as researcher and the subject i.e. staff of the RTÉ newsroom. An implication of this would be the

problem of arriving at “any explanation of the experiences and motives of those we observe other than those they themselves express” (Deacon, 2002, p. 256).

Any restriction to my analytical capacity or self-censorship due to the persuasiveness of the corporate ideology of RTÉ was factored into my storytelling process. However, a “high degree of personal involvement” can also be “desirable as you can penetrate a culture more thoroughly” (Deacon, 2002, p. 256). Throughout this project I ensured I retained a certain level of detachment in order to produce an objective insightful documentary rather than just explanation and in doing so avoided “going native” (Bryman, 2008). As Berger (2000) advises, between participant as observer or observer as participant there will need to be a trade-off between familiarity on one hand and neutrality on the other. I bore this in mind during all my editorial decision-makings.

INTERVIEWEES

The focus of my documentary is how the newsroom of RTÉ is adapting to a change in both news production and news consumption. Also, from my preliminary research I knew that the Irish General Election of 2016 was going to be a prominent event in my documentary. With this combination of subject matter and relevant key event happenings I was then able to identify and approach the main contributors for this piece. These included:

- **Declan McBennett – Editor, RTÉ News Now and RTÉ News Online**

As the head of RTÉ News Online and RTÉ News Now Declan McBennett has overseen the development of the online news team and its migration from a part of RTÉ Digital to a fully integrated team within the newsroom proper. He also oversaw the starting up of RTÉ’s first online channel – RTÉ News Now (McBennett, 2016). For my documentary I identified Declan McBennett’s potential as an interviewee. For his interview I wanted to explore the narrative of online news’ development within RTÉ and the challenges both he and his team face in a newsroom still dedicated to the traditional media of television and radio. Declan McBennett wished to see a ‘mobile mentality’ amongst the RTÉ newsroom’s journalists during the Irish General

Election 2016 (McBennett, 2015). For my interview with him I wanted to analyse how successful he felt the engagement by the newsroom journalists with producing content for online and social media platforms was. Also, I wanted to examine the audience figures achieved during the Irish General Election 2016 compared to previous years (See Appendix B).

- **Philip Bromwell – RTÉ’s Mobile Journalism Champion & Head of Newsroom Innovation**

As a video journalist with RTÉ News Philip Bromwell shoots and edits features for television news. He is also a mobile journalist and has shot and edited several television news features on his iPhone. Philip Bromwell is currently leading a small innovation team within the RTÉ Newsroom. With his team Philip Bromwell is experimenting with innovative ways to tell a story to an online and social media audience. The challenge of “how might you tell a story in ten seconds?” is one, which he and his team are hoping to master (Bromwell, 2016).

For his interview I wanted to explore the direction he feels the audience is going, i.e. what platform are audiences engaging with, what he would like to see change within the newsroom structure and what, if any, frustrations he has with the current structure in terms of staffing resources and budgets. Also, both he and Patricia O’Callaghan (discussed below) briefed and trained six newsroom journalists, who were assigned to follow the political party leaders during the Irish General Election 2016, on how to deliver content for RTÉ News’ online and social media platforms as well as television and radio. With his interview I also asked him to reflect on how he felt the online coverage worked or didn’t work and also if the level of audience engagement matched the labour intensity involved to produce this coverage.

- **Patricia O’Callaghan – Strategist of RTÉ’s online news output for General Election 2016**

Patricia O’Callaghan is a journalist with the RTÉ online news team but crucially she was the principal strategist of RTÉ News Online’s output for the Irish General Election 2016. For her interview I wanted to explore the changes she has witnessed

in the online news team in recent years. I also wanted to discuss how she planned RTÉ's online coverage for the Irish General Election, how she researched it and where she feels the next big challenge is for online news within RTÉ.

- John D McHugh who is the co-founder of Verifeye Media

John D McHugh is a photojournalist and runs a visual news agency for the smartphone age. He is passionate about the evolution of storytelling and journalism in the digital age. With his interview I wanted to explore his opinion of how the RTÉ Newsroom operates in online and social media news as an outsider looking in.

- Molly Swenson is a member of the founding team at RYOT, an LA-based media company

Molly Swenson specialises in new forms of storytelling especially that of 360 video. This is an area in which the RTÉ Newsroom has only just started to experiment in and so for her interview I wanted to explore why she feels 360 video is the next big thing.

With all my interviewees I also planned common questions to ask of all of them, which broadly addressed the main focus of my documentary, i.e. the changing production and consumption of news. Furthermore, I asked all my interviewees how they consumed their news. Also, with all interviewees I prepared a release form to them to sign (See Appendix F).

KEY EVENTS

In conjunction with identifying and obtaining interviews with key members of the RTÉ Newsroom and MojoCon 2016 attendees I also identified events of interest for my documentary:

- Irish General Election 2016

The General Election took place on February 26th and so when I begun filming for this documentary it was still very much in the minds of RTÉ Newsroom employees. It was also a "crossing of the rubicon" for RTÉ News Online in terms of the volume of

resources used and output generated and so was highly relevant to my subject matter (McBennett, 2016).

- RTÉ Newsroom post-election analysis meet-up

On the evening of the 5th April Declan McBennett and Philip Bromwell led a post-election analysis of how RTÉ News Online and its social media platforms in particular were serviced during the Irish General Election 2016. This was very much a discussion outlining where the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts lay. This was a key event for me to film but also formed part of my research and helped me formulate better questions for my interviewees.

- MojoCon Ireland 2016

MoJoCon (Mobile Journalism Conference) 2016 took place on April 29th and 30th. It considers itself to be the leading international media conference focusing on mobile journalism, mobile content creation, mobile photography and new technology (RTÉ Mojocon Ireland, 2016). I felt this would be a great opportunity for my documentary to pick up vox pops from innovators in this field and also gain valuable research from the event's seminars and lectures.

EDITORIAL DECISIONS/OMISSIONS

Initially I had felt that MoJoCon 2016 would be a great opportunity to find outside opinion on how RTÉ News should evolve to meet the changing media landscape. With both interviewees, John D. McHugh and Molly Swenson, I asked them their thoughts on the changing media landscape, the challenges it presents and how they felt a public broadcaster such as RTÉ can overcome those challenges. While initially I felt it would be good to have an outside perspective, during the edit I felt introducing a new location without explaining the context would be confusing for the viewer. In hindsight it perhaps would have been more cohesive and coherent for this video documentary to have conducted the interviews with my existing interviewees in this setting also thereby creating a link to the event - from the RTÉ Newsroom to MoJoCon 2016.

Technically I was not happy with the audio on the MoJoCon 2016 interviews and felt that the poor quality would take away from the polish of the overall piece. I decided to continue working the newsroom footage from the election review through the whole documentary as a visual thread rather than using any MoJoCon rushes. In doing so I felt the documentary has particular significance depicting the RTÉ newsroom in transition.

As already stated, there is much more than online and social media in terms of the output from the newsroom of RTÉ. However, for the purpose of making it simple yet informative it was important not to over complicate the narrative by also covering the other platforms to which the newsroom caters i.e. television and radio. Also restricting the narrative to the key event of the Irish General Election 2016 again simplifies the story but also allowed for enriching specific examples of mobile journalism.

Before sync editing I prepared a Running Order to help construct the narrative of the documentary (See Appendix E).

DESIGN CONCEPT

The documentary as a form is no newcomer to innovation and part of that innovation is through its use of new technologies, which have provoked fundamental questions about the relationship of recording media to reality and the nature of the documentary subject.

“Today, we stand at a new technological threshold, enabled in part by video-equipped handhelds. Nearly ubiquitous, these devices have the capacity to transform the ‘great mass’ of spectators into makers of the image. The latent cameras in pockets and purses are part of a larger dispositif that includes networked connectivity, aggregation sites for live uploads, accessible and user-friendly editing systems and popular distribution portals” (Uricchio, no date).

Whilst much of my effort was put into forming the idea, driving narrative for the documentary and consequently what interviewees to feature much of my initial

research also focused on how I would technically produce the finished piece. As part of my planning for the technical aspect of this documentary I conducted a research interview with Glen Mulcahy, Innovation Lead at RTÉ and also Founder of MojoCon Ireland (Mulcahy, 2016). This helped greatly with planning the technical process I would employ for the project.

The genre of this documentary is factual with moments of observational storytelling. The intended target audiences are media professionals, students and those that have an interest in how our media landscape is evolving. As this video is also aimed at being adaptable to online viewing I decided against a standard voice over and instead used motion text to help progress the story.

As this documentary is exploring the future newsroom of Ireland's public service broadcaster in the digital age I decided to shoot and edit this documentary using an Apple iPhone and Apple iPad Pro. The decision was also made to avail of these smart devices' ability to shoot and edit in 4K. The term 4K refers to is the number of pixels across a video file's horizontal dimension, which is around 4000. HD video, the previous standard, has a video resolution of 1920-by-1080 pixels. 4K video has more pixels and so contains more detail than HD video. 4K video must be watch on a 4K enabled monitor and whilst these are not widespread as yet my reason to shoot my documentary in 4K is that it will be future proofed against these upgrades (Apple Inc, 2016). The delivered project is a HD version. This was to ensure playback on a wider variety of devices.

Using the techniques of mobile journalism the equipment I employed included:

- iPhone 6S
- Tripod
- Smartphone shoulder pod
- Radio microphone, rifle microphone
- iPad Pro (see Appendix C)

Mobile Journalism is an emerging form of new media storytelling where storytellers and journalists use smart phones and devices to gather, edit and distribute news and stories. It is sometimes known as MoJo (Mulcahy, 2014a). This method of storytelling is now being employed to shoot both feature films (Baker, 2015) and documentaries (Darg, 2015).

As this project was being filmed in 4K it made sense to contain the project within the 'IOS universe' and so edit the documentary using an app on the iPad Pro. Through research I decided on what apps were best to use for both the shooting and postproduction of this documentary (Mulcahy, 2014b). The apps used included:

- FiLMiC Pro (to film)
- Legend, (graphics, titles)
- Pinnacle Studio (to edit)
- Reflector (desktop mirroring)
- Adobe Spark (social media stories, animated video)

During the shoot for this documentary I attended and filmed the RTÉ Newsroom's post-election analysis meet-up. This meeting, hosted by Declan McBennett and Philip Bromwell, focused on the RTÉ newsroom's engagement with social media platforms during the Irish General Election 2016. Again I decided the use of the medium of mobile journalism to help tell this story suits its message i.e. digital innovation in storytelling and journalism. Three smart device apps were discussed during the post-election analysis. These were Picplaypost, Storyo and Periscope. I employed these apps throughout the video documentary to show examples of digital storytelling and provide a split screen effect at key moments in the documentary.

- PicPlayPost
- Storyo
- Periscope

APPS USED (see Appendix D)

- Filmic Pro

The Filmic Pro app enables the user to enhance their iOS camera. It does this by providing more camera setting options, for example this documentary was filmed in 4k, 16:9 at 25 frames per second. Also, the app allows the user to separate focus and exposure. With full manual control over focus, exposure, ISO, shutter speed, tint and colour temperature you can produce a nice quality picture during the shoot. Additionally, Filmic Pro also has audiometers, stereo microphone support, informative thirds guide and aspect ratio overlays.

- Legend

The Legend app allows the user to craft text animation over video or picture, which I could then employ as titles during my documentary. I used these titles instead of standard voice over.

- Pinnacle Studio

Pinnacle Studio is an app that enables you to quickly edit video, audio, and photos. With this app I was able to arrange their clips in the storyboard, make precision edits using the timeline and dual view precision, and add transitions, effects, and a soundtrack. Crucially, this app allowed me to edit my documentary in 4K on the iPad Pro.

- Reflector/Director

Reflector is a wireless mirroring and streaming receiver. With this app I was able to mirror the content I accessed on my iPad and record this to my Mac laptop. I used this to show examples of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

- PicPlayPost

This app was one of the three apps RTÉ Newsroom journalists used during the Irish General Election 2016 coverage to feed into RTÉ online and social media platforms. This app in particular enables the user to create video and photo collages.

- Storyo

This app was one of the three apps RTÉ Newsroom journalists used during the Irish General Election 2016 coverage to feed into RTÉ online and social media platforms. The app accesses your photo gallery and creates a slideshow timeline of an event. This includes plotting on a map the locations these events or photos occurred.

- Periscope

This app was one of the three apps RTÉ Newsroom journalists used during the Irish General Election 2016 coverage to feed into RTÉ online and social media platforms. Periscope is a live streaming app.

- Adobe Spark

This app helps to create social media posts, web stories and animated videos. This was the app I mainly used to create the motion graphics which, instead of a traditional voice over progressed the narrative flow of the documentary.

MUSIC

As I used apps to create this produce many provide “a selection of professionally composed, instrumental music tracks for you to use for free” (Adobe Spark, 2016). There are only three music tracks used in this video documentary:

- *Distant Telegram* from the Adobe Spark app – there is no copyright on this track as copyright comes with download of the app (Adobe Spark, 2016).
- *Tilted* from the artist Christine and the Queens – there is copyright on this track.
- *Light of the Seven* from artist Ramin Djawadi – there is copyright on this track.

As this is a student dissertation the copyright music can be used for educational purposes however, if this documentary were to be published this music would be need to be changed for a track that is copyright free.

GRAPHICS AND TITLING

The main titles of the documentary were done through the app Adobe Spark. The colours of yellow and pink were chosen, as these would be strong and bright for the viewer especially considering this documentary is aimed at online platforms. Also the colours of pink and yellow are far removed from any RTÉ branding and so further distanced this dissertation editorially from its subject matter.

The Legend app was also employed to create more dynamic motion graphics and again the colours of pink and yellow were used to keep consistency throughout the project. The Legend app primary function is as a gif creator for social media platforms. Due to this it exports only 1:1 aspect ratio. As the documentary is in 16:9 aspect ratio I had to import the Legend graphics into the Picplaypost app in order to be able to export them in the desired aspect ration. The Picplaypost app also allowed me to create split screen graphics. The subtitled names of the documentary's contributors were created within the Pinnacle Pro editing app. I allowed a minimum of 5 seconds duration for subtitled names and 10 seconds for motion graphic titles. I felt this was sufficient time for the audience to read them.

Chapter Four: DISCUSSION

A dissertation proposal was submitted on February 25th 2016 outlining the dissertation by practice I hoped to achieve. The proposal itself contained a detailed analysis of the aims and objectives of the project as well as a list of potential interviewees that would suit the topics to be addressed. In the intervening time, as discussed in the previous chapter, the number of interviewees I felt were necessary for the video documentary changed during the interview process. My interviews also influenced the production design for documentary. As I am exploring news consumption on digital platforms it became obvious that my video documentary should be facilitated towards those platforms, for example, the use of bright bold graphics and no voice over. The documentary, although it is 15 minutes in duration, can be broken down into three self contain parts that are of a more appropriate duration for online sharing. I tried to observe the following rules for online video storytelling:

- Shorter
- Visual
- Snappy
- Gets message across in shorter time
- Has 'shareability' potential (Philip Bromwell, 2016)

Having been informed of our supervisors in late March 2016, I corresponded with Deirdre Kerins and Maurice Coakley in the weeks and months after that on the development of the documentary. The first meeting with Deirdre Kerrins about the practical element of the thesis took place on April 4th. During this meeting we discussed the main documentary narrative, potential interviewees and the workflow and technology available to me in order to film and edit this documentary using an iPhone and iPad. The meeting was followed by a discussion with Maurice Coakley about the written academic dissertation on April 8th.

Filming commenced on April 4th as I attended the RTÉ Newsroom's post-election meet up. Filming continued the following week with two interviewees scheduled for April 11th and a further one scheduled for April 27th. The interviews were timely in the light of the recent Irish General Election 2016, which was a major backdrop for the narrative of this documentary. I filmed at MoJoCon 2016 over the course of two days, April 29th and April 30th. My aim was to have all filming for the documentary completed by the end of April. However, upon review of material during the sync edit one further day of filming was required on June 3rd.

I met with Deirdre Kerins again on May 5th. The objective for this meeting was to show Deirdre my interview rushes and also show her practical examples of how I was going to use smart device apps (as outlined in the previous chapter) in the production design of the documentary. At this point I had experimented with the mirroring app Reflector and could show Deirdre how I intended to incorporate this as a storytelling device. I also demonstrated how I would use the RTÉ Newsroom's three main apps of choice for their Irish General Election 2016 coverage in my own documentary as a way of showing examples of mobile journalism.

Between my three main interviewees and my two interviewees from MoJoCon 2016 I had an over-abundance of material for my 15-minute documentary. I decided to exclude the MoJoCon 2016 interviewees, as they were too general for the specific questions I wanted answered during the documentary narrative. By May 31st I had my sync edit completed and I sent a copy of this via Dropbox to Deirdre Kerins for review.

On June 3rd Deirdre Kerins and I had a phone call to review my sync edit. She followed this up with an email summarising her suggestions including working the newsroom footage of the election review through the whole film as a visual thread. By treating the meet up as a "case study" it would give it particular significance in the viewer's mind as a key moment in the life of the RTÉ newsroom. She also suggested reviewing the cut in the following way:

- What does the audience need to know about this?

- What are the implications of the "case" study election 2016.
- What does it mean for RTÉ, for audiences, aspiring journalists?

I provided Deirdre Kerins with another edit in July and we met to discuss this on July 23rd. At this point the narrative structure was firm and I was advised to focus on the finishing touches such as cover interviewees with examples of social media news stories. I also emailed a final draft of the written report to Maurice Coakley towards the end of July.

The meetings and email correspondence with my supervisors proved extremely helpful in the development of this project. Their guidance and support allowed me to explore every avenue available to me to eventually produce a documentary of high quality and journalistic merit.

During the five months between the thesis proposal submission and final thesis submission, the content and theme of the documentary did not deviate significantly. However, the design and structural element did evolve according to my findings from my interviewees and my own research on the concept of "made on mobile for mobile".

I had made the decision early on in this project that this dissertation by practice would be informative and educational. This decision was not taken lightly and while I appreciate that reactions to any documentary are subjective to each individual, it was my intention in the end to both inform and educate the audience.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

PHILIP BROMWELL:

While Philip Bromwell did his first mojo report for RTÉ's Six One news a few years ago mobile journalism is still not widely practised in the RTÉ newsroom. "It has definitely taken root...it is not widely but commonly practised" (Bromwell, 2016). Philip sees the RTÉ newsroom as still being a traditional newsroom. Even though mojo filming is accepted now and they have overcome that challenge there is still a reluctance to experiment with apps to tell stories for social media platforms. Philip

Bromwell agrees with Declan McBennett that the 2016 Irish General Election was a watershed moment for mobile journalism in RTÉ. He felt they succeeded in delivering more content to the audience at the time the audience was accessing it at.

For the newsroom it is not just a matter of thinking of how best to serve the platforms of radio and television now it must also think of how best to serve the third platform of online. Philip Bromwell asserts that they, as journalists, must think of new ways of telling stories whatever the platform. “The figures don’t lie. TV is dipping. Online is rising and social media is exploding. We have to bite that bullet for an audience that don’t watch and never will watch the Six One News” (Bromwell, 2016). This new audience, he asserts, is one that will grow up seeing the brand of RTÉ News pop up in their Facebook feed rather than seeing it on television.

With this online and social media platforms the audience does not linger and so the story must fit the platform with the following parameters:

- Shorter
- Able to watch it mute therefore must be subtitled
- Visual
- Snappy
- Gets message across in shorter time
- Has ‘shareability’ potential (Bromwell, 2016)

According to Philip Bromwell the challenge, as a journalist, is always that you are trying to tell an engaging story, trying to communicate a message; however, now there are several routes to tell a story.

The architecture of the RTÉ newsroom is very much a 20th Century newsroom architecture according to Philip Bromwell. Due to its orientation toward television and radio he believes it is not fit for purpose in this 21st Century media landscape. Like a big ship turning it is hard for traditional newsrooms such as RTÉ to react as quickly as digital-born and digital-first newsrooms.

Bromwell (2016) believes five years ago nobody would have predicted the demise of television news and while he admits television is still the anchor and main player he asserts that it is the traditional concept of what is television is what is being challenged. “Every newsroom has to take that risk – balancing the audience of today and audience of tomorrow” (Bromwell, 2016). For Philip Bromwell and his team he is not sure what we they are and where they are going but is “quite happy with that because it leaves room for experimentation” (2016).

DECLAN MCBENNETT:

In the four years Declan McBennett has managed RTÉ News Online he has seen it grow and change. This evolution, he firmly believes, is being led and driven by the audience and technology. Despite restraints within the organisation of RTÉ, including cultural, historical and financial restraints, Declan McBennett believes they are making the journey from a broadcasting organisation to a media organisation (McBennett, 2016).

Rather than being complacent McBennett feels they need to continue to build on the engagement that is there and “figure out where do we go for the next 6 months and the next 12 months” (2016). They do this, he believes, by asking, “What is our content **WORTH?**”

- **Who** is our audience?
- **Own** our content
- **Resonant** with audience
- **Traction** of story
- **Holistic** approach to news (McBennett, 2016)

PATRICIA O’CALLAGHAN:

One of the most interesting findings of this documentary was what my contributors felt was the next big platform or area of focus for news delivery and consumption. For Patricia O’Callaghan ‘hooking’ or engaging your audience on a social media

platform and then following through on this and successfully bringing that audience back to your own native site is, for media organisations, the next big hurdle to overcome. It is interesting in that there is no easy answer and if a solution is not found the dominance of platforms such as Facebook for the public's news consumption is going to become harder to compete with. "The next step is finding out how we drive people back to RTÉ, bringing the audience back in from social media - that's the challenge" (O'Callaghan, 2016).

Chapter Five: CONCLUSION

The exploration of how the RTÉ Newsroom is evolving and adapting to change has not been addressed at length in the general media. Any insight into this industry is interesting to the general public and also professionals, teachers and students of journalism and media. From a journalistic point of view, the news value of an examination of the industry is significant. As the current climate of change in the world of digital journalism is moving so rapidly my documentary is a snapshot in time of a new era for Ireland's public service broadcaster. There is much more to explore in the area of journalism's online and social media presence and a snapshot recorded a year from now I'm sure would look different from the one I recorded over the past few months.

Throughout the development of this documentary I asked various people, family and friends how they consumed their daily news. It really is fascinating to see such a change in people's traditions, home and family life. No longer do we as a nation come together for the main evening news. There are no deadlines anymore. News is constant and constantly available on every platform. Repeated examples my interviewees refer to during my documentary included Davitt Walsh's interview after the Buncrana Tragedy of 2016, and Philip Bromwell's tweet of the newspaper front pages after the Bataclan attack of 2016 both of which feature in the documentary. Such examples show the power and reach of material once it is published in the online sphere.

The process of designing and executing this video documentary purely through smart devices proved challenging but extremely rewarding. It is an innovative and as yet relatively unique way to shoot and edit a documentary. I had to engineer new workflows in terms of storing and transferring content but also in terms of editing and creating it. I investigated a wealth of iPhone and iPad apps and experimented with their primary function but also how I could make them work for what I envisioned for my project. Overall, while the method was constraining at times and challenging ultimately it was rewarding to produce an innovative piece of video storytelling.

As one of the aims of the documentary is to increase the awareness amongst journalism students of the emerging 'mobile mentality' needed to succeed in today's newsrooms, I would hope that someone might find this useful as a basis for their future journalism pieces. The intention was for the documentary to be specific in its topic but also accessible as possible in order to reach, and be comprehended by the widest audience possible.

Ultimately, it is important to examine how news is being disseminated and on to which platforms. Intrinsicly linked to this and equally important to examine is how this news is being consumed by today's generation and how might it be consumed in the future. This dissertation is a moment in time of the life of RTÉ's newsroom but it is an important moment.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

6/26/2016

Untitled - Mannion, Eleanor

Untitled

McGouran, Hilary

Mon 22/02/2016 17:58

To: Mannion, Eleanor <Eleanor.Mannion@rte.ie>;

Hi Eleanor,

Checked with Kevin and Michael and we are all happy for you to go ahead,

thanks
Hilary

HILARY MCGOURAN Managing Editor, TV News

RTÉ News and Current Affairs

Donnybrook, Dublin 4

Approval email from RTÉ newsroom

Appendix B

News Online Figures over time (Source: RTÉ Digital)

Date	Impression	Visits	Unique browsers
July 2014	39 million	10m	2,790,345
July 2015	49 million	14m	2,859,345
Nov 2015	62 million	17.9m	3,049,875
Feb 2016	85 million	22.7m	3,661,654
March 2016	69 million	21.1m	3,081,946

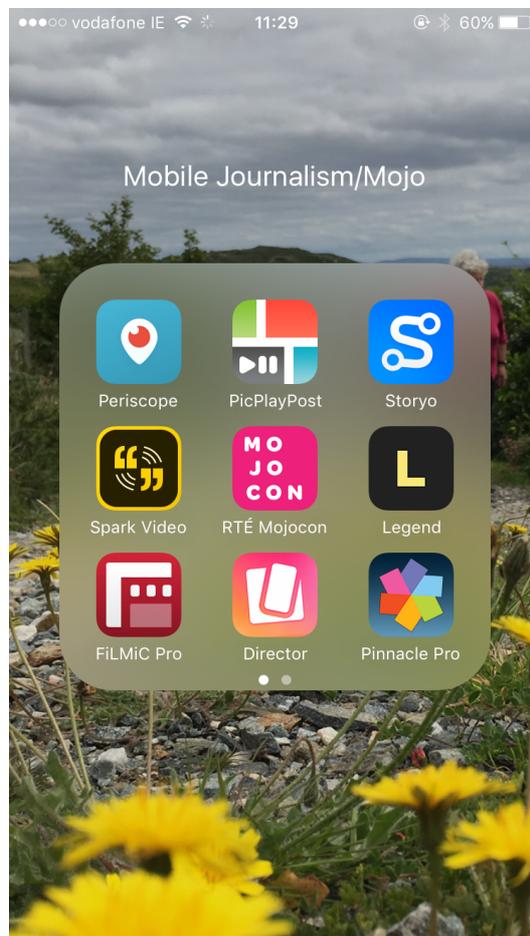
Appendix C



Mobile journalism kit

Appendix D

iPhone apps used



Appendix E

- Running Order for Documentary

The Future Newsroom Running Order/Script – 15 minutes

VO/Sync	Visuals	Dur:
<p>Opening: Philip: for the first time ever we sent people out mojoing Patricia: 11 years ago we were in a different building... I want to make that point Declan: Tech has changed everything...we have to go to the audience Molly: when I think of how I access news John: News is changing...</p>	<p>Opening montage of interviewees, news platforms (TV, Radio, Online, Social Media) leading to digital disruption graphics and key statistics e.g. comscore (people spend more times on their phones than watching telly)</p>	1:00
<p>Part 1: Script: “Just as the music industry has had to adapt to digital disruption so too has the news industry”. (Kirk) And so too must the RTE Newsroom evolve to adapt to the changing news consumption trends of its audience. Declan mojo meet up: What worked, what didn’t work? Not going a set path – moving rapidly. We want to absorb what people experienced in the field. Not going away...it’s expanding</p>	<p>Declan at mojo meet up with cutaways including attendees and online audience figures Graphics read top left of frame: RTE Newsroom post General Election chat Declan IV is fullframe and his super appears bottom of frame</p>	4:00
<p>Declan: 4 years online come on a lot – down to audience and technology leading and driving it is the audience Restraints: historic, cultural...</p>	<p>GVs of newsroom</p>	
<p>Patricia: 11 yrs in online – we were in a different building. There’s been a growth in audience year on year. It’s capacity and reach blows you away</p>	<p>Shots of patricia at online desk working split screen with end of Declan IV Patricia IV fullscreen for super</p>	

Philip: definitely taking root. Not widely practised but commonly practised. Still a traditional newsroom. Accepted that it does happen. Architecture of our newsroom oriented towards TV Radio. Not fit for purpose. We need to delivered more content to audience at the times they are accessing it. How do they serve? Radio, tv, online, social media?	GVs of Philip in newsroom then Philip IV fullscreen for super GVs of newsroom particularly TV and Radio studios	
Part 2: Script: The General Election 2016 saw the RTÉ Newsroom shift in focus to a digital-only and digital-first approach - a mobile mentality. Declan: GE is our rubicon – Trace online, newsroom corner Mobile mentality??	Shots of GE coverage	4:00
Philip: GE watershed moment for MOJO in RTÉ	Shots of picplaypost, periscope and storyo apps in usage	
Patricia: Online is the 3 rd platform in newsroom. Saw that in election past journalists following leaders producing bespoke content & video for social audience		
Declan: Huge leap forward. Trackers for 40 constituencies, SM team, Mojo team, Video team – content audience platform		
Philip: 3 Apps		
Part 3: Script: What makes social media of particular interest to journalism and how a newsroom is structured is its influence as a communication and news-breaking tool. Strength online – no deadlines, reaction content, beautiful longform Examples:	GVs of RTE news website Examples of breaking news stories - Batacaln, Brussels and social media footage Budget graphics	3:00

Buncrana Bataclan tweet Telegraph Tell a story in ten seconds		
Part 4: <i>Script: How will the RTÉ Newsroom continue to be relevant to audiences of the future?</i> What's next? Roles and what's important, what's the next big thing? Snapchat?	New roles montage visuals including vacancies on media websites	2:00
Ending	Finish on montage – millennial news consumption	30"

Appendix F

- SAMPLE RELEASE FORM

(ON-AIR/ON SCREEN CONTRIBUTORS ONLY)

Programme: _____The Future Newsroom of RTÉ_____

Nature of

Contribution: _____Interviewee_____

Recording

Date: _____

Producer/Director: _____Eleanor Mannion_____

In consideration of the recording of my contribution, I agree to the filming/recording and use of my contribution by Eleanor Mannion. I agree that my contribution will be subject to the editorial control of Eleanor Mannion and agree to the terms relating to copyright and performers' rights set out below.

Name of Contributor

Signature of Contributor

STANDARD TERMS

- In consideration of the recording of my contribution, I assign to Eleanor Mannion all rights in my contribution including (but not limited to) all copyright and *performance rights. I agree that Eleanor Mannion may use my contribution in any medium and in any format, and license the said rights, as it sees fits for the full period of copyright throughout the world including (but not limited to) radio, television, and the internet. I waive my moral right I may have to my contribution under the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000. These terms apply equally to the whole or any part of my contribution. I agree that Eleanor Mannion may use my name, likeness, photograph and biographical information in connection with the Programme and all promotion, advertising and publicity relating to the Programme.
- *[Applicable only to “qualifying performances” of a performer under Part III of Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 (“the Act”)]. I waive any rights I may have in my contribution under Part III of the Act to the extent permissible under the Act.

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