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THE OFFICIAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES:

TECTONIC OR TRIVIAL FOR COMMUNICATORS?

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By LCdr S.M. Stefko

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a phenomenon that has captured the imagination and attention of the world, and Canadians are some of its most prolific users. Individuals, businesses and governments are all moving to participate, and many believe that social media will replace mainstream media altogether, creating an even larger imperative for engagement. This paper considers to what extent public affairs practitioners in the Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) should devote limited resources to social media campaigns.

The fragile state of the mainstream media industry in the United States and Canada will be explored, as well as the growing relationship between mainstream and social media. Consideration of the return on investment of social media identifies a number of risks to participation, and shows that, by and large, DND/CAF efforts have largely reached an audience already interested in the military. However, social media does provide greater opportunities for engagement, and while popularity of platforms may change, social media itself is here to stay.

This paper considers current Government of Canada and DND/CAF policy, and determines that while that policy may be limiting in some respects, it is an inescapable fact of government communications, and departments still have latitude as to how to manage their social media campaigns. The paper concludes that social media is in fact worthy of resource investment, but initiatives must be chosen with care and deliberation in order to meet objectives while still incurring a reasonable opportunity cost.

Today we are beginning to notice that the new media are not just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, but new languages with new and unique powers of expression.

- Marshall McLuhan, 1957

INTRODUCTION

The growth of social media[1] is a worldwide phenomenon. In 2013, six out of every seven people on earth had access to the Internet, and one in four used social networks.[2] Social media usage is also rapidly increasing, with the number of social media users worldwide increasing 18 percent in 2013 alone.[3] Canada is a leader in both social media and Internet use – two-thirds of Canadians use social media,[4] and a 2011 report stated that Canadians spend more time online than citizens of any other country.[5] At the time of the report, Canadians spent a monthly average of 43.5 hours online – almost double the global average of 23.1 hours, and eight hours more than the second place United States.[6]

In response to this trend, the use of social media by Canadian government departments and agencies, as well as businesses, has been increasing. A recent report claims that 57 percent

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[1] Social media has been defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as, "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)" http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media.

[2] Irfan Ahmad, "Global Internet, Mobile and Social Media Engagement and Usage Stats and Facts Infographic," *Social Media Today*, last modified 11 December, 2013, http://socialmediatoday.com/irfan-ahmad/1993606/global-overview-internet-mobile-and-social-media-engagement-and-usage-infographi.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Michael Oliveira, "Two in three Canadians use social media," *Macleans On Campus* 9 October 2013, http://oncampus.macleans.ca/education/2013/04/29/two-in-three-canadians-use-social-media/.

[5] Aaron Zaltzman, "Canadians top world in use of social media," *The Gazette*, 10 March, 2011.

[6] Ibid.

of small businesses in Canada used social media in 2013, an increase of 42 percent from 2012.[7]

In the United States, more than 90 percent of surveyed small business owners used social media

in 2012.[8] Canadian government departments have more than 750 recognized social media

accounts on various platforms, with the number of accounts continuing to rise.[9] In fact, the

Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) have nearly a

hundred different accounts themselves, many run by public affairs officers (PAOs), although

only 26 of those are considered official by the Government of Canada (GC).[10]

This paper will consider to what extent communicators within DND/CAF should

embrace this growing social media trend. In order to answer this question, one must consider

how important social media will be to communicating information in the future, particularly as

some experts herald the death of traditional forms of media. The return on investment of social

media (SM) campaigns is another important aspect to consider, given limited time and resources.

Finally, one must consider current Government of Canada policy in order to determine if, given

policy limitations, an effective SM campaign can even be conducted.

There are numerous questions and concerns surrounding social media's use both in

Canada and overseas. Domestically, issues such as the recent "Cpl Bloggins" Facebook scandal,

in which an anonymous Canadian soldier posted insulting and derogatory comments, only serve

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[7] Ryan Holmes, "Social media shake up: Big changes coming for Canadian businesses," *Financial Post*, 9 February 2014, http://business.financialpost.com/2014/02/09/social-media-shake-up-big-changes-coming-for-canadian-businesses/.

[8] Ari Herzog, "90 Percent of Small Business Use Social Media Infographic," *Social Media Today*, 18 September, 2012, http://socialmediatoday.com/ariherzog/820046/90-percent-small-business-use-social-media.

[9] Treasury Board Secretariat, *New Official Social Media Accounts Inventory* (Ottawa, January 2014).

[10] Ibid.

to highlight the potential dangers associated with social media. The United States Armed Forces are also grappling with the issue of social media and security, as posting deployment lengths and locations, the availability of soldiers' personal information online, and geo-tagged photos which show locations of equipment or troop movements, all pose challenges.[11] Overseas, one must consider the efforts of the CAF's adversaries. The Taliban, for instance, has been very effective at reaching the Afghan population by quick and extensive social media efforts, often relying on disinformation to either claim credit for an activity or to blame NATO forces for civilian deaths. Social media accounts are now also used by military organizations as tools for internal communications. While there are many other possible questions and concerns surrounding the use of social media in DND/CAF, in order to provide a more focused discussion, this paper will deal with social media in a domestic Canadian context as part of the CAF's official communications efforts.

THE FUTURE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Public communications for DND/CAF are largely conducted by PAOs.[12] As per Defence Administrative Order and Directive (DAOD) 2008-0, Public Affairs Policy states, "the role of Public Affairs (PA) is to promote understanding and awareness among Canadians of the role, mandate and activities of the C[A]F and DND, and of the contributions that the C[A]F and DND

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[11] Peter Reft, Airman 1st Class, "Social media: Unwanted eyes may be watching Airmen, families," *U.S. Airforce News*, 26 February, 2014, http://www.af mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/473431/social-media-unwanted-eyes-may-be-watching-airmen-families.aspx.

[12] For the sake of simplicity, the term public affairs officers will be used in this paper to include both military and DND civilian public affairs personnel.

make to Canadian society and the international community."[13] Public affairs practitioners employ multiple means to accomplish this, including reaching out to Canadians directly through speaking engagements or public events, community and stakeholder outreach, and social media campaigns. However, informing Canadians about the CAF through the medium of the mainstream media has been the predominant means by which public affairs has been traditionally conducted.

A changing media landscape, however, has prompted some communicators to question the validity of relying on traditional mainstream media to convey information. Some see the increase of social media as, "a Darwinistic struggle,"[14] between the two types of media, and conclude that traditional mainstream media is dying as a result.[15] This belief contends that the future of communications will be marked by the democratization of news, or "macro-participation,"[16] and will encompass a, "shift from mass media to personal media,"[17] as more of the population participates in the news process. This opinion is shaped by phenomenon such as the explosive growth of platforms such as Twitter, which has more than 645 million users as of 1 January, 2014, with 135,000 users joining every day,[18] tweeting half a billion tweets daily.[19] This

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[13] Department of National Defence, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 2008-1 Accountability and Responsibility for Public Affairs* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1998) http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/dao-doa/2000/2008-0-eng.asp.

[14] Olga Guedes Bailey, Bart Cammaerts, and Nico Carpentie, *Understanding Alternative Media (*New York: Open University Press, 2008), 25.

[15] Rory O'Connor, *Friends, Followers and the Future: How Social Media are Changing Politics, Threatening Big Brands, and Killing Traditional Media (*San Francisco: City Light Books, 2012), 236.

[16] Baily, Cammaerts and Carpentie, *Understanding Alternative Media…*, 25.

[17] Nic Newman, "The Rise of Social Media and its Impact on Mainstream Journalism," *Reuter's Institute for the Study of Journalism Working Paper* (September 2009), 5.

[18] Statistics Brain, "Twitter Company Statistics," last modified 1 January 2014, http://www.statisticbrain.com/twitter-statistics/.

[19] Daniel Terdiman, "Report: Twitter hits half a billion tweets a day," *CNET,* 26 October 2012, http://www.cnet.com/news/report-twitter-hits-half-a-billion-tweets-a-day/.

leads to a pivotal question for PAOs – should they devote limited time and resources to developing their own direct relationships with Canadians through social media, or should they continue to rely predominantly on traditional mainstream media?

The American Mainstream Media Industry

The United States mainstream media (MSM) industry is arguably the most influential in the English-speaking world, yet the decline of even this industry indicates that there is evidence to support MSM doomsayers.[20] In fact, out of concern for the industry, in 2010 the United States Congress commissioned a study of mainstream media to gauge the state of the industry, and to see if it might warrant federal government intervention. Its conclusion was that, "by all measures – income, sales, circulation, and money spent on research and development, the industry is in trouble."[21] A majority of Americans are also pessimistic about MSM, and believe that the industry will perish altogether within a decade.[22] Furthermore, "over the last decades, trust in mass media has declined. It is widely seen as biased and in the hands of special interests. In January 2004, this trust dipped for good below 50 percent in the United States."[23] In 2010, a Pew Research Centre Study found that only one in three Americans trusted the information that was reported in the mainstream media,[24] and by 2012, that number dropped to one in four.[25]

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[20] The American mainstream media is being studied in this paper due to its influence, but also due to the fact that the trends and statistics surrounding this industry have been studied in greater depth than the Canadian version, providing a better opportunity to analyze a comparable situation and allow greater insights into the Canadian MSM industry.

[21] Ingrid Sturgis, *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World?* (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 13.

[22] Sturgis, *Are Traditional Media Dead?...,* 1

[23] Felix Stalder, "Between Democracy and Spectacle: The Front-End and Back-End of the Social Web," in *The Social Media Reader*, ed. Michael Mandiberg (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 245.

[24] Sturgis, *Are Traditional Media Dead...*, 6.

[25] O'Connor, *Friends, Followers and the Future…*, 22.

The loss of trust is reflected in how Americans choose to obtain their news. Author Rory O'Connor states that most Americans, "say they use Internet-based sources such as websites, blogs, and social networking sites," to get their news, as opposed to traditional news sources such as newspapers, television and radio.[26] While this online viewing may indeed include MSM websites, this is still a blow to the MSM industry, which has yet to find a way to sufficiently monetize online viewership, as the majority of online advertising revenue accrues to search engines, news aggregators and social media sites. For instance, one study found that there is only one new dollar of Internet advertising revenue for every seven dollars of print advertising lost due to people accessing their news online.[27]

The American Newspaper Industry

If American mainstream media as a whole is suffering, the beleaguered newspaper industry can be seen as the canary in the coalmine, as it has been the first to plummet, partly in response to increased online competition. In the United States, newspapers are losing nearly 2 percent of their readers on an annual basis.[28] In 2008, the year the recession began, nearly 16,000 journalists lost their jobs, and more than four dozen newspapers ceased operations. In 2009, more than 140 newspapers and 350 magazines went out of business. In less than half a year, from October 2008 to the end of March 2009, the weekday circulation of the country's top daily

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[26] Ibid…, 31.
[27] Robert W. McChesney, "Mainstream Media Meltdown," *Salon*, 3 March, 2013, http://www.salon.com/2013/03/03/mainstream_media_meltdown/.
[28] Robert W. McChesney, *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution that will Begin the World Again* (Philadelphia: Nation Books, 2010), 12.

newspapers declined 7.1 percent.[29] Fourty-five percent of American households received a daily newspaper in 1998, which fell to 30 percent by 2011.[30]

Not only is circulation on the decline, so is revenue. Traditionally, newspapers rely on advertising revenue, including classified ads, for about 80 percent of total revenue.[31] However, "in the second quarter of 2009, newspaper revenues fell a whopping 29 percent from a year earlier, the greatest quarterly drop since the Great Depression, and the 12th consecutive quarterly decline in revenues since 2006."[32]

Classified advertising revenue is particularly suffering, as newspapers are forced to compete with free online classified sites such as Kijiji and Craig's list. Classified advertising used to account for much of the newspaper advertising revenue stream – in 1999, classified ads represented 40 percent of newspaper advertising revenue. That percentage dropped to 22 percent by 2009.[33] Many people in the industry believe that newspaper classified advertising will soon cease altogether – a resounding blow to what used to be such a significant portion of the revenue stream.[34] The decline in print advertising in the American newspaper industry is shown in Figure 1.1.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] O'Connor, *Friends, Followers and the Future*…, 234.

[31] Suzanne M. Kirchoff, "The U.S Newspaper Industry in Transition," in *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World*, ed. Ingrid Sturgis, 15-27 (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 16.

[32] McChesney, The Death and Life of American Journalism…, 13.

[33] Ibid., 27.

[34] James Fallows, "How to Save the News," in *Are Traditional Media Dead*? *Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World?* (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 107.

Print Ad Revenue Continues to Decline

In Billions of Dollars
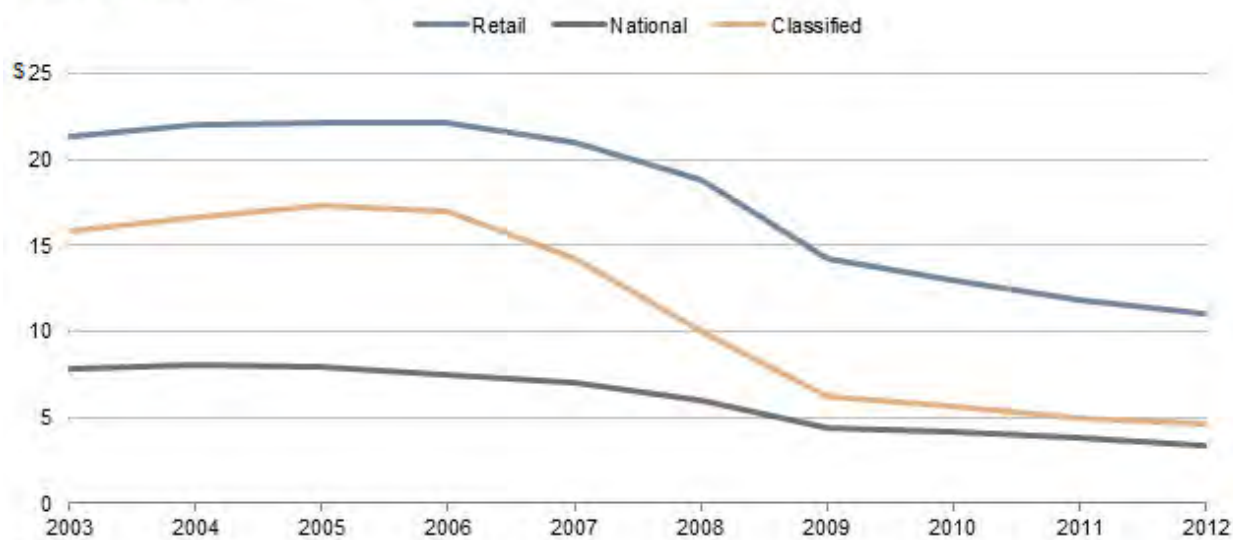
Figure 1.1 – Decline in advertising revenue
Source: Pew Research Centre for Excellence in Journalism, "Newspapers: By the Numbers," 7 May 2013.

Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, refers to the loss of classified and advertising revenue as well as the decrease in circulation as a, "triple whammy,"[35] for the industry. Indeed, in many respects, the future of the newspaper industry looks grim.

Some experts feel that, "the occasional woes of some media firms have been transitory… suggesting that broad economic forces, not the Internet, are the source of their problems."[36] However, while some of the losses may well be due to economic pressures stemming from the

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Dwayne Winseck, "Financialization and the "Crisis of the Media: The Rise and Fall of (Some) Media Conglomerates in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Communication* Vol. 35 No. 3 (2010): 371. http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/2392.

2008 recession, these losses follow a larger trend. The number of newspapers per capita sold in the U.S. has been declining since the 1940s, with newspaper circulation dropping 44 percent between 1947 and 1988.[37] While the population of the US has doubled since 1950, fewer Americans read newspapers today than nearly 65 years ago.[38]

This longer-term decline is often attributed to a changing demographic, as older generations are twice as likely to read newspapers as younger generations.[39] However, even older Americans are reading newspapers less. For those born in 1946 or earlier, the proportion of people who read a newspaper the day before decreased from 65 percent in 1998 to 53 percent in 2008.[40] In the same timeframe, a study showed the number of Baby Boomers recently having read a newspaper fell from 48 percent to 38 percent.[41]

In an attempt to salvage revenues, many newspapers have turned to paywalls. However, research indicates that most users will not pay for news content.[42] The Los Angeles Times, for instance, implemented a paywall in 2003. Their online readers dropped from 729,000 to 19,000, and the newspaper abandoned the paywall less than two years after imposing it.[43] In fact, a study of three dozen newspapers showed that only 1 percent of users opted to pay for content.[44] While

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[37] McChesney, *The Death and Life of American Journalism…*, 31.
[38] McChesney, *The Death and Life of American Journalism…*, 31.
[39] Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. "Newspapers Face a Challenging Calculus," in *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World*, ed. Ingrid Sturgis, 41-47 (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 42.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid…, 43.
[42] Bill Mitchell, "Clues in the Rubble: A User-First Framework for Sustaining Local News," in *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World?,* ed. Ingrid Sturgis, 152-168 (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 154
[43] Ibid…, 156.
[44] McChesney, "Mainstream Media Meltdown"…, 2.

some newspapers have been able to make paywalls work, this only represents exceptions to the rule, such as those offering specialized content, those which cater to wealthy users, or in cases where the subscriptions can be written off as business expenses.[45] For instance, community newspapers, which exclusively provide news content for a particular region, have sometimes been able to make the paywall system work – the Lima News in Ohio is one such newspaper.[46]

The American Broadcast News Industry

The decline in MSM is not just limited to newspapers, but carries into the American television and radio broadcast news industry as well. The decline is less dramatic here, however, being more consistent with expected age demographics – with younger generations turning to the Internet for information, and older generations still tuning in to their televisions.[47] In fact, television viewing as a whole is increasing in the U.S., with the average American watching more than four and a half hours of television a day in 2012, a figure that has remained relatively consistent over the last four years.[48]

However, the broadcast news industry is still under threat. Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of 18 to 29 year olds that used network news broadcasts to inform themselves on political campaigns dropped from 39 to 23 percent.[49] Even more dramatically, between 2007 and 2008 alone, "the three network news broadcasts lost 21 percent (CBS), 13.5 percent (ABC) and

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[45] McChesney, "Mainstream Media Meltdown"…, 2.

[46] Mitchell, "Clues in the Rubble: A User-First Framework for Sustaining Local News"…, 156.

[47] Bruce A. Williams, and Michael X. Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment (*New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7.

[48] David Hinckley, "Americans spend 34 hours a week watching TV, according to Nielsen numbers," *New York Daily News*, 19 September, 2012, http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/tv-movies/americans-spend-34-hours-week-watching-tv-nielsen-numbers-article-1.1162285.

[49] Williams, and Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News*…, 7.

10.1 percent (NBC) of their eighteen-to-thirty-four-year-old audience."[50] While television itself

seems to be able to better withstand the onslaught of Internet-based content, network news in

particular does not seem to be holding up as well.

Furthermore, Americans aren't watching television the way they used to, which has

implications for the broadcasting industry. Phenomena such as the huge array of available

television channels and even the advent of the remote control have reduced viewer loyalty. For

example, in 1950, viewers watched an average of three channels per week. In 1980 that rose to

six, and by 2009, had risen to 16, fragmenting viewership, and challenging the previous

domination of network television, including network news.[51]

One way in which this is demonstrated is through examples of television viewership for

popular American programs. In 1983, nearly half of all Americans, 106 million people, watched

the final episode of *M*A*S*H*.[52] In 1998, 76 million watched the final episode of *Seinfeld*,

another hugely popular sitcom.[53] In 2012, audience (and thus advertising) fragmentation was

further pronounced, as *Breaking Bad*, another extremely popular television series, captured just

10 million viewers in its final episode.[54] While each of these shows was a prominent cultural

sensation, audience fragmentation meant that fewer people were reached, despite the popularity

of the shows and a growing U.S. population.

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Williams and Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News…*, 78.

[52] Richard Warnica, *et al*, "Why the future of TV may not include TV," *Canadian Business* 22 October, 2013, http://www.canadianbusiness.com/companies-and-industries/why-the-future-of-tv-may-not-include-tv/.

[53] Brian Lowry, "Seinfeld's' Finale Ends Up in Sixth Place of All Time," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 May, 1998.

[54] Richard Warnica, et al, "Why the future of TV may not include TV"…

In addition, possibilities such as availability of digital recording and web-based content allow users to watch only what is of interest to them – which often does not include commercials, changing the relationship between advertisers and broadcasters, and making television advertising less valuable.[55] Historically, companies advertised through traditional MSM because it was the best way to reach their audiences, not because there was any particular desire to support the industry.[56] Now that there are more options, companies are starting to put their advertising dollars elsewhere – largely online. In 2009, the Pew Research Centre's Project for Excellence in Journalism, declared that it, "is now all but settled that advertising revenue – the model that financed journalism for the last century – will be inadequate to do so in this one."[57]

The blurring of lines between information and entertainment has also been shown to be a blow to traditional news broadcasts, as mainstream news must compete for audience share among a greater array of programming. In 2004, for instance, "21 percent of eighteen to twenty-nine-year-olds named *The Daily Show* and *Saturday Night Live* as their regular source of campaign news, up from 9 percent in 2000.[58] An online 2009 poll conducted by *Time Magazine* named Jon Stewart as Americas must trusted newscaster,[59] and, in a telling statement of the

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[55] Jason Deign, "How the Internet is Changing the Way We Watch Television," *Cisco's Technology News Site*, 6 January, 2013, http://newsroom.cisco.com/feature-content?articleId=1119737&type=webcontent .

[56] McChesney, *The Death and Life of American Journalism…*, 66.

[57] Eric Black, "The State of the News Media, 2009," *MinnPost,* 16 March, 2009.

[58] Williams and Delli Carpini*, After Broadcast News…*, 7.

[59] Ibid…, 8.

priorities and interests of Americans, in 2004, people cast more votes to select the winner of

American Idol than to vote for the President of the United States.[60]

There is another form of online competition for the news industry. In 2006, more

Americans, "played such popular online games as Warhammer [*sic*][61] or participated in virtual

communities such as Second Life than watched the cable news networks."[62] And yet, online

gaming is only the second most popular thing that Americans do on the web – while 10.2 percent

of Americans' Internet time is spent online gaming, social media sites now account for 22.7

percent of all time spent online.[63]

These are all sobering trends for the future of the broadcast news industry in the United

States. While Americans do continue to watch television, the television news industry is being

challenged by audience fracturing, the replacement of traditional media by infotainment,

increasing online options, and perhaps most importantly, a decline in television advertisement.

The Canadian Mainstream News Media

The Canadian media sphere presents a slightly more complicated picture. While some

industries are still performing quite strongly, there have also been job losses and the closure of

some outlets, particularly with respect to television and newspapers. Many newspaper

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[60] Mark Sweney, "American Idol Outvotes the President," *The Guardian,* 26 May, 2006, http://www.theguardian.com/media/2006/may/26/realitytv.usnews.
[61] Warhammer Online was not released until 2008, the author is likely referring to World of Warcraft. Pete Haas, "Warhammer Online Shuts Down, Private Server Launches," 18 December 2013, http://www.cinemablend.com/games/Warhammer-Online-Shuts-Down-Private-Server-Launches-61141.html.
[62] Williams and Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News…*, 91.
[63] O'Connor, *Friends, Followers and the Future…*, 235.

organizations themselves see these losses as proof of the decline of traditional media. However,

some experts, including James Compton, a professor of Information and Media Studies at the

University of Western Ontario, caution that:

> The impact of the internet on the newspaper industry must be understood within
> the context of a restructuring commercial news industry. This restructuring, which
> has been going since at least the 1970s, long before the emergence of online news
> sites, has resulted in the further concentration of newspaper ownership, cross-
> media ownership, declines in the sizes of newsroom staff and declines in certain
> areas of news coverage.[64]

Carleton University journalism and communications professor Dwayne Winseck echoes

this sentiment, asserting that the majority of the problems Canadian media organizations faces

come not from a lack of audience or revenue shortfall, but from bloated debt levels incurred by

media organizations in costly takeovers and increased media ownership concentration.

Ownership concentration of the Canadian media industry rose from 54 percent in 1992, to 61

percent in 1996, to 72 percent in 2008,[65] with a corresponding rise in debt of the eight major

Canadian media companies from $8.8 billion in 1995 to a high of $24.8 billion in 2001.[66]

Winseck claims that this high level of debt, and not a systemic problem with the news industry in

Canada, has resulted in layoffs, the closure of some newspapers, and even the failure of large

media conglomerates. For instance, Canwest Global's debts soared in the early 2000s after its

$800 million purchase of Western International Communications in 1998, and its 2000 $3.2

million purchase of the Hollinger newspaper chain and the National Post.[67] Despite the fact that

Canwest's profits were in the healthy 20 percent range during the early 2000s, and were still at

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[64] Mike Gasher, David Skinner, and Rowland Lorimer, *Mass Communication in Canada Seventh Edition* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2012), 300.

[65] Winseck, "Financialization and the "Crisis of the Media"…, 379.

[66] Ibid…, 384.

[67] Ibid…, 375.

16 percent in 2009, its large debt levels played a major factor in the company's move to bankruptcy protection that year.[68]

Overall, Canadians trust mainstream media more than Americans do, which may help to account for the greater stability of the Canadian MSM industry. A 2011 online Globe and Mail study found that 90 percent of Canadians felt information from mainstream media was reliable, whereas only 26 percent felt social media networks were trustworthy.[69]

The Canadian Newspaper Industry

In fact, according to some studies, audience sizes are actually growing. In early 2014, Newspapers Canada president and CEO John Hinds asserted that newspaper revenue has been fairly stable in Canada, reporting that newspaper closures have been relatively few, and that circulation has been much more stable than in the United States over the last several years.[70] NADbank, which compiles information on the newspaper industry in Canada, claims that half of all Canadians read a hard copy newspaper every day, with three-quarters reading one at least once per week.[71] Factoring in print and digital editions of newspapers, readership among even

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[68] Ibid…, 383.
[69] Mike Vardy, "Online Survey Shows Canadians Trust Mainstream Media over all Others," *The Next Web*, 12 May, 2011, http://thenextweb.com/ca/2011/05/12/online-survey-shows-canadians-trust-mainstream-media-over-all-others/#!ucQoQ.
[70] Jenny Lee, "Newspapers Healthy Despite Kamloops Daily News Closure," *Vancouver Sun*, 6 January, 2014.http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Newspapers+healthy+despite+Kamloops+Daily+News+closure+industry+spokesman+says/9355158/story.html.
[71]Ibid.

young Canadians, those 18-24, is 74 percent, and for Canadians aged 25-34 is 76 percent,[72] as compared to the American statistics of 59 and 63 percent, respectively.[73]

However, when one considers another measure, and focuses instead on total paid circulation, the numbers are less positive.[74] While paid circulation of newspapers increased from 1950 to 1990, in 1950 paid circulation was actually above 100 percent of households, dropping to 30 percent of households by 2010.[75] Between 1995 and 2010, total paid circulation dropped from 5.3 million to 4 million.[76]

Furthermore, advertising, the lifeblood of newspaper revenue, is falling, and industry-wide, is predicted to drop by almost 20 percent between 2012 and 2017.[77] Already, annual online advertising revenue in Canada surpasses the value of the entire Canadian newspaper industry. In 2012, a global study estimated Canada's print newspaper industry was worth $2.1 billion. By comparison, Canada's 2012 online advertising revenue was $3.2 billion, and was estimated to increase to $6.4 billion by the end of 2017.[78] While a surge of online advertising may appear potentially positive for the news industry, similar to the situation in the U.S., much advertising revenue will go to non-MSM websites. Even when newspapers do obtain digital advertising, up

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[72] NADBank, "2012 Study: More Than a Readership Study," last accessed 4 February, 2014, http://nadbank.com/en/system/files/2012OverviewofResults_0.pdf.

[73] Pew Research Centre for Excellence in Journalism, "Newspapers: By the Numbers," last updated 7 May 2013, http://stateofthemedia.org/2013/newspapers-stabilizing-but-still-threatened/newspapers-by-the-numbers/.

[74] As opposed to considering the circulations of all newspapers, including free editions.

[75] Communications Management, "Sixty years of Daily Circulation Trends: Canada, United States, United Kingdom," 6 May, 2011: 6, http://media-cmi.com/downloads/Sixty_Years_Daily_Newspaper_Circulation_Trends_050611.pdf.

[76] Ibid…, 5

[77] Steve Ladurantaye, "Newspaper Revenue to Drop 20 percent by 2017, Report Predicts," *The Globe and Mail*, 5 June, 2013, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/newspaper-revenue-to-drop-20-per-cent-by-2017-report-predicts/article12357351/.

[78] Ibid.

to 80 percent of that advertising occurs via networks which take 50 percent of the revenue, making it even more difficult for newspapers to make up for lost revenue.[79]

Not surprisingly, as advertising revenue shifts, profits have been falling among newspaper chains. The Star Media Group, which publishes the Toronto Star as well as Harlequin Romance novels, lost $1.3 million in the first half of 2013.[80] Postmedia, which owns newspapers across the country, including the National Post, the Calgary Herald, the Ottawa Citizen, and the Montreal Gazette, lost $14 million in the first quarter of 2013.[81] Nearly 60 percent of the company's revenue comes from print advertising, which continues to fall – dropping $27 million over the same period.[82] Mirroring the American situation, classified ads, which bring in 16 percent of the company's revenue, fell by 20 percent in the same timeframe. Quebecor's Sun Media, Canada's largest newspaper chain, is similarly facing lower profits, newspaper closures, and layoffs. While the company is still profitable, those profits decreased from $71.4 million in 2012 to $36.5 million in 2013.[83] Sun Media cut 500 jobs and closed two production facilities in 2012, and in July of 2013 announced the elimination of 360 jobs, eight newspapers as well as three free daily newspapers.[84] While the Canadian newspaper industry has been faring better than that of the United States, it too is suffering in what is now increasingly seen as a structural problem instead of a temporary issue due to a faltering economy.

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[79] McChesney, "Mainstream Media Meltdown"…

[80] Steve Ladurantaye, "Torstar Profits Plunges 44 Percent," *The Globe and Mail*, last updated 1 August, 2013, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/torstar-profit-plunges/article13523147/.

[81] Steve Ladurantaye, "Five Things about the Canadian Newspaper Industry," *The Globe and Mail*, 12 April, 2013, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/five-things-about-the-canadian-newspaper-industry/article11121196/.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Vanessa Lu, "Sun Media closing 11 papers, cutting 360 jobs," *The Toronto Star*, 16 July, 2013, http://www.thestar.com/business/2013/07/16/sun_media_closing_11_papers_cutting_360_jobs.html.

[84] Ibid.

To save money, many companies have reduced the number of newspapers published per week, with several no longer producing Sunday editions.[85] A majority of national Canadian newspaper publishers, including the Star Media Group, Postmedia, Quebecor and the Globe and Mail, have already instituted, or plan to introduce, a paywall system to regain lost revenues. Whether or not this will be more successful than in the United States remains to be seen – although a 2011 Canadian Media Research Consortium survey reported that 92 percent of Canadians said they would look elsewhere if their preferred news websites instituted a paywall.[86]

Other newspapers are fighting back via other means. La Presse invested $40 million in an application, La Presse+, which gives readers the ability to download news in text and video on their iPad for free.[87] Since advertising creates much more revenue than online subscriptions, and considering the difficulty in instituting paywalls, it was decided to make content free and to focus on advertising revenue. Correspondingly, much effort was put into the advertising component of the application, with focus groups used to determine which kinds of advertisements were viewed and then recalled afterwards.

La Presse estimated that between April 2013, when the application launched, and September 2013, it would have 200,000 users. Instead, that number was reached as early as May.[88] However, the success of its application will mean reduced sales in the printed version of

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[85] Winseck, "Financialization and the "Crisis of the Media"…, 367.
[86] Gasher, Skinner, and Lorimer, *Mass Communication in Canada*…, 301.
[87] Steve Faguy, "Can La Presse Save the Newspaper Industry by Doing Everything Wrong?," last modified 22 October, 2013, http://blog.fagstein.com/2013/10/22/la-presse-plus-analysis/.
[88] Ibid.

the newspaper, and with no corresponding reduction in the company's fixed costs such as its printing presses and delivery trucks, the newspaper's publisher admits that, "the more La Press+ is a success, the more the acceleration toward the end of the paper."[89] However, this is an example of a Canadian newspaper adapting to profitably deliver an online product without paywalls or user fees. This fledgling model has garnered the attention of newspapers across Canada. If it proves to be a success, it may be a sign of hope for an industry that many people feel is dying.

The Canadian Broadcast Industry

There are mixed messages in the Canadian television industry. The President and CEO of Quebecor Inc. predicted that the Canadian industry could, "face extinction."[90] Others say the threat is being exaggerated and counter that most Canadians continue to watch TV traditionally instead of switching to Internet TV.[91] In 2013, Canadians watched about 28 hours of television per week, watching another three hours online.[92] According to a Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) report, in 2012, there was actually a 1 percent increase in the number of households that subscribed to television service, with local advertising and profits both increasing from 2010 to 2011,[93] and viewers watching mostly (87.5 percent)

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[89] Ibid.

[90] QMI Agency, "Canada's TV industry could 'face extinction': Peladeau," canoe.ca news, 8 October 2012, http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2012/10/08/20267846 html.

[91] LuAnn LaSalle, "Pulling the Plug on Traditional TV is still a Slow moving Trend in Canada," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 November 2013, http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/pulling-the-plug-on-traditional-tv-is-still-a-slow-moving-trend-in-canada-232262021.html.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, "CRTC releases 2011 Financial Results for Canadian Conventional Television Stations," News Release, 4 April 2012, http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/com100/2012/r120404b.htm.

Canadian content.[94] 2012 also saw a revenue increase in the distribution of television

programming, from $8.6 billion in 2011 to $8.7 billion in 2012.[95]

However, some of the concerns stem not from the current statistics, but emerging trends.

While the number of "cord cutters," those who eschew television for online content, are in the

minority, their numbers are increasing. A 2013 Google study states that one in six Canadians do

not have cable television at all, but watch their television exclusively online.[96] These cord cutters

are predominantly younger Canadians, representing one in four of those aged 18 to 24 – a 60

percent growth from 2010. For the 25-34 age bracket, one in five are cord cutters, a 270 percent

growth over the same timeframe.[97] Older Canadians were most likely to watch television

traditionally.[98] One of the concerns arising from this trend stems from the fact that Canada's

Broadcasting Act mandates that television providers such as Bell, Rogers, and Shaw contribute

five percent of their earnings to Canadian programming."[99] Providers of online content are not

necessarily based in Canada, and are thus not obliged to pay into the system to help pay for

Canadian content.[100] Between this, and the growing propensity for advertisers to shift their

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[94] Canadian Media Sales, "Canadian Media Statistics," last accessed 2 February, 2014,
http://www.canmediasales.com/canada-101/canadian-media-stats/.

[95] Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, "CRTC issues Annual Report on the State of the Canadian Communication System," News Release, 26 September, 2013,
http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/com100/2013/r130926.htm.

[96] The Canadian Press, "One in Six Canadians Relies Exclusively on Online Video Services," last updated 12 July 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/business/story/1.1414548.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Dan Fricker, "How Digital Distribution is Transforming the Canadian Television Industry," *The Huffington Post*, 26 July, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/dan-fricker/how-netflix-changed-everything_b_3654983.html.

[100] Ibid.

funding towards online and mobile advertising,[101] many feel that the long term outlook for

traditional TV is bleak, despite the continued high TV viewership ratings.[102]

The Canadian Radio Industry

Despite the competition arising from phenomenon such as satellite radio, the radio

market in Canada remains solid and stable. Perhaps due to its ability to allow multi-tasking more

than any other medium, allowing people to listen to the radio while at work, for instance, or

driving a car (the latter accounting for half of all radio-listening time),[103] Canadian radio stations

have maintained a healthy listenership. In response to concerns that television would replace

radio, in 1951 William S. Hedges, a formative figure in the history of American radio,

prophetically stated that radio, "will always have a place in many bathrooms, kitchens, dining-

rooms where television would never penetrate."[104] Despite the nearly ubiquitous nature of

television, and the vast changes in technology since that statement was made, it still largely holds

true, with the convenience and portability of radio allowing the medium to accompany people in

even more situations than before. Consequently, in contrast to other forms of mainstream media

such as newspapers, even the younger population remains wedded to radio, with 60 percent of

teenagers engaged in radio listening in 2011.[105]

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[101] Richard Warnica, et al, "Why the future of TV may not include TV"…

[102] The author was unable to find a correlation similar to the U.S. in terms of television viewership as a whole and the viewing of network news. The majority of reports discuss the industry as a whole. However, given similar trends in demographics and culture, as well as other areas with respect to news and media, it is likely that the television news industry in Canada faces similar challenges.

[103] Val Maloney, "Taking the Pulse of the Radio Industry," *Media in Canada*, 7 November, 2012, http://mediaincanada.com/2012/11/07/taking-the-pulse-of-the-radio-industry-study/.

[104] Michael Stamm, *Sound Business: Newspapers, Radio and the Politics of the New Media* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 185.

[105] Maloney, "Taking the Pulse of the Radio Industry"...

As a whole, revenues for radio in Canada remained stable. However, because the majority of radio revenue comes from local advertising,[106] differences in economic situations across the country have meant that some radio stations did quite well, while struggling regions, such as Kitchener/Waterloo or Hamilton, actually saw their revenues fall.[107] Fortunately for this industry, and unlike that of newspapers, this difference is deemed to be circumstantial rather than structural, and overall, despite the fact that there was a loss of 465 jobs in the industry in 2012, as a whole, the industry is considered to be doing quite well, at least with respect to FM stations.[108] The number of FM stations actually grew in 2012, with 11 new stations created, and revenues increasing slightly over 2011 numbers.[109] AM stations, on the other hand, moved in the reverse direction, with five stations closing in 2012, and revenues declining by 1.6 percent from the previous year.[110]

Where news-gathering is concerned, however, this may be considered small comfort. With perhaps some exceptions such as CBC Radio 1 and some AM stations devoted to news, the radio industry is not that significant in terms of actual news creation. While radio does devote air time to covering local or national news, it is the least significant medium in terms investigative, in-depth reporting, and is not well-placed to replace traditional news reporting.

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[106] Steve Ladurantaye, "Five Things about the Canadian Radio Market," *The Globe and Mail*, last updated 19 June, 2013, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/five-things-about-the-canadian-radio-market/article12676163/.

[107] Gary McDonald, "Think Tank: Canadian Radio is a Billion Dollar Industry," 15 June 2013, http://www.frontsidegroup.com/think-tank/think-tank-canadian-radio-is-a-billion-dollar-industry/.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ladurantaye, "Five Things about the Canadian Radio Market"…

[110] Ladurantaye, "Five things about the Canadian Radio Market"…

With respect to CBC radio, Canada is one of many nations, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Spain and Italy, whose public broadcasting system is under increasing financial pressure. In fact, in many ways Canada's public broadcaster fares worse than those of comparable nations:

> Among 18 major Western countries, Canada was third in terms of the lowest level of per-capita public funding for public broadcasting in 2011. Only New Zealand and the United States (U.S.) posted lower levels. At $33 per inhabitant (all amounts in Canadian dollars, unless indicated otherwise), Canada's level of funding was 60% less than the $82 average across the 18 Western countries.[111]

This is visually depicted in Figure 1.2 below.

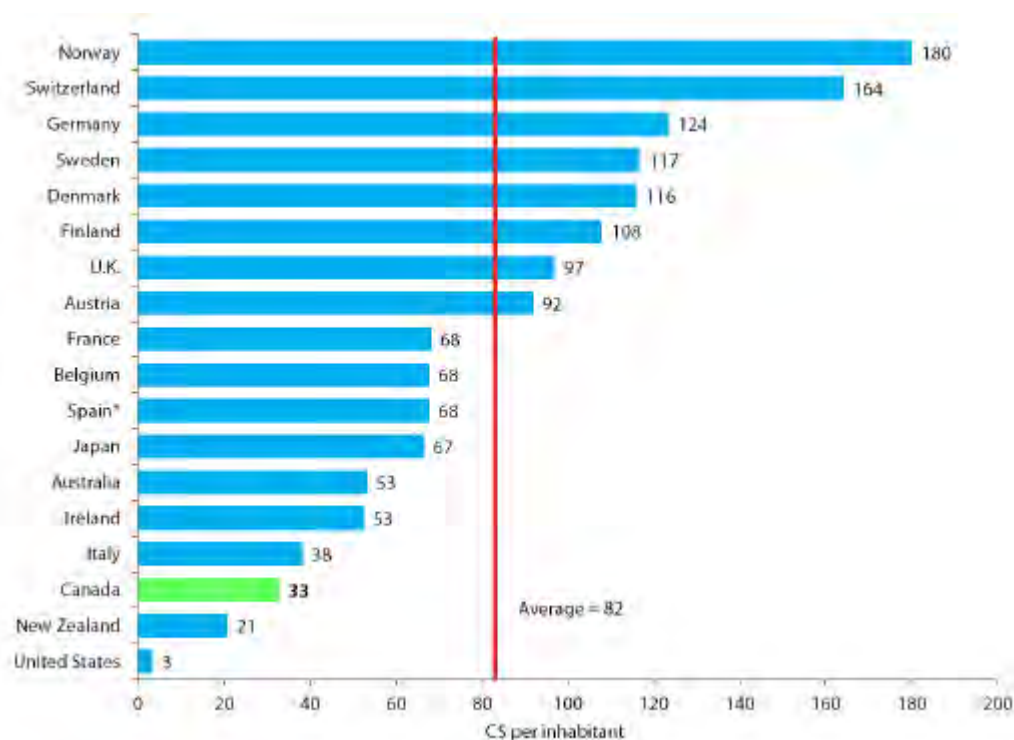Figure 1.2 – Per capita public funding for public broadcasters, 2011
Source: Nordicity, "Analysis of Government Spending for Public Broadcasting and Other Culture in Canada," October 2013.

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[111] Nordicity, "Analysis of Government Spending for Public Broadcasting and Other Culture in Canada," October 2013, http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/_files/cbcrc/documents/latest-studies/nordicity-analysis-public-broadcasting-en.pdf, 2.

Many nations have turned to for-profit operations arms to help subsidize public broadcasting.[112] In Canada, despite a dramatic overall increase in government spending since 2006, CBC's own funding began a steady decline in 2008.[113] In 2012 alone, the government announced a 10 percent cut, representing $115 million over three years, resulting in 650 job losses, a programming reduction, advertising on two of its radio stations to make up for lost revenue, and the removal of Radio Canada International from short-wave radio and satellite.[114] While this is within the 5-10 percent range of spending cuts seen across many government organizations during the same timeframe, many believe that public broadcasting is specifically targeted under the current Conservative Government. In 2011, the Conservative Party surveyed its members as to if they thought taxpayers get good value for money spent on the CBC, with one Conservative MP starting a petition to cease CBC funding altogether (with the intent to privatize the institution).[115]

There is also evidence of increasing government influence on the CBC. The entire board of directors, for example, has been replaced by Conservative Party appointees, with seven out of

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[112] Manuel Castells, *Communication Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 71.

[113] Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, "More on the Impact of Past and Future Cuts of CBC," Briefing Note, 28 February, 2012, http://www.friends.ca/blog-post/10587.

[114] Bruce DeMara and Liam Casey, "CBC Announces Major Cuts, Plans to Shed 650 Jobs over 3 Years," *The Toronto Star*, 4 April 2012, http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2012/04/04/cbc_announces_major_cuts_plans_to_shed_650_jobs_over_3_years.html.

[115] Dan Oldfield and Karen Wirsig, "Canadian Budget Bill Contains Rude Shock for the CBC," *The Toronto Star*, 30 May 2013, http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2013/05/30/canadian_budget_bill_contains_rude_shock_for_the_cbc.html.

the eleven board members Conservative Party donors.[116] Bill C-60, part of the 2013 budget implementation bill, includes a clause which would permit the cabinet to approve salaries, working conditions and collective bargaining positions for the CBC. This is seen as another cause for alarm.[117] If it passes, "the government will sit at the management table of the largest news organization in the country," giving the government far more sway on the operations of the corporation and destroying the arms-length relationship between the government and the CBC as mandated in Canada's Broadcasting Act.[118]

In 2011, Bill C-461 was introduced, passing its second reading in 2013. This bill would allow the majority of CBC's operations, including all news-gathering activities, budgets, interview strategies, programming, and more to be accessed through the Access to Information process, subject to an "injury test" to see whether or not the corporation would be harmed by the release of requested information.[119] This could give rivals an advantage and undermine CBC's competitiveness in the market. The bill would also remove the CBC's right to safeguard private information it collects for its reporting, again subjecting this information to an injury test, potentially making the subjects of CBC investigations as well as the organization's journalistic sources vulnerable, potentially dissuading whistleblowers to come forward with information.[120]

These threats to Canada's public broadcaster demonstrate that even though the institution may be less vulnerable to some of the market-related difficulties than private industry, it too

[116] Tim Naumetz, "Feds Threatening Journalist Independence of CBC under new Power over Wages, Benefits, Collective Bargaining, say Critics," *The Hill Times Online*, 1 May 2013, http://www.hilltimes.com/news/politics/2013/05/01/feds-threatening-journalist-independence-of-cbc-under-new-power-over-wages/34568?page_requested=2.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Oldfield and Wirsig, "Canadian Budget Bill contains rude shock for the CBC"…
[119] The Canadian Association of Journalists, "Bill C-461: A Threat to Canada's Public Broadcaster," Press Release, 22 November, 2013, http://www.caj.ca/?p=3635.
[120] Ibid.

faces significant challenges, which may undermine its own viability and credibility as a news-gathering organization.

Mainstream News Media Summary

It therefore becomes apparent that in many respects, the news-gathering abilities of traditional mainstream media are in peril, in Canada as well as in the U.S. This is exacerbated by the ease of social media in entering the market. Anyone with access to a computer and the Internet can now join the news conversation, without costly materials, equipment, infrastructure, technology or physical delivery required. While traditional media may in fact also use platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, this requires an increasing investment of time, while not relieving them of the fixed costs associated with news creation and dissemination.

Where newspapers, the traditional forum for discussion, debate, and in-depth reporting are concerned in particular, the situation seems particularly grave, although less in Canada than in the United States. While television is so far holding its own, many predict the industry to face even more competition from Internet-based platforms in the coming years, given improving technology and a changing demographic in which younger people today expect to be part of the news conversation. They also are more likely to obtain their information from a plurality of sources, a growing number of which are online,[121] changing the creation and delivery of news.[122]

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[121] O'Connor, *Friends, Followers and the Future…*, 31.

[122] Even more alarmingly for the current structure of the MSM industry, a recent *Time* study has proclaimed that brains of the younger generation are "wired" differently in terms of processing information. The younger generation is thought to be mentally flexible and capable of multitasking, but unable to concentrate on anything for long periods of time, lacking patience, and drawn to instant gratification. This is potentially detrimental to the understanding of difficult or complex issues.   O'Connor, *Friends, Followers and the Future…*, 31.

What this means for public affairs practitioners is that the media have a reduced capability to set the public agenda, in what has been described as *multiaxiality* – the multitude of possible information sources:

> Multiaxiality suggests three things. First, the increase in the number and types of mediated gates through which information is disseminated means that traditional journalists are losing control of the agenda-setting process. Second, it means that a wider range of actors have the potential to influence the discursive environments. And third, it means that the ability of any set of actors to control the discursive environment is tenuous and unstable…[123]

Thus, the traditional mainstream media is no longer the only means by which to provide information or shape the public dialogue.[124] This is seen by some as part of a changing media landscape, with some predicting a greater shift from mass media to personal media, where the model is no longer "one-to-many," but multimodal, or "many-to-many."[125] It is seen as the democratization of news, as populations are now participants in the news process. The phrase, "the people formerly known as the audience," was coined to help explain this change. [126] This point of view sees blogs as "little First Amendment machines," views podcasts as turning over radio to the users, video-sharing sites as replacing television, and individual citizens as editors who choose their own front pages.[127] Indeed, the availability of technology allows people to publish cheaply and easily, to share their viewpoints and to find others with similar interests and points of view.

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[123] Williams. and Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News…*, 121.

[124] Ekeanyanwu, Kalyango and Peters, "Global News Flow Debate in the Era of Social Media Networks: Is the U.S. Media Still the World's News Leader?," *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 8, No. 3 (February 2012), 136-160, http://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/60 , 157.

[125] Nic Newman, "The Rise of Social Media and its Impact on Mainstream Journalism." *Reuter's Institute for the Study of Journalism* Working Paper, September, 2009, 5.

[126] Jay Rosen, "The People Formerly Known as the Audience," in *The Social Media Reader*, ed. Michael Mandiberg, 13-16 (New York: New York University Press, 2012),13.

[127] Rosen, "The People Formerly Known as the Audience,"…, 13-14.

The Growth of Social Media

It is certainly true that Canadians have espoused the Internet as a whole and social media in particular. By the end of 2012, 79 percent of Canadian households had an Internet subscription,[128] and as mentioned, Canadians spend more time online than citizens of any other country. Canadians are equally enthusiastic about social media. In fact, social media is so popular in Canada that in 2011, according to research firm eMarketer, on a per capita basis, Canada had the most social networking users in the world.[129] While Canadians still trust mainstream media more than social media, a 2011 survey found that one in three Canadians, "considered sites such as Twitter and Facebook important news sources," and that two-thirds of those who use social networking sites do so in order to follow the news.[130]

There is in fact a well-publicized trend towards the use of social media worldwide. It has indeed gained such acceptance that in the United Kingdom, the Queen of England chose YouTube as the means by which to broadcast her 2007 Christmas greetings. Similarly, in 2008 the American Presidential debates were available through YouTube as well as through traditional television channels.[131]

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[128] Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, "CRTC issues Annual Report on the State of the Canadian Communication System"…

[129] CBC, "Unfriended? Canada Might Lose Our Social Networking Dominance," last updated 1 March, 2012, http://www.cbc.ca/strombo/news/unfriended-canada-might-lose-our-social-networking-dominance html.

[130] Lauren McKeon, "Online Social Networking Changing the way Canadians get their News: Study," last updated 27 April, 2011, http://j-source.ca/article/online-social-networking-changing-way-canadians-get-their-news-study.

[131] Castells, *Communication Power...*, 67.

Social media is thus becoming accepted as an alternate source of news, and represents an increasing option for politicians, businesses and others to take their message directly to the people, bypassing the mainstream media.[132] According to a report by consulting firm Communications Management Inc.:

> The fundamental reality about media in the 21st Century is that technology now threatens to challenge traditional media's role as intermediary – because media from other places, content-producers and advertisers will all be able to send media-like content directly to consumers.[133]

By giving advertisers a way to contact consumers without using traditional media, and by "unbundling" media content so consumers can access only the stories they are interested in, the Internet is fundamentally changing the communication process worldwide.[134] Advertising is the foundation of the media industry, and by providing consumers and advertisers other options, many forecast the end of the news media industry as we know it.[135]

What are the conclusions professional communicators can draw from this rather dire assessment of the mainstream news media? Is social media killing traditional media, as many claim, and many statistics seem to show? Is it thus a logical conclusion that the end is nigh for traditional media, and that the future of communications lies with social media? There are many who would disagree.

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[132] Newman, "The rise of Social Media and its Impact on Mainstream Journalism"…, 5.
[133] Communications Management, "Sixty years of Daily Circulation Trends"…, 1.
[134] Ibid., 2
[135] Ibid.

The Relationship between New and Traditional Media

In fact, Google itself, which has often been blamed for the unbundling of news and the corresponding decline in advertising revenues for the MSM, recognizes the importance of a functioning news industry. CEO Eric Schmidt has stated that high-quality journalism is "essential to the functioning of modern democracy,"[136] and a Google executive agreed that even Google's future is reliant on interesting, informative content online, which is in turn reliant on mainstream media sources.[137] This demonstrates that some believe there is a symbiotic rather than competitive relationship between mainstream and other types of online media.

A Pew study which tracked news content accessed in the United States between 2009 and 2010 noted the linkage between MSM and social media – blogs in particular. It found that, "more than 99% of the stories linked to in blogs came from legacy outlets such as newspapers and broadcast networks."[138] This study seems to indicate that social media refers readers to traditional media, as opposed to trying to replace it.

While this does not hold true for all types of social media, since some platforms, such as YouTube, were not found to significantly link or correlate to traditional media, neither were they in direct competition. The Pew study found that the most-watched videos on YouTube were of a novel or entertaining nature. When the videos were indeed news oriented, many of them were actually about events overseas, in a language other than English, and on an issue largely ignored

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[136] Fallows, "How to Save the News"…, 104.
[137] Fallows, "How to Save the News"…, 105.
[138] Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. "Newspapers Face a Challenging Calculus"…, 83.

by mainstream media.[139] Thus, in a newsworthiness comparison, it can hardly be viewed as competition, splitting the same audience, or even filling the same need. For instance, the top viewed YouTube video in March 2009 was that of, "an unidentified city council meeting that was interrupted by the sounds of flatulence."[140] In 2012, the honour went to the South Korean music video *Gangham Style*.[141] In this sense, it is difficult to imagine a viewer replacing his or her nightly newscast with YouTube videos.

Platforms such as Twitter were somewhere in between, as some American studies show 50 percent of Twitter links referred visitors to mainstream media outlets,[142] and a 2010 UK study showed that 73 percent of the shared links on Twitter came from traditional media.[143] Facebook has also increasingly referred its members to mainstream media outlets. In 2011, for instance, Facebook delivered 400 percent more referrals to BBC than it had just two years earlier.[144] The Economist magazine asserts that social media, "has been one of the fastest growing sources of new traffic to the website,"[145] causing some analysts to challenge the notion that social media networks detract from mainstream media. Rather, they say, SM in fact often works to increase MSM audiences.[146] Not only do SM sites deliver visitors to MSM news, but it has been found

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[139] Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, "New Media, Old Media: How Blogs and Social Media Agendas Relate and Differ from the Traditional Press," In *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World?*, ed. Ingrid Sturgis (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 100.
[140] Ibd., 98.
[141] Sean Ludwig, "Here are YouTube's 10 most popular videos of 2012," last accessed 30 April 2014, http://venturebeat.com/2012/12/18/most-popular-videos-2012/.
[142] Ibid., 83.
[143] Newman, Nic, "Mainstream Media and the Distribution of News," *Reuter's Institute for the Study of Journalism* (September, 2011), 26.
[144] Newman, "Mainstream media and the distribution of news"…, 15.
[145] Rachel Bartlett, "7 Insights into Social Strategy at The Economist," last modified 5 September 2013, http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/seven-ways-the-economist-is-serving-the-social-audience/s2/a553981/.
[146] Newman, "Mainstream media and the Distribution of News"…, 21.

that the visitors from sites such as Facebook and Twitter spent 29 percent more time there, and view 20 percent more pages than do visitors through search engines such as Google.[147] Visitors from social media are in fact considered to be so valuable for some news organizations that some, such as the Times of London, are considering allowing Facebook users to bypass their paywalls.[148]

Those who see social media as a promoter of the news industry also assert that, in addition to making more information and more potential sources available to assist with news reporting, social media involves more people in the news as a whole, stimulating interest. A 2011 Pew Research study found that to some extent, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are, "pathways to news," leading some people to news items that they otherwise would not have been aware of or sought out.[149]

Some MSM organizations take advantage of the popularity of social media sites such as Facebook to their advantage. During the Arab Spring, Al Jazeera ran advertisements on Twitter and Facebook, particularly targeting American audiences. The popularity of the site surged, with traffic increasing by 2,500 percent, with up to 50 percent of the audience coming from North America, hitherto an untapped audience.[150]

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[147] Ibid., 51.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Amy Mitchell,Tom Rosenstiel and Leah Christian, "What Facebook and Twitter Mean for News," last accessed 4 February, 2014, http://stateofthemedia.org/2012/mobile-devices-and-news-consumption-some-good-signs-for-journalism/what-facebook-and-twitter-mean-for-news/.

[150] Steven Maher and Michael Corcoran, "Al-Jazeera, as Endorsed by Hilary Clinton," *The Guardian*, 10 March, 2011.

While this may be true, there are many who believe MSM will lose its audience because it simply cannot compete with the timeliness of social media. These people often cite Twitter as being able to break news much more quickly than MSM. A notable example was the 2011 death of Osama Bin Laden, which was live-blogged by a Pakistani citizen when he tweeted his annoyance at helicopters flying overhead at 1 a.m. The next morning he realized what had happened, and tweeted that this was actually the killing of Bin Laden. His Twitter followers surged, and the news started to spread across the world, aided by fellow tweeter, Keith Urbahn, Chief of Staff to former U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Urbahn tweeted the information in advance of official sources, but later conceded that, "My source was a connected network TV news producer. Stories about 'the death of MSM' because of my 'first' tweet are greatly exaggerated."[151] Regardless, the mainstream media were clearly behind Twitter in actually reporting the information, with official sources failing to confirm the event, preventing the media from verifying the story for nearly an entire day. However, despite the delay, when official sources were ready to confirm the news via mainstream media:

> President Obama's address was watched by 56 million people on nine different networks, the biggest audience since his election. Rather than replace core news outlets, social media acted a bit like a cheerleader, getting the ball rolling and stimulating interest in the main event.[152]

In fact, mainstream media later took the lead in providing in-depth commentary, amplification and context, further demonstrating its value. This is becoming a niche role for mainstream media. While it is often true that platforms such as Twitter are the first to break a story, it is also often true that the facts are not corroborated before "facts" are tweeted. Some

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[151] BBC News, "Bin Laden raid was revealed on Twitter," last update 2 May 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-13257940.

[152] Newman, "Mainstream media and the Distribution of News,"…, 32.

would argue that the huge number of people participating in the conversation means that mistakes are corrected quickly in the Twitterverse, but there are still challenges in using Twitter as a main source of information.

A case in point arises in what has been called the "Twitter Revolution," the protests in Iran following the June 2009 election. While social media, including Twitter, helped spread photos and information of the riots and government abuses, especially once news correspondents were removed from Iran, a good deal of the information tweeted was incorrect, such as a vast overestimation of the number of protestors, and a false declaration of the elections' invalidity.[153] Younger, computer-savvy Iranians, as well as Western activists were more likely to have their voices heard, skewing the reporting. While MSM is often criticized itself for skewed reporting, this shows that SM is subject to the same pitfalls.

Whereas news organizations used to be under tremendous pressure to be the first to get the story out, that function now seems to be shifting. More and more, mainstream media's role has not been to lead with the story, but to take a multitude of inputs, sort through which are credible, which are important, and provide more context. In the case of the Iran protests, social media was seen as a tool for distributing information, but it was not a replacement for mainstream media, and, ultimately, "most people still saw the protest through the lens of the mainstream media."[154]

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[153] Newman, "The Rise of Social Media and its Impact on Mainstream Journalism"…, 27.
[154] Ibid…, 30.

Many mainstream media outlets have also taken the, "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" approach when it comes to social media. A number of correspondents have their own blog, Twitter account, or other such medium to reach out to the public. This approach has often been met with success; the most read blogger in the United Kingdom is BBC's Robert Peston.[155] He feels that the information he has gleaned in his research is not always used in his broadcasts, so he still has a wealth of other information to contribute to the public. He has a strong following, partly due to the fact that he is already seen as an authority in his area of expertise. He also sees this as an opportunity to engage with his audience through the comments he receives, allowing him to gain better perspective on what is of interest to his viewers, as well as potential story angles to pursue.[156] This is another example of the symbiotic relationship between social and mainstream media.

A similar phenomenon has been reported by The Guardian technology correspondent Jemima Kiss. Her relationship with her Twitter followers is two-way; in addition to informing her followers, she asks for help and advice, and crowdsources questions for her podcast topics. She now has nearly 40,000 followers, who she in turn helps push to the Guardian's website.[157]

News organizations themselves have also started to participate in social media in order to remain engaging. In January 2014, for example, BBC introduced a trial of Instafax, in which it

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[155] Ibid…, 35.
[156] Robin Hamman, "BBC's Robert Peston: The Blog is at the Core of Everything I Do," *Cybersoc*, 03 Sep 2009, http://www.cybersoc.com/2009/09/bbcs-robert-peston-the-blog-is-at-the-core-of-everything-i-do.html#.UvEKCE8o5Ms.
[157] Newman, "The Rise of Social Media and its Impact on Mainstream Journalism"…, 37.

delivered three 15-second video clips of the top news stories to Instagram users daily.[158] The

BBC also encourages the public to contribute to their news stories, while ensuring that

submissions are authenticated before using any information, images or videos. Similarly, it has

started to use Flickr, Twitter and YouTube in its own reporting, trying to balance its use of

verified facts with speed of reporting and richness of content available through those sites.[159]

CNN is also trying to balance its connection with its audience while maintaining a

reputation for strictly factual reporting. To meet this challenge, the organization created a

separate platform called iReport, where it invites users to create the content on this website in a

model similar to Wikipedia, while making a clear distinction between it and its verified,

authenticated CNN reporting.[160] These are just some of the ways that the broadcast media is

adapting to allow users to be more interactive, to contribute content, and to keep their interest

and market share.

The newspaper industry is also adapting in order to remain viable, although there are

multiple schools of thought regarding this industry. Some feel that in an era of "selfies,"

narcissism and greater interest in personal stories, combined with shorter attention spans and

audience fragmentation, there is simply less demand for the in-depth type of information that the

print industry has typically provided. Others feel that the demand is there, considering that social

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[158] Leila Haddou, "BBC Targets Social Media Users with Instagram Video News," *The Guardian*, 20 January, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/jan/20/bbc-targets-social-media-users-with-instagram-video-news

[159] Newman, "The Rise of Social Media and its Impact on Mainstream Journalism"…, 10.

[160] Jack Schofield, "iReport: Now Anyone Can be a Journalist," *The Guardian*, 2 June, 2008, http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2008/jun/02/ireport.

media often leads to more interest and engagement from the public – but that there needs to be a new business model in order to monetize the industry.[161]

In any event, the newspaper industry is not likely to go down without a fight. As discussed, many newspapers are already trying different ways to monetize their product, including paywalls and free applications focused on increasing advertising revenue. There are many other initiatives and ideas aimed at saving the newspaper industry. Some of those include changing copyright law to protect information from being used by competitors such as news aggregators. Other legislative initiatives include a bill introduced in the United Sates called the Newspaper Revitalization Act of 2009.[162] If passed, this act would allow local newspapers to operate as non-profits, making them tax-exempt, and considering them a public service. There are some who are trying to redefine revenue-sharing with aggregators such as Google, in order to give newspapers greater compensation for the stories they produce, and some organizations, such as the Associated Press Newswire, are trying to better capture their information online in order to control and better profit from that information being used by other organizations.[163] Studies are also being conducted to determine if the government needs to step in to save local media, as evidenced by the 2010 Congress study, as well as the 2009 Columbia University report, *The Reconstruction of American Journalism*. Options such as funding local media through surcharges

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[161] Turi Munthe, "How Technology Turned the News into a Converation," In *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World?*, ed. Ingrid Sturgis (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 79.

[162] Daniel S. Park, "The *Associated Press v. All Headline News*: How Hot News Misappropriation will Shape the Unsettled Customary Practices of Online Journalism," In *Are Traditional Media Dead? Can Journalism Survive in the Digital World?,* ed. Ingrid Sturgis (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2012), 131.

[163] Ibid., 132-133.

for radio and television licenses, or through public endowments, have also been brought forward for consideration.

What does all this mean for the public affairs practitioner in DND/CAF? It is clear that social media is a growing phenomenon, in Canada and worldwide. This should not be dismissed as a fad, as the increasing popularity of SM sites shows no signs of abating.

However, neither is SM free from the monetization problems that plague traditional media. In terms of profitability, one must take into account that social media, while wildly popular, has itself yet to be financially viable. For instance, YouTube was created in 2005, and although it was purchased by Google in 2006 for $1.65 billion – as of 2009, it was still losing money.[164] Google predicted that YouTube would start to be self-sustaining by 2010, although has been subsequently unwilling to release profitability figures.[165]

Furthermore, advertising rates have been falling. This may be partially due to the surge of videos uploaded, which fragment the advertising market. In 2011, approximately 72 hours of video was uploaded on YouTube every 48 hours; in 2013, 72 hours of video were uploaded every minute.[166] Whether decreased advertising rates are due to more options for advertisers within the site, a perceived lack of return on investment considering a fragmented market, or more online platforms from which to choose, advertising on YouTube is not as lucrative as it used to be. Rates for "pre-roll" ads, those which play in advance of the feature video, dropped

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[164] Gasher, Skinner, and Lorimer, *Mass Communication in Canada…*, 267.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Anita Hamilton, "It's Getting Harder to Make Money on YouTube," *Business Week*, 27 April, 2013, http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-04-22/its-getting-harder-to-make-money-on-youtube.

from "$9.35 per 1,000 views in June of 2012 to $6.33 in March."[167] Popular YouTube site

AVbyte saw earnings decline more than 50 percent in early 2013, despite attracting the same

number of viewers.[168] What this means for the future is not clear. Perhaps this is a temporary

aberration; perhaps this is a sign that platforms such as YouTube do not provide stable return on

investment for either advertisers or content producers. In a time of rapid technological and social

change, it may simply be too early to predict with any certainty that currently popular social

media platforms are likely to stay that way, or that they have an inherent advantage over other

types of media when it comes to making money.

Twitter is facing the same challenge. Despite being worth $18 billion, investing heavily

in advertising technology and increasing the size of its advertising team, the company has yet to

make a profit.[169] After going public in November 2013, the company lost $132.4 million in the

first quarter of 2014, in comparison to its $27 million losses as a privately-held company over

the same timeframe in 2013.[170] While many analysts see increasing advertising revenue and the

sites' 255 million monthly users as signs of potential profitability in the future, in its seven-year

history that has not yet come to pass.[171] According to *Time Magazine* business reporter Victor

Luckerson, "that hardly makes Twitter unique in today's tech landscape. Increasingly, Internet

firms – typically with a social bent – are amassing billion-dollar valuations without earning a

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[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Pia Gadkari, "How does Twitter make money?," *BBC*, last updated 6 November 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24397472.
[170] Barbara Ortutay, "Twitter earnings higher, but still loses money," *Stuff.co*, 30 April 2014, http://www.stuff.co.nz/technology/60048448/twitter-earnings-higher-but-still-loses-money.
[171] Ibid.

dime."[172] Other social media giants such as Instagram and Pinterest are in the same situation, and others, such as Facebook, have recently shown a decrease in profitability.[173] This does not mean that social media is a flash in the pan, or a trend that is showing signs of reversing. Indeed, the major social media players are all seeing increases in their user base, and are becoming ever more popular and pervasive. However, this means that traditional media are not alone in struggling with issues of monetization and profitability.

To put this all into context, despite a decrease in profitability, warnings of its imminent death, and evidence of audience fragmentation, the mainstream media continues to play a strong role in setting the public agenda. A majority of Canadians still look to and trust MSM for information, despite the many challenges the industry faces. While there are more choices available, and other forms of media may be the first to break a story, it is still the traditional media which gives the news context, and which most Canadians still turn to. At the same time, it is also undeniable that the use of social media continues to grow, in Canada and around the world.

Thus, PAOs should not assume that the MSM is passé or anachronistic. Traditional mainstream media should remain a sizeable focus for public affairs practitioners, although effort should be expended to, "be where the people are,"[174] which, increasingly, is on social media.[175]

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[172] Victor Luckerson, "These 8 Internet Companies Are Worth Over $1 Billion—But They Haven't Made a Dime," *Time*, 29 October, 2013, http://business.time.com/2013/10/29/these-8-internet-companies-are-worth-over-1-billion-but-they-havent-made-a-dime/.

[173] Christopher Mims, "Five Reasons why this is the Worst Earnings Report Facebook has ever Issued," *Quartz*, 1 May, 2013, http://qz.com/80462/five-reasons-why-this-is-the-worst-earnings-report-facebook-has-ever-issued/.

[174] Ines Mergel, *Social Media in the Public Sector* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 15.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The growth of social media has not been lost on the CAF. Many public affairs

practitioners, as well as a portion of the CAF leadership itself, have already chosen to invest time

in establishing a social media presence. In fact, there are approximately 100 DND/CAF accounts

that exist today.[176] To what extent, however, these efforts are recouped, or what the return on

investment (ROI) is, is difficult to determine.

Difficulties can arise when the motivation behind creating social media sites is merely to,

"be where the people are." If the goal is simply to have a Facebook page because there are 1.3

billion people worldwide on the site,[177] to establish a Twitter presence because it is one of the

fastest growing SM platforms in existence, or to create a SM presence due to pressure from the

chain of command, then performance measurement will be hard to gauge. If the goal in and of

itself is not clear and meaningful, it will be impossible to adequately measure it.[178] In other

words, the strategy itself should not be the goal – or the tactics should not dictate the

objectives.[179] Marketing expert Olivier Blanchard explains:

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[175] An additional point drawn from this analysis is that, due to the linkages between mainstream and social media sites, stories that are of interest to MSM may well be picked up by social media, even without the efforts of PAOs. This may even be seen as more credible, as in this case it would be others who would find the CAF worthy of discussion and attention, and not the institution itself. However, this third-party linkage removes the CAF's participation in the discussion. These are all relevant factors which must be taken into consideration when deciding to what extent efforts should be placed into one type of media or the other.

[176] Ian McKenna, Senior Marketing Advisor, ADM(PA), telephone conversation, 31 March, 2014.

[177] Statistics Brain, "Facebook Statistics," 1 January, 2014, http://www.statisticbrain.com/facebook-statistics/.

[178] Iris Uitz, "Social Media – Is It Worth the Trouble?," *Journal of Internet Social Networking & Virtual Communities*, Vol. 2012 (2012): 7, http://www.ibimapublishing.com/journals/JISNVC/2012/313585/313585.pdf.

[179] Olivier Blanchard, *Social Media ROI: Managing and Measuring Social Media Efforts in Your Organization* (Indianapolis: Que Publishing, 2011), 12.

>Whenever I hear people say that their company either has or sells a "social media strategy," I cringe. There is no such thing as a "social media strategy." It is kind of like having a "telephone strategy" or an "email strategy." It's a meaningless buzzword. What you do have, however, are business objectives and strategies to achieve these objectives. Start with those and incorporate *social* into them.[180]

Government of Canada *Social Media Measurement Guidelines* agree, stating, " just like all other channels, you should only use social media to support a communications strategy that has clear objectives and clear ways to measure whether the objectives have been met."[181]

Return

Thus, the first part of understanding ROI is to determine what success looks like, what the organization's objectives are, and thus what constitutes a "return." In order to be used to best effect, social media efforts should integrate seamlessly with other communication efforts and objectives, be used to amplify other information, provide timely updates, visuals, and in general, complement and improve other communication goals and efforts (as opposed to operating in a silo).

To understand what those communications objectives should be, one must return to overarching PA policy, DAOD 2008, which again states that, "the role of Public Affairs (PA) is to promote understanding and awareness among Canadians of the role, mandate and activities of the C[A]F and DND, and of the contributions that the C[A]F and DND make to Canadian society

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[180] Blanchard, 16.
[181] Government of Canada, "Social Media Measurement Guidelines," GCPedia, last updated 24 March 2014, http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/social_media_measurement_guidelines.

and the international community."[182] While usually subservient to the public information role, there is also an internal communications aspect to public affairs, as chains of command are responsible to integrate PA, including internal communications, into their doctrine and operations.[183]

In addition, the federal measurement guidelines state that some objectives of a public sector social media campaign should include recruitment, crisis communications, outreach, consultation, and delivery of services.[184] Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART).[185] For instance, given a goal of "outreach," criteria could be a percentage increase or target number of supporters or followers, increased discussion about one's organization, sharing government information via actions such as re-tweets, forwards, or comments, and increased commentary about the organization's content in blogs or articles.[186]

However, some experts caution against relying too much on statistics, even those related to the criteria listed above, in order to determine the success or failure of social media efforts:

> The measurement of social media marketing performance indicators is very complex and has to deal with numerous variables. Isolating single dimensions and calculating the specific impact is hardly possible. Furthermore, each social media activity has a specific goal and therefore a different measurement metric.[187]

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[182] Department of National Defence, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 2008-1...*
[183] Ibid.
[184] Government of Canada, "Social media measurement guidelines"…
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Uitz, "Social Media – Is it Worth the Trouble?"…, 7.

Put another way, "the problem with trying to determine ROI for social media is you are trying to put numeric quantities around human interactions and conversations, which are not quantifiable."[188]

The situation is not necessarily easier for companies that have easier goals to measure, such as profit. Despite the increasing amount of effort put into SM campaigns, the majority of businesses are not seeing a direct return on this investment. If increased sales represent the primary metric, social media has in most cases failed to live up to its hype, since, "with a few notable exceptions, social media campaigns lose money."[189] One study showed that fully 85 percent of social media investments lose money or at best break even.[190] Worldwide studies show that generally, only one-third of marketers report a positive return on SM investment, with a mere 23 percent indicating that they believe that they have an effective social media advertising campaign.[191]

Is this failure to adequately demonstrate a positive return on the time, effort and money of a social media campaign a sign that resources spent on social media are in fact wasted? There are experts who believe that, even for businesses, linking social media efforts to increased sales or profits measures the wrong thing. They believe that brand awareness, audience growth and

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[188] Ibid., 8.

[189] Ian Lurie, "Taking the Long View: Social Media's Real ROI," *Washington Technology Industry Association* (blog), 1 May 2013, http://wtiablog.org/2013/05/01/taking-the-long-view-social-medias-real-roi/.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Cooper Smith, "One-Third Of Marketers Generate A Return On Their Social Media Efforts," *Business Insider,* 13 January 2014, http://www.businessinsider.com/one-third-of-marketers-generate-a-return-on-their-social-media-efforts-2014-1.

improved customer relations, while more difficult to measure, are in fact the real benefits of

social media efforts.[192]

Thus, instead of using sales metrics, followers/reach, positive sentiment, and engagement

should be the primary indicators of a successful social media campaign.[193] This approach sees

social media as a longer-term investment, with the first goal being merely to obtain people's time

and attention. From there, a relationship can be built, with trust, the real value, being built over

time.[194] However, as discussed, measuring human sentiment is difficult to measure through

measuring statistics. Furthermore, many organizations get lost in the attempt to measure

everything, causing confusion instead of clarity.[195] As Blanchard says:

> Countless companies spend an inordinate amount of time measuring things that
> were neither critical nor relevant to diagnosing the effectiveness of their programs
> and campaigns. If the golden rule of business measurement is "measure what
> matters," the golden rule of social media measurement is "just because you can
> measure it doesn't mean that it matters."[196]

Indeed, there is an overwhelming number of measures and matrices to measure social

media marketing success, including Share of Voice (the number of brand mentions in relation to

a particular industry or competitive market), Issue Resolution Rate (the measure of the resolution

of public inquiries via social media), Sentiment Ratio (the ratio of positive to negative brand

mentions), [197] to brand awareness, engagement, reach, and other related metrics.[198] Formulae are

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[192] John Heggestuen, "The Most Effective – and Least Effective – Ways to Measure a Brand's social media strategy," *Business Insider*, 24 January, 2014, http://www.businessinsider.com/the-social-roi-myth-2-2014-1.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Frank J. Kenny, "Frustrated by your Chamber's Social Media ROI?," last accessed 23 April 2014, http://frankjkenny.com/frustrated-by-your-chambers-social-media-roi/.
[195] Blanchard, *Social Media ROI…*, 32.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Uitz, "Social Media – Is it Worth the Trouble?"…, 10-11.

also used to calculate the change in revenue compared to the cost of SM activities to determine return on marketing investment.[199] In fact, there are now so many calculations, models, and ways of interpreting data that there is a new measure – the ROI of ROI, which considers to what extent is it helpful or necessary to invest time in amassing and interpreting data surrounding social media.[200]

In this ever-increasing and complicated world of ROI, PAOs must remain focused on what their goals and objectives are. For most government communications, reach and participation are the easiest and most relevant measurements to determine the effectiveness of a SM campaign. To this end, there are an increasing number of tools, both free and at a cost, which can help to determine these metrics. Some of the most popular tools are discussed in Appendix 1, Common Measurement Tools for Social Media Campaigns.

There are a great many ways of measuring social media interest and activities, including some from social media platforms themselves. Facebook, for instance, has a service called Insights, which allows administrators to monitor Facebook activity, including the number of engagements, likes, comments, and content sharing. Twitter has its own free analytics tool, allowing administrators to see how many times their tweet has been responded to, re-tweeted, favourited, and how many times links have been accessed. While tracking each platform

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[198] including last-touch attribution, measuring the last SM activity's effect on revenue, marketing mix modeling, considering incremental changes from each SM marketing effort, predictive modeling, using past information to predict audience engagement levels, and agent-based modeling, considering how marketing affects the intent and choice of consumers. Guy Powell, Jerry Dimos, Steven Groves, *The Roi Of Social Media: How To Improve The Return On Your Social Marketing Investment* (New York: Wiley, 2011), 208-210.

[199] Ibid., 201.

[200] Ibid., 212.

separately may be an option for smaller organizations, large organizations, especially those who use a multitude of platforms, could quickly be overwhelmed by trying to track information separately.

Once again, one must be wary of relying exclusively on the numbers when it comes to assessing the effectiveness of a social media campaign. Just because one may have a large number of likes, fans or followers, this does not represent the level of engagement, understanding or interest. One article on SM ROI used the saying, "talk is cheap," and followed it with, the statement, "and re-tweets and likes are even cheaper."[201] This was indeed found to be true during an online *Save the Darfur* campaign between 2007 and 2010. The movement had more than a million members, with 80 percent encouraged to join by their Facebook friends.[202] The vast majority of those members did not contribute to the cause – 99.76 percent of members never donated any money, and 72.19 percent never recruited any other members.[203] While the large number of members suggested that many people were engaged and supportive of the issue, in reality, support for the cause by most members was shallow, with many investing no effort to further it.[204]

This is not to say that the number of members was meaningless – that number itself could have been used to some benefit. For instance, the organization could have used these numbers to

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[201] News Staff, "Social Media Underwhelms: Armchair activities Aren't Doing All That Much," *Scientific Blogging*, 4 March 2014, http://www.science20.com/news_articles/social_media_underwhelms_armchair_activists_arent_doing_all_much-130928.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

try and demonstrate that there was in fact a groundswell of support in order to influence the actions of others. One has to be careful, however when interpreting participation in social media, as the number of supporters, likes, followers, forwards or other common metrics may not mean as much as they may initially indicate.

There are other studies which demonstrate the danger in relying on the metrics when assessing the effectiveness of campaigns. In March 2014, an Interactive Advertising Bureau study found that 36 percent of all Internet traffic is fake, resulting from computers infected by viruses which are programmed to visit certain websites.[205] While this is particularly seen as troublesome for online advertisers who pay for the number of views their sites receive, this information can skew Internet data for all who rely on metrics. Some astute managers and some analytic tools enable discernment of website traffic:

> You can tell it's bot traffic just by looking at the analytics. We'd see a traffic spike in our real-time analytics dashboard and then we would see all of our traffic for the day serve in a couple of hours, or it would all come from users using the same really old version of Internet Explorer. Almost all our users had Flash versions from 2003, according to Google Analytics. That just doesn't happen with real users.[206]

However, one must be sensitized to potential issues, keep a close on analytics results, and know how to interpret these results in order to determine if the statistics reported by analytics tools are true or misleading.

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[205] Suzanne Vranica, "A 'crisis' in online ads: one-third of traffic is bogus," Wall St. Journal, 23 March 2014, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304026304579453253860786362.

[206] Jack Marshall, "Confessions of a Fake Web Traffic Buyer," Digiday.com (blog), 12 November 2013, http://digiday.com/publishers/confessions-bot-traffic-buyer/.

Regardless, there are still a number of other ways to skew the real reach of social media campaigns. For instance, even when real people actually do "like" a Facebook page or comment on a YouTube video, it may be a factory worker, paid to do just that. Organizations referred to as "click farms" pay people to like pages, tweet, post comments and view videos. In 2013, YouTube deleted billions of music videos, and Facebook deleted 14.1 million accounts because it was thought they were fraudulently supported through click farms.[207] Interestingly, it's not just businesses that have been found to use this misleading tactic. The U.S. State Department had more than 400,000 Facebook likes – largely from Cairo, Egypt, an indicator that these likes were in fact bought via click farms.[208] While this is not to suggest that DND/CAF or other Canadian government departments use these methods, a comparative analysis of social media campaigns between Canadian government departments and those of the U.S. could be misleading.

Regardless of the challenges involved, and while it may be impossible to understand all the ramifications of an organization's SM presence, at least some of the metrics surrounding reach and sentiment can and should be measured. Metrics are the only way to determine the approximate reach and engagement of a SM campaign. These are two very basic, but very important means by which to measure the success of such a campaign. Much time and effort go into creating, maintaining and responding to social media efforts, and to simply not consider how many people are engaging with the content, and their sentiments, would be an irresponsible use of those resources.

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[207] Martha Mendoza, "Inside click farms: Selling 'likes' on social media spells big business," *The Associated Press*, 5 January 2014, http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/inside-click-farms-selling-likes-on-social-media-spells-big-business-1.1618538.
[208] Ibid.

Investment

This leads to the next part of the ROI equation – the investment required to conduct a SM

campaign. In this sense, PA practitioners also differ from for-profit corporations in a number of

key ways. For most large corporations, a large portion of this investment is the cost of

advertising. In fact, content marketing[209] is a $118.4 billion industry.[210] Whether that means

creating advertising content, placing advertising on Facebook or YouTube, or hiring companies

such as Taboola or Outbrain to place content in the most lucrative areas of the Internet, there is

an advertising cost component to corporations' social media investment.[211] The CAF does not

have the social media advertising option open to it, as the only money that can be spent on

buying DND/CAF advertising space is for recruiting purposes or for safety-related reasons such

as Public Notices (advising the public of safety-related issues).[212]

This inability to advertise will become a greater obstacle to effective social media

performance in the coming years, given the decline in reach of "organic" social media – that

which is not attributable to paid advertising. Facebook in particular is being criticized for the

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[209] According to the Content Marketing institute, content marketing is the effort to attract and retain customers by consistently creating and curating relevant and valuable media content with the intention of changing or enhancing consumer behavior. Social media is an increasingly growing aspect of content marketing. Content Marketing Institute, "What is Content Marketing?," last accessed 23 April, 2014, http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/.

[210] Danielle Letayf, "7 ways social media will be more expensive this year," *Outbrain* (blog), 17 January, 2014, http://www.outbrain.com/blog/_press/7-ways-social-media-will-be-more-expensive-this-year.

[211] Ibid.

[212] While the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada does not explicitly forbid advertising by DND/CAF, it states that government departments must "co-ordinate advertising planning with PCO, and implementation with PWGSC, in accordance with the Procedures for Planning, Contracting and Evaluating Advertising." For DND/CAF, the only approved advertising expenses are recruiting or public notices. Treasury Board Secretariat, *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, Last Updated 1 April 2012), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?section=text&id=12316. (Confirmed by ADM(PA) Senior Marketing Advisor Peggy Theriault email 26 March 2014.)

decreasing efficacy of organic reach. Partly due to Facebook's popularity, there is an increasing amount of information on its news feeds, meaning that posts rapidly become lost in a sea of competing information. As Facebook itself says, "content that is eligible to be shown in news feed is increasing at a faster rate than people's ability to consume it."[213] (During an average day, an average Facebook user could see 1,500 stories, for instance.[214]) As Facebook and other organizations encourage Internet users to 'like' more things, this "allow[s] Facebook to build a more comprehensive view of the user but at the cost of diluted relevance."[215] It is also a dilution of the impact of each like to an organization, as it vies for the attention of the user with an ever-increasing number of other interests. These phenomena are contributing to a rapid decline in reach. In April 2012, Facebook fan pages reached about 16 percent of the audience who "liked" a particular organization. By February 2014, that number decreased to 6.15 percent.[216] This is not lost on companies who diligently keep track of their SM ROI. In August 2013, 74 percent of survey respondents said their Facebook marketing budgets included spending on paid ads, up from 54 percent in June 2012.[217]

To make matters even more difficult for corporate accounts, in 2013 Facebook announced an algorithm change. The company reported that its users were more likely to post

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[213] Cotton Delo, "Facebook admits organic reach is falling short, urges marketers to buy ads," *Ad Age*, 5 Dec 2013. http://adage.com/article/digital/facebook-admits-organic-reach-brand-posts-dipping/245530/.

[214] Michael Stelzner, "Facebook marketing declines: how business should react," *Social Media Examiner*, 17 January, 2014, http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/facebook-marketing-declines-with-mari-smith-and-jay-baer/.

[215] Matt Owen, "Forrester says Facebook is Failing marketers. Here's why I Disagree," *EConsultancy* (blog), 1 November 2013, https://econsultancy.com/blog/63704-forrester-says-facebook-is-failing-marketers-here-s-why-i-disagree.

[216] Tara Urso, "Your Facebook Page's Organic reach is about to plummet," *Social Media Today*, 24 March 2014, http://socialmediatoday.com/tara-urso/2281751/your-facebook-pages-organic-reach-about-plummet.

[217] Nate Smitha, "Facebook Metrics Defined: Paid Likes vs Organic," *Simply Measured* (blog), 25 September 2013, http://simplymeasured.com/blog/2013/09/25/facebook-metrics-defined-paid-likes-vs-organic/.

their own updates and spend more time on the site if they saw updates from their friends – not businesses.[218] Therefore, the company reduced the branded content of its site – unless companies were willing to pay for advertising. What this means is that if an organization posts an article, only 1-2 percent of its fans will be able to see the post, with the clear message from Facebook being that an organization must pay in order to maintain corporate audience share, or as many put it, "pay to play."[219] This has frustrated many businesses who have invested time and effort in building a fan base through diligent and creative use of Facebook, which is now almost entirely unavailable to them without paying. One blogger likened the change to an email service, in which you worked to build your subscriber base, and then, "once you got your email subscriber list built up, the service provider decided to charge you to send them an email. Not just one email but every single email you ever send."[220] Many marketers are now questioning the utility of increased investment in Facebook.

Other social media agencies that used to be free are also moving to monetize their content. Pinterest is planning to charge between $30 and $40 for 1,000 views (CPM), or to charge companies through a cost-per-click basis.[221] This would allow paid items to be prioritized at the top of searches for relevant material, while looking fairly seamless to the

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[218] Jennifer Slegg, "Facebook News Feed Algorithm Change Reduces Visibility of Page Updates," Search Engine Watch, 23 January 2014, http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2324814/Facebook-News-Feed-Algorithm-Change-Reduces-Visibility-of-Page-Updates.

[219] Urso, "Your Facebook Page's Organic reach is about to plummet"…

[220] Melanie Dodaro, "Is Facebook Organic Reach Dead?," *Social Media Today*, 12 December, 2013, http://socialmediatoday.com/meloniedodaro/1997701/facebook-organic-reach-dead .

[221] Ginny Marvin, "Pinterest Advertisers Could Start Paying For Promoted Pins As Early As Next Month [Report]," Marketing Land, 24 March, 2014, http://marketingland.com/pinterest-advertisers-start-paying-promoted-pins-early-next-month-report-77645 .

viewer, and therefore seeming less intrusive.[222] In fact, it is difficult to tell the difference between promoted and organic pins.[223] With more than 70 million people using Pinterest, as the number of users and postings increases, it will be increasingly difficult to be near the top of the search for those who are not paying for prioritization.[224] In an effort to attain profitability, other social media sites such as Twitter, Linkedin and Tumblr are also moving towards monetizing their sites through advertising revenue. The dilution of content due to the ever-increasing number of players and pieces of information available on these sites means that it will be more difficult as time goes on to stand out without paying for advertising.

For defence communicators, who cannot pay for social media advertising, this inability will most certainly impact the return on effort. However, the question still exists – if investment does not include advertising dollars, what exactly is the cost of social media engagement?

The establishment of attractive, interactive and interesting sites whose metrics are measured may cost money if these functions are outsourced. The primary cost of social media efforts, however, is time. Precisely how much time is a difficult question to answer, however. As with many things, it depends. It depends on how many platforms an organization plans to use, how often they are updated, how responsive the organization is, and, how much it keeps track of metrics and tries to increase its SM effectiveness. Some, such as marketing automation company Pardot promise potential clients that they can help the client's company to, "Rock Social Media

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[222] Lauren Indvik, "Pinterest's First Ads Go Live," *Mashable*, 9 October 2013, http://mashable.com/2013/10/09/pinterest-promoted-pins-live/.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Aaron Taube, "Pinterest's Monetization Plan: Charge Advertisers Up to $2 Million," *Inc.com*, last updated 21 March, 2014, http://www.inc.com/pinterest-plan-to-monetize-charge-1-million-for-ads html.

in 30 Minutes a Day," utilizing Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, and Instagram in that 30 minute period.[225] This, however is wildly optimistic, and since the service promises these benefits largely through automation, may be dangerous as well.

Many organizations have found out this particular danger themselves. For instance, the London Daily Mirror sent out a pre-scheduled Tweet about the 2013 Boston marathon which said, "David Luiz urges Chelsea marathon men to drag themselves over finish line."[226] Since the marathon had been bombed, this pre-planned, automated tweet was insensitive and provocative when issued. Likewise, the day of the Aurora, Colorado mass shooting, American Rifleman, a journal affiliated with the National Rifle Association, posted a pre-planned tweet saying, "Good morning, shooters. Happy Friday! Weekend plans?"[227] If no one is monitoring the offending account, the misstep can go viral before the organization can adequately respond.

Regardless of potential offence, automation in the social media process is seen by many to be antithetical. The *social* in social media is valuable because of a sense of interaction, not broadcast. It is about relationship-building, making people feel valued, and offering a personal experience, which is a major reason why social media, with its many-to-many construct, has been so successful.[228]

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[225] Matt Wesson, "Rock Social Media in 30 Minutes a Day Infographic," *Pardot*, 23 October 2013, http://www.pardot.com/infographic/rock-social-media-30-minutes-day-infographic/ .

[226] Ishbel Macleod, "The dangers of pre-scheduling: Daily Mirror apologises for marathon tweet," *The Drum*, 16 April 2013, http://www.thedrum.com/news/2013/04/16/dangers-pre-scheduling-daily-mirror-apologises-marathon-tweet.

[227] Ibid.

[228] Digimind, "How to Tweet with Impact: 7 Twitter Lessons from the World's Best," *Social Media Forum* (blog), 29 January 2014, http://www.socialmedia-forum.com/blog/2014/01/social-media/how-to-tweet-with-impact-7-twitter-lessons-from-the-worlds-best/.

In addition, having a social media presence, engaging with the public more often, and posting information more frequently, can be a risk in and of itself. Many online exchanges become antagonistic, even insulting. One must use tact and judgment when engaging in online conversations, which can easily spiral into negative sentiment and loss of reputation. This could potentially come from someone who opposes tax dollars being spent on the military, opposition to a particular operation or campaign, anger due to the death or mistreatment of a loved one by the military, or a host of other possible sources of discontent. A social media presence provides a platform for negativity and criticism that may be difficult to combat.

While administrators on sites such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter are able to remove comments, this is fraught with its own difficulties. Some warn that removing negative commentary (unless it is a security threat, or racist, sexist, or otherwise universally offensive), "will only aggravate the commenter, or move the conversation elsewhere. Deleting things on the internet is an illusion anyway, and will bring into question your integrity to not only the complainer, but all your followers."[229]

Normally the best way to deal with such comments is to tactfully respond to de-escalate the situation, or if possible, ignore them altogether. If a response is necessary, it must be rapid in order to diffuse the situation before too much damage occurs. A case in point is a 2008 Motrin video campaign, which targeted mothers who carried their babies in a sling, and thus suffered from back pain. Statements in the video such as, "Wearing your baby in a sling seems to be in

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[229] PennState Social Media Committee, "Handling Negative Comments or Complaints in Social Media," last accessed 23 April, 2014, http://agsci.psu.edu/communications/web/best-practices/social-media/handling-negative-comments-or-complaints-in-social-media.

fashion,"[230] offended many, and the video became the subject of a trending Twitter conversation. With no de-escalation, apologies or withdrawal of the video, the issue was picked up by mainstream media, spreading criticism and anger about Motrin across the United States, before the Vice President of Motrin Marketing apologized.[231] Most of these events occurred within a span of 24 hours over a weekend, demonstrating the importance of continual monitoring and rapid responses, which can be critical to social media platforms which are live 24 hours per day.[232]

In fact, the prevalence of social media has increased the public's demand for rapid responses to questions or comments via social media as a whole. A 2012 study showed that 42 percent of consumers expect an answer to questions asked on social media in less than an hour – damaging the company's brand and reputation if those expectations are not met.[233] While a social media campaign can increase the reach of public information or communication, it comes with a whole new set of responsibilities for responsiveness and flexibility. For those who are already on call to deal with media requests, ongoing operations, or emergencies, this causes an increased burden, and results in yet more platforms and devices to monitor, particularly as Defence Wide Area Network (DWAN) computers, and to an even greater extent, issued mobile devices, are not enabled for many SM platforms. Furthermore, updating SM content from

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[230] Donna L. Hoffman and Marek Fodor , "Can you measure the ROI of your social media marketing?," *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 1 October 2010, http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/can-you-measure-the-roi-of-your-social-media-marketing/.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Matt Beswick, "The Instant Feedback Dilemma – Why Social Customer Service Is a Double-Edged Sword," *State of Digital*, 20 March 2014, http://www.stateofdigital.com/instant-feedback-dilemma-social-customer-service/.

personal mobile devices or computers may be a potential source of concern from a security standpoint.[234]

There are many other ways in which social media campaigns are time-consuming. Engaging in a successful SM campaign requires knowledge of the platform, the audience demographic using each platform, the audience's reasons for being there, as well as their expectations. Content must therefore be tailored to each SM platform. Not only does it seem like spam if the same user sees the same message on each of their social media profiles, the message that may resonate on Twitter may garner no interest on Facebook.[235] As BusinessWeek magazine warns, "You can't fake it or take shortcuts; companies that… dump identical content on different platforms just look stupid."[236]

Understanding each platform that is used is in fact critical. There are different recommended lengths on everything from meta descriptions, to Facebook posts, tweets, video length, different times of day or week in order to most effectively post an update, nuances in tone, vocabulary, images, and a whole host of other factors that must be considered.[237] Knowledge of each of these, and customization of content is essential to running an effective SM program. Spending several hours a week to develop and distribute content that is not read is at

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[234] These are seen as the predominant risks associated with an official SM presence. Despite the fact that official use of SM accounts by the organization would follow relevant regulations, providing more information on a more frequent basis about CAF people, equipment, deployments and operations could also be considered a risk with official SM account use, although much less for this type of use than unregulated, unofficial accounts.

[235] Elliot Martinez, "4 Social Media Blunders Every Company Makes (And How to Avoid Them)," Social Marketing Writing, 17 January 2014, http://socialmarketingwriting.com/4-social-media-blunders-every-company-makes-and-how-to-avoid-them/ .

[236] Steve McKee, "How to Run an Effective Social Media Program," *Bloomberg Business Week*, 20 March 2013, http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-03-20/how-to-run-an-effective-social-media-program#p2 .

[237] Andy Crestodina, "The ideal length for Blog posts, tweets and everything else in your marketing," *Orbit Media Studios* (blog), March 2014 http://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/ideal-blog-post-length/.

best a waste of time. At worst, it does the organization a disservice in terms of reputation and

credibility. Once content is created and posted, an ongoing commitment still needs to endure, as:

> Somebody needs to be in charge of trend watching, content development, calendar creation, writing, editing, posting, interacting, responding (in as close to real time as possible), and, depending on the platforms used, photography, graphic design, video production, and more.[238]

While it is difficult to say how much time this might take, a recent study showed that

nearly 45 percent of small businesses spent six or more hours a week on their social media

program,[239] nearly equivalent to one work day per week.[240] A publication called, *Social Media

for Social Good: A How-To Guide for Nonprofits* suggests the following timelines as reasonable

expectations for investment in a social media program: 15 hours per week for Facebook, Twitter

and YouTube, five hours weekly for digital photography sites such as Flickr, and ten hours

weekly for blogging.[241] A survey of 3,000 American marketers found that more than 62 percent

used social media six hours per week or more, with 36 percent using it eleven hours or more

weekly, as shown in Figure 2.1.

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[238] McKee, "How to Run an Effective Social Media Program...

[239] Ibid.

[240] Discussions with various PAOs indicate that somewhere in the realm of an hour per day is a realistic average in order to implement a modest SM campaign.

[241] Nonprofit Tech for Good, "How Many Hours Per Week Should Your Nonprofit Invest in Social Media?," (blog), 11 July 2012, http://www.nptechforgood.com/2012/07/11/how-many-hours-per-week-should-your-nonprofit-invest-in-social-media/.
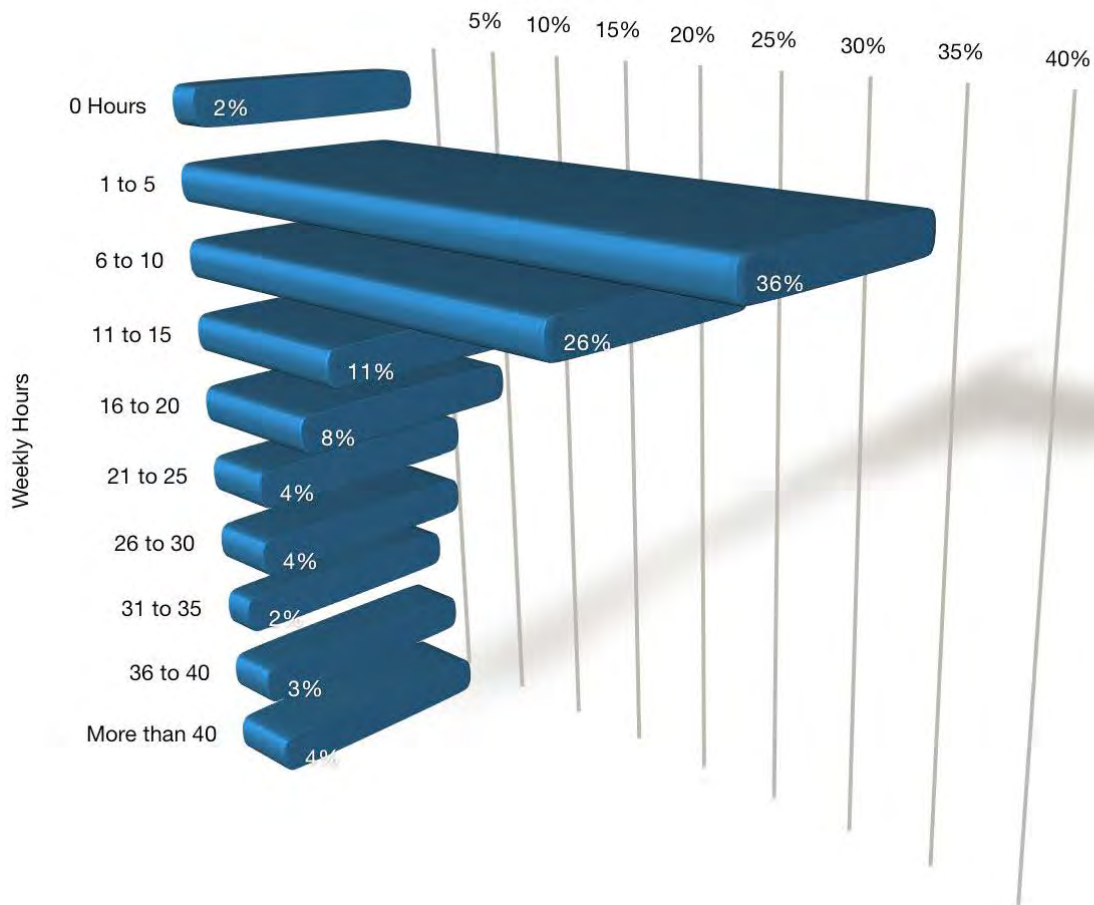
Figure 2.1 – Average Weekly Social Media use by Marketers

Source: Michael A. Stelzner, Social Media Marketing Industry Report, May 2013

This variation demonstrates that there can be a large disparity in effort expended – one can manage a rarely updated Facebook page, or be actively engaged in multiple platforms, and still veritably claim to have a social media campaign.

Whatever amount of time an organization devotes to social media, one must consider the investment in time – the opportunity cost – and ask: of all the activities a communications professional could be working on, is social media the best possible use of that time?[242]

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[242] Blanchard, *Social Media ROI…*, 14.

Example – the Royal Canadian Navy

The CAF's approximately 100 official social media sites are largely managed by public affairs officers, with a number of senior officers also managing their own Twitter accounts. In order to apply some of the theory behind ROI to CAF social media efforts, a snapshot in time will be considered. The data referenced below is taken mostly from late March to early April 2014 from the referenced SM accounts of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

Twitter

With respect to Twitter, the RCN itself has nearly 2,900 followers from a wide cross-section of society – members, retired members, politicians, other CAF and related organizations (such as legions, the MSM, and corporations), as well as those with no apparent ties to the RCN. The RCN tweets relatively frequently, often re-tweeting information from other CAF organizations, or items that are already in the news. While there are some photos that may not otherwise have been seen through the RCNs website or other engagement efforts, generally speaking, the RCN Twitter accounts largely include repackaged information from items such as news releases and official photos, and there are few conversations with the general public on the site. Many of the RCNs tweets are re-tweeted, however – anywhere from two to 15 times on average, often by a naval member to his or her own followers.

Each of the formations – Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT - 920 followers), Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAC - nearly 2,300 followers), and the Naval Reserve (1,050 followers) each have their own corresponding Twitter accounts, as do prominent RCN personnel,

such as the Commander of the RCN (2,300), and the Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic (1,200). As might be expected, the content is similar among all the accounts, and while there are some unique posts for each, the same information is often re-tweeted between them.

There are different perspectives on having multiple accounts for one organization. Some believe that "more is more." There are hundreds of Toronto Police members with their own Twitter account, for example, each with their own unique list of followers. In this way, a more personal relationship with each follower can be established, as the accounts have a more intimate instead of corporate feel – while clearly still being professional accounts. Toronto Police Corporate Communications, which conducts mandatory two-day training sessions with those who are deemed to warrant accounts (such as those with regular interaction with the public and community outreach officers), strongly encourages all members to use the same background format for their accounts – a blue background, with the Toronto Police crest in the centre, and the organization's website on the left-hand side.[243] However, police officers are otherwise free to format their accounts as they see fit, as long as the accounts are appropriate. A further unifying feature is the fact that the Toronto Police have their own site which lists all their officers' tweets over the past 24 hours. It is a simple yet effective way of creating a brand, using it consistently for ease of identification, and allowing followers to identify an account as official, while still maintaining the freedom of individual officers. This helps counter one of the potential threats to maintaining multiple accounts – the ease of an individual to impersonate a corporate account. While of course corporate "look and feels" can be spoofed, impersonation is easier to accomplish

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[243] Meaghan Gray, Corporate Communications Toronto Police Service, Information & Issues Management Section Head, telephone conversation, 23 April 2014.

if there is no consistency between accounts, and one just needs to claim to represent a particular organization.

With respect to the Toronto Police, it would be difficult to establish and nurture these types of relationships and interactions with only one main corporate account. Multiple accounts serve to both amplify the reach of the police as a whole, but conversely can potentially decrease the voice and weight of the main @TorontoPolice Twitter account, as people can choose to follow "their" police officer instead of the force. This approach also exposes two sides of the risk equation. While increased activity and freedom of individual police officers increase the likelihood of an inappropriate or offensive tweet, the approach also serves to mitigate risk. If one police officer shows a lack of judgment, it reflects more on that member, and less on the organization as a whole.

A case in point can be found in considering a CAF example. After an at-sea collision between two RCN ships in August 2013, HMCS Protecteur and HMCS Algonquin, the commanding officer (CO) of one of those ships defended himself and his ship on Twitter, publicly providing information while an investigation was underway. The freedom to post a tweet as a CO allowed this situation to happen – such a comment would not likely have been tweeted by naval PA staff. However, should that have happened, any similar comments would have reflected more poorly on the organization if issued from an official organizational account. Furthermore, while this clearly lacked judgment and professionalism, perhaps in weighing the aggregate impact of the CO, the number of tweets from the CO overall reflected positively on the

navy. There is thus no automatic right or wrong approach on the number or type of accounts that an organization should support.

However, managing SM accounts in a way similar to the Toronto Police, while potentially useful, would be challenging for the CAF. Due to the number of distinctive brands within the CAF (Army, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations, to name but a few), this would be difficult, as this level of unity is unlikely. To even coordinate a common look and feel would likely be opposed by many who finally see SM as a way of expressing their own unique culture (as opposed to websites which are subject to much more stringent applications of the GC's common look and feel requirements).[244]

There are other possible downsides to having multiple SM accounts for one organization. One blog refers to this as "account-itis," or the lack of clarity and confusion caused by too many accounts.[245] An example of this is the printer company Epson, which has so many Twitter accounts that the main company's Twitter account delivers little of value itself. By relegating itself to re-tweeting from its other accounts, it provides no strong corporate voice or identity. Furthermore, even customers who want to reach someone in the company become confused due to the large number of accounts."[246]

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[244] *Common Look and Feel 2.0 (CLF 2.0) Standards for the Internet* have been replaced by a series of standards: the *Standard on Optimizing Websites and Applications for Mobile Devices*, the *Standard on Web Interoperability*, the *Standard on Web Usability*, and the *Standard on Web Accessibility*. However, the main tenets found in *CLF 2.0* still apply. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Web Standards for the Government of Canada*, 30 April 2013, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ws-nw/index-eng.asp.

[245] John Morrison, "Seriously: How Many Twitter Accounts Does a National Brand Need?," *Sprout Social*, 6 August 2012, http://sproutsocial.com/insights/multiple-twitter-accounts/.

[246]Ibid.

Others provide a more mixed explanation, and say that, "by having several accounts you risk the chance of having fewer followers per account, and [it] will take you longer to grow as a brand. However, it'll help you deliver specific and clear messages to a target following."[247]

Sysomos, a social media metrics company, is itself skeptical regarding the use of multiple accounts. It suggests that multiple accounts can cause confusion, overlap and waste resources. The company recommends that once an organization is well-established, it can launch into more specific sites. For instance, having sites devoted to different purposes could be useful here. In the RCN example, it could be the equivalent of an account for each of the formations – partially the construct that currently exists (although of course besides the organizational accounts, the navy also has accounts belonging to certain members of navy leadership). Perhaps it could mean that the navy could establish an account for imagery, one for breaking news, one for friends and family of naval members, as well as other possible themed accounts.[248]

To compare the RCN approach with that of a similar organization (but one that has had greater success in reaching large audiences), the United States Navy (USN) gives guidance on the subject in their Social Media Handbook:

> It is recommended that you maintain a single command presence within each social media platform and allow those different offices/units feed content to the command presence. That means one command Facebook page, Twitter account, and so on. The reason for this is that each subset of the command that has its own social media presence splinters the audience for the command and can increases the time spent managing multiple presences. Unless there is a compelling reason for a social media presence as a subset of the command presence, such as

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[247] Tim Grimes, "How Are Brands Using Twitter? Facts, Stats, Recommendations," *Social Media Today*, 19 August 2013, http://socialmediatoday.com/timgrimes/1676946/how-are-brands-using-twitter.

[248] Mark Evans, "To Have or Have Not Multiple Twitter Accounts?," *Sysomos* (blog) 21 September 2010, http://blog.sysomos.com/2010/09/21/to-have-or-have-not-multiple-twitter-accounts/.

reaching a unique audience; it is strongly recommended that there be only one command social media presence per application.[249]

Thus, in order to achieve maximum return on Twitter investment, thoughtful consideration needs to be given, organization-wide, to ensure that any approach – whether it follow the Toronto Police or the USN model, is thought through, consistent and at least somewhat coordinated in order to provide a cohesive and cogent strategy. This is especially important for leaders within the organization who personally manage their own accounts. In this case, despite the opportunity for increased engagement and ambassadorship for the organization, the opportunity cost comes at a higher price, as the finite time of a commander is valuable, increasing the cost of "I" in the ROI equation.

Facebook

With respect to Facebook, the RCN once again has numerous groups. There are unofficial, closed, internally focused sites, where members must be invited to join, as well as open, organizational Facebook sites.

The RCN unofficial version has more than 2,500 members, and discusses news items as well as posts of interest to the group. It is fairly active, with lively conversations, likes, and comments, having a much higher participation rate than the Twitter accounts. The West Coast navy unofficial group has similar demographics (nearly 1,200 members) and activity, and is likewise targeted toward a more internal audience. These closed accounts are not managed by the

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[249] United States Navy, "Navy Command Social Media Handbook," Fall 2010, http://www.cnrc.navy.mil/PAO/socialnetwrk/soc_med_hnd_bk.pdf, 8.

organizations themselves, but by volunteers not part of the naval communications team or senior navy chain of command.[250] Given the small size of the navy of approximately 8,500 regular force members and more than 5,000 reserve members, the closed Facebook membership of nearly 3,700 people is relatively high, even considering that not all Facebook members are currently serving RCN members.

Some of the participation in these accounts, however, is negative in tone, some of it is critical towards the institution, or argumentative with respect to other members, which may not necessarily reflect well on the RCN. While members need to be permitted to join the group, members aren't necessarily military members, and conversations cannot reasonably be expected to be private, considering the large number of followers (and of course considering the fact that it's on the Internet). The danger of appearing to be official, while in reality not being so, will be discussed in the next chapter of this paper. Internally-focused sites may, on the other hand, contribute positively to the RCN, whether it is to share information, find others with like interest, or foster pride or a sense of belonging.

Both MARLANT and MARPAC also have official Facebook sites, with more than 1,050 and nearly 3,800 likes, respectively, although many of the same unofficial account Facebook members make up this demographic. A large cross-section of HMC ships also have their own Facebook sites, as Facebook's account creation is free, and it is easier to update than most web pages. As such, Facebook has proven to be an invaluable tool for ships' crewmembers to share

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[250] One of the three administrators of the RCN unofficial Facebook page, for instance, is a naval Cadet Instructors Cadre (CIC) officer who also a Class A reserve force officer in HMCS Cataraqui in Kingston, ON.

information with family. (This is particularly helpful in regions such as Quebec, which have little coverage in local mainstream media.)

These sites also enjoy a fairly high level of engagement, judging by the frequency of posts, number of likes for each post (some having more than 100) and high number of comments. More visual, Facebook pages seem more interactive and spontaneous than those of Twitter, while also being less repetitive (not suffering from an excess of re-broadcasts). However, content on both the unofficial and the official pages suggest that the vast majority of those who are commenting are affiliated with the navy – some self-identify or can be deduced to be current or retired members, and many are spouses, friends or parents of naval personnel.

This suggests that by and large, at least with respect to Facebook, relatively few Canadians outside of the naval demographic are actually following the Navy, especially if one accounts for the fact that only 1-2 percent of the 5,000 total fans of both formations (about 50 to 100 people) will actually see updates from the official Facebook pages on their personal newsfeeds. As a comparison, in 2012, the Globe and Mail had a daily average circulation of 302,000 newspapers.[251]

Thus, Facebook provides mixed ROI. Facebook sites, whether belonging to individual ships or formations, largely reach an internally focused audience – members, families, and those with related interests. Those followers who "like" the navy but don't explicitly follow these

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[251] Tamara Baluja, "Seven Interesting facts from the 2012 newspaper Canada circulation report," *The Canadian Journalism Project*, 19Apr 2013, http://j-source.ca/article/7-interesting-facts-newspaper-canada-2012-circulation-data-report.

accounts, will see little in the way of updates, with the organic reach of Facebook being as low as 1 percent of fans.

Thus, the 1.3 billion people who are on Facebook notwithstanding, the actual audience size may not become that substantial. The niche nature of SM makes the world full of vast online opportunities, but, one must consider that, "while it's true you can reach out to the largest mass audience ever in history for free, social media by it's *[sic]* very nature creates individual communities that want to make connections."[252] For those who truly are interested however, the official online communities provide greater depth of information, more conversations, and likely strengthen existing relationships. The unofficial, closed accounts likely accomplish the same feat, although provide a higher degree of risk, as they seem to represent the organization, but in fact operate outside the chain of command.

ROI Summary

While it is impossible to pronounce actual effective SM ROI for the CAF based on such a small cross-section of social media activity, this reflection does provide some insight into trends relating to ROI and the CAF. Overall, in terms of filling the primary public affairs mandate, this may not be an efficient means by which to inform Canadians about the mandate of the navy, especially when compared to the reach of mainstream media such as the Globe and Mail. However, SM may be an effective way of deepening the bond with other naval members, demonstrating pride in and commitment to the organization, or sharing relevant information.

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[252] Diana Landau, "The Real Reason Why Social Media Matters for Niche Publishers," *Niche Media* (blog), 24 October 2013, http://blog.nichemediahq.com/audience-development/the-real-reason-why-social-media-matters-for-niche-publishers/.

In addition, social media provides a modicum of freedom as compared to other communications activities such as news releases or media interviews which are subject to greater approvals and oversight. Although communicators need to make sure the content is appropriate and bilingual in the case of official public sites, social media allows more opportunities for connection with a Canadian audience than could otherwise be gleaned through media coverage or many other traditional types of communication.

This is particularly true as media coverage is often dominant in regions where the navy is located – the navy is fairly high profile in Halifax for instance, as compared to Edmonton. In this sense, the removal of perceived geographic boundaries that the Internet and SM provides may allow an avenue for many-to-many conversations in regions where the population would not necessarily be informed of RCN activities.

Finally, overall, a presence on SM helps keep doors open for the RCN. An American study by industry analyst company Yankee Group Research Inc., found that 70 percent of respondents said "they're looking for information and communication on social networks," and concluded that, "companies failing to get onboard with them are putting themselves at risk."[253] Social media is clearly increasing in prevalence and importance in society as a whole, particularly among those of recruiting age.[254] The CAF must remain credible, relevant and

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[253] Sharon Gaudin, "Companies not using social nets at risk, report says," Computer World, 15 July 2010, http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9179218/Companies_not_using_social_nets_at_risk_report_says .

[254] In 2011, 86 percent of 18 to 34 year-old Canadians those most part of the CAF's recruiting demographics, had at least one social media profile: Ipsos Reid, "Canada's Love Affair with Online Social Networking Continues," 14 July 2011, http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id=5286 .

accessible where citizens go to obtain their information, and despite the dangers of SM engagement, be aware that there are also risks in not engaging in social media.

All of this notwithstanding, one must participate with an understanding of the opportunity cost of social media engagement. To effectively undertake a campaign takes time, planning and follow-up. Communicators must understand what they are trying to achieve and utilize the appropriate social media platform in order to best achieve their goals. While mainstream media is still the most effective in reaching the largest numbers of Canadians, SM provides a limited but important means of achieving the CAF communications mandate.

POLICY

While having a social media presence can be beneficial to DND/CAF, skeptics believe that in a restrictive government communications environment, subject to a large number of rules, regulations, policies, and oversight, social media efforts cannot flourish. Indeed, there were many criticisms in the wake of the 2011 *Treasury Board Guidelines for External Use of Web 2.0*, the government's first major foray into regulating external social media activity.[255] The 33-page document was criticized for being, "too long and too dense to allow the average employee to use

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[255] Considerable effort has gone into internal forays into social media. GCpedia, an internal wiki-type of e-publication, was launched in 2008 along with a guideline for *Acceptable Use of Internal Wikis and Blogs within the Government of Canada*. There has been consistent effort to share information internally using this system, and the use of these internal tools has increased substantially from year to year. As of March 2014, there were nearly 47,000 registered users, nearly 1,500 of whom were active, with close to 24,000 pages, more than 80,000 uploaded files, and nearly 27 million page views. Government of Canada, "GCpedia statistics," last accessed 1 May 2014, http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Special:Statistics. Other internal tools include GCconnex, an internal networking platform, as well as GCforums, which includes forums for discussion of particular projects or subjects. In 2012, DND/CAF introduced DAOD 6002-7, *Internal use of Social Media Technologies*, http://www.admfincs forces.gc.ca/dao-doa/6000/6002-7-eng.asp in order to help promote the use of similar collaborative technologies.

social media,"[256] with the rigid levels of accountabilities and responsibilities more likely to

discourage than encourage SM use. For instance, one paragraph lists 11 different policies that

must be taken into account in the management of social media accounts:

> information management, information technology, communications, official languages, the *Federal Identity Program*, legal services, access to information and privacy, security, values and ethics, programs and services, human resources, the user community, as well as the Senior Departmental Official as established by the *Standard on Web Accessibility*. A multidisciplinary team is particularly important so that policy interpretations are appropriately made and followed when managing information resources through Web 2.0 tools and services.[257]

The policy was significantly streamlined in the subsequent *Standard on Social Media*

Account Management, which took effect 1 April, 2013, replacing the previous document

(hereafter referred to as the *Standard*). The policy also brings the added weight of being a

standard instead of merely a guideline.[258] The policy acknowledges the usefulness and

increasing prevalence of social media, designates accountabilities and responsibilities, and lists

relevant legislation and policy – taking the document from a previous 33 pages to seven

(including definitions and a list of legislation that must be followed).[259] While this sharp focus

may provide more clarity, it too was released with its own guideline, the *Guideline on Official*

Use of Social Media (hereafter referred to as the *Guideline*), as well as a document entitled

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[256] JD Speedy, "Canadian Government Web 2.0 Guidelines criticized," *IT World Canada*, 1December 2011, http://www.itworldcanada.com/article/canadian-government-web-2-0-guidelines-criticized/45137.

[257] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2011), 5, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=24835&section=text.

[258] A standard is a set of measures, procedures or practices for government use. They are aimed at managers and specialists, and their application is mandatory. Guidelines provide advice, guidance or explanation, and are voluntary in nature. Treasury Board Secretariat, *Foundation Framework for Treasury Board Policies* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, last modified 24 June 2008), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=13616&section=text#sec3.2.

[259] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Standard on Social Media Account Management* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2014), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=27033.

Technical Specifications for Social Media Accounts, which provides symbols, background images, avatars, usernames and other specifications that are allowed to be used for official GC social media accounts. Furthermore, in October 2013, a *Policy on Acceptable Network and Device Use* was implemented, further delineating use of GC networks and devices. While each of these documents is more streamlined and tailored for particular users, one can hardly say that there is less bureaucracy or fewer policy considerations than in previous iterations.

In fact, in February 2014, Dean Beeby, a Canadian Press reporter, led the charge on mocking federal government SM policy – in particular the Twitter policy of Industry Canada. Based on documents obtained through an Access to Information request, Beeby stated that, "most 140-character tweets issued by the department are planned weeks in advance; edited by dozens of public servants; reviewed and revised by the minister's staff; and sanitized through a 12-step protocol."[260] Even re-tweets from other government departments needed to be approved.[261] Mark Blevis, a public affairs expert, acknowledges that any company requires some sort of rules or regulations surrounding social media, but refers to Industry Canada's policy as costly (in terms of staff time), unresponsive, and "asocial," adding that, "I'm not aware of any organization having a newspaper policy, a magazine policy, a radio policy, a television policy, a coffee shop policy, a dinner at friends policy, etc…"[262] He suggests that social media engagement should be treated as any other form of public communication and not be managed in excruciating detail, stating that, "organizations should maintain guidelines which help/enable

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[260] Dean Beeby, "The long and winding road that leads to a government tweet," *Metro*, 2 February 2014, http://newsmaritimes.ca/2014/02/02/feds-put-cage-around-government-tweets/.

[261] Mark Blevis, "How much should a tweet cost: Industry Canada's 12-step Twitter policy," Mark Blevis Digital Public Affairs, 4 February 2014, http://markblevis.com/much-tweet-cost-industry-canadas-12-step-twitter-policy/.

[262] Ibid.

their teams to be successful using the tools rather than stripping away all the utility the tools offer." [263]

However, despite the fact that Industry Canada's only response to this criticism was to state that they were simply following Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) policy, the department's restrictive process is not in fact based upon TBS requirements. While it is true that a host of policies and regulations must be followed, it is up to departments to manage social media accounts themselves, including the approval process for sending tweets.[264] A comparison between two departmental guidelines helps illustrate this.

Parks Canada produced a guide for their personnel in 2011, entitled *Going Social @Parks Canada: A Roadmap for Parks Canada's Entry into Social Media*. Some of the guiding principles clearly demonstrate the Parks Canada philosophy. Statements such as, "our management structure calls for a decentralized approach," or, "engagement is as important as providing information," show an open, engaging view of social media.[265] The document even goes on to say, that, "Parks Canada will explore ways citizen engagement and user-generated content and interaction can be enabled within the Parks Canada Web Site."[266]

By contrast, the Department of Justice wrote its own guide for employees, *How to Write for Social Media*. In this case, the wording was much more restrictive, stating that:

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[263] Ibid.

[264] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Standard on Social Media Account Management…, 3.*

[265] Referring to Field Units,Service Centres, National Office Branches around the country, since Parks Canada is composed of disparate offices across the country.

[266] Parks Canada, *Going Social @Parks Canada: A Roadmap for Parks Canada's Entry into Social Media* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2011).

Content for social media should be drawn from any of the following Department of Justice Canada communications materials that exist on the Justice.gc.ca and Justice-related websites: news releases, backgrounders, marketing materials and videos, programs, projects or initiatives and advertising campaigns.[267]

The document adds that normally, social media content should be planned in advance, and submitted along with other communications products. For emerging or crisis-related issues, content must be submitted to the social media team, where it will be subject to review, and possibly changed. Finally, personnel are instructed that, "once approved by the responsible party (i.e. the client, the Minister's office, PCO etc.), provide the approved French and English content to the social media team for posting." [268] This approval process closely mirrors that of traditional media products, as well as the apparent policy of Industry Canada.

While both departments by necessity follow the rules regarding bilingualism, accessibility, and other relevant acts, the respective departmental policies read very differently between the two departments. Whether this may be due to the nature of the department's work, departmental leadership or culture, or varying levels of faith in (or of) the departments' head of communications, however, is not clear.

Regardless of how SM policy is outlined within the department, the rules surrounding the creation of an account must be followed across the government. The two key personnel in the establishment and management of accounts are the head of communications for the department, as well an organization referred to as "the entity." The entity, officially created in March 2014,

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[267] Department of Justice Canada, *How to Write for Social Media: A guide for the Department of Justice Canada's Official Social Media Accounts* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2013).
[268] Ibid.

but not yet in place, will administer departments' social media accounts, create those accounts, and provide the tools for citizen engagement.[269] For instance, the entity will administer the to-be-created Social Media Platform Management Tool, which will keep track of all GC official social media accounts, and post the accounts to the Government of Canada website.[270] Until the entity (from the Department of Employment and Social Development) is in place, departmental heads of communications undertake these responsibilities.

In order to approve the creation of an account, an implementation plan must be submitted by the department to the entity. This plan must consider nine key aspects. These, paraphrased from the *Guidelines on Official Use of Social Media*, are:

a) Objectives and business drivers – including how the account will support the department's mandate;

b) Platform – why a particular platform was chosen, given the target audience, message, ability to support use in both official languages, accessibility and terms of use of each platform;

c) Resources – what human and financial resources will be required, including training to use the platform;

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[269] Privy Council Office, "PC number: 2014-0349," last modified 31 March, 2014, http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/oic-ddc.asp?lang=eng&Page=secretariats&txtOICID=2014-0349&txtFromDate=&txtToDate=&txtPrecis=&txtDepartment=&txtAct=&txtChapterNo=&txtChapterYear=&txtBillNo=&rdoComingIntoForce=&DoSearch=Search+/+List&viewattach=29136&blnDisplayFlg=1.

[270] In April 2014, Hootsuite was awarded the new platform management tool. Government of Canada, "SOCIAL MEDIA ACCT.MGT.SERV.(SMAMS) (EP597-141009/001/EEM)," last updated 30 April 2014, https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/award-notice/PW-EEM-006-26757-001

d) Roles and Responsibilities – departmental areas responsible for aspects such as creating, translating, approving and posting content;

e) Risk Management – identification and proposed mitigation of risks including security, privacy, or legal issues, as well as the third party platform's own policies, etc.;

f) Privacy Impact Assessment and Threat and Risk Assessment – to help create a social media risk management plan;

g) Management Protocols – for moderation, engagement, interaction and dealing with contentious issues;

h) Performance Measurements – to determine if the account is meeting its objectives;

i) Communications Plan – to ensure messages are aligned between social media and other communications channels and activities; and,

j) Phasing Out – to help determine if and when an account should be shut down.[271]

Once departments have adequately explained this lengthy list of factors to the entity's satisfaction, the entity will configure and create the account based on the implementation plan, and will then turn the operation of the account over to the department through the Social Media Platform Management Tool (which departments must use in order to access all of their SM accounts).[272] While the departments will then be able to manage the accounts, there are other layers of oversight. Deputy heads of departments will monitor compliance with the *Standard*, TBS oversees, "compliance with the application and administration," of the *Standard*, and the entity will report on compliance of the *Standard* as well as official SM activities government-

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[271] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guideline on Official Use of Social Media*, (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2014), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=27517&section=text, 5-8.
[272] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guideline on Official Use of Social Media…*, 9.

wide. Therefore, while the department gains control of and accountability for the account once it is created, it is always subject to oversight.

What does this mean for DND/CAF? Like any other government department, DND/CAF must abide by the policies and directives of TBS. Accordingly, the *DND/CF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media* align with TBS policy on the issue, including the necessity to submit an implementation plan, in this case to ADM(PA).[273] This ensures that any official SM accounts are well-considered and thought through before being created, although some might see these administrative requirements as a time-consuming deterrent to account creation.

One aspect that seems to be somewhat different for the CAF than for other government departments, however, is the notion of official use. TBS defines this as, "the use of an official social media account on behalf of the Government of Canada. Only those individuals who have been authorized to represent the Government of Canada can use official social media accounts."[274] It specifically says that other uses, such as personal and professional, are not covered by the *Guideline*.

While DND/CAF guidelines similarly state that, "Use of an official Web 2.0 account for DND/C[A]F communication purposes, including as a spokesperson for the DND/C[A]F or

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[273] In March 2014 the Royal Canadian Air Force created its own guidance in the forms of a CANAIRGEN: CANAIRGEN 003/14 C AIR FORCE 05/14 061611Z MAR 14 *RCAF Guidance on Use of Social Media*, http://barker/Admin/Canairgen/2014/cag14003-eng.html .
[274] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guideline on Official Use of Social Media…*, 2.

within the scope of an individual's duties in the course of their employment,"[275] this leaves the

definition more ambiguous. In the TBS Guidelines, only those who are pre-authorized and

identified in advance can have official SM accounts. In the CAF Guidelines, using the "every

member is a recruiter" philosophy espoused by General Hillier, anyone who believes it's their

mandate to share information on their unit, element, or the CAF in general could feel that it's

their right/obligation to do so via SM. This could reasonably apply to any unit information

officer (UIO) across DND/CAF – those who have completed a one to two week course, and

perform a public affairs role as a secondary duty. This could even potentially apply to the

unofficial MARPAC and RCN accounts, if they are administered by naval personnel at their

place of work. While the CAF could contest this interpretation, it would be a reactive response,

as opposed to the TBS definition, which proactively and clearly defines in advance who is an

official representative of the GC.

Some confusion surrounding what constitutes *official* can be seen when considering

existing Twitter accounts. One could reasonably argue that Vice Admiral Norman (the

Commander of the RCN) has a responsibility to communicate with the public as part of his

official duties. However, what about Rear Admiral Lloyd (his deputy), or Chief Petty Officer 1st

Class Riefesel (the Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, who also has a Twitter account)? How far

down the chain of command can an officer or non-commissioned member be able to claim that

communicating with the public is part of their duties and functions? And, if these accounts are

tied to people and not positions, what happens when those people get posted, since the accounts

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[275] ADM(PA), *DND/CF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2011),
10.

and followers are in their name, not the positions'? Furthermore, if these are indeed considered

to be official, all policies with regards to an implementation plan, bilingualism, accessibility,

among others, should apply to these social media accounts. Yet that does not seem to be the case,

at least with respect to bilingualism – suggesting that those are not in fact official accounts.[276]

Another difference is in the level of responsibility. While TBS policy states that

departmental heads of communication manage the overall program, DND/CAF policy states that,

"L1s are accountable for all Web 2.0 content and use in their command/organization."[277] Given

the differences between different elements and organizations in DND/CAF, this seems

unavoidable. Having ADM(PA) manage and monitor all SM accounts would be both unwieldy

and untenable for the L1s, each with his or her own communication staff, activities, priorities and

messages. It does, however, mean that unlike other departments, there are 24 different

accountabilities for SM in DND/CAF.

One could argue, and justifiably so, that – that is what social media is meant to be – it is

in fact the point of social media. Devolved accountabilities, many-to-many conversations, more

personalized relationships and greater spontaneity are all much more easily achieved using the

DND/CAF framework. It is also probable that a wider number of people are reached by

following this construct. Some in fact believe that the era of controlled communications is over,

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[276] This is not to say that high-profile CAF leaders should not have their own SM accounts. A blend of personal and professional SM accounts have shown to be extremely effective, especially in the hands of those who are gregarious, innovative or excellent communicators. Astronaut Chris Hadfield was an example of a civil servant who ran an exceedingly high-profile, positive personal/professional social media campaign, garnering over 1 million followers at the peak of his campaign, becoming an international celebrity, and even being awarded a meritorious service medal from the Governor General of Canada. The Canadian Press, "Chris Hadfield receives meritorious service medal," *CTV News*, 27 June 2013 http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/chris-hadfield-receives-meritorious-service-medal-1.1344432.

[277] ADM(PA), *DND/CF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media…*, 3.

and that this is the way of the future – even for (historically controlled) government communications.

One could even argue that this approach is along the lines of the Parks Canada model, although that department still allows for a greater central authority in its corporate voice, while still permitting individual parks and historic sites their own identities.[278] This differs from the multimodality of the DND/CAF approach, whose policy of delegation empowers and makes L1s responsible for SM efforts. While it is true that other departments may also devolve responsibility for SM content to different managers within the organization, the author of this paper has found no federal government department with such a disparate and varied number of SM accounts as that of DND/CAF.

Taking this a step further, perhaps the question of clarity is more than just considering the multimodal approach of official SM communications. One must also consider whether or not the account could reasonably be assumed to be official in the eyes of the public. This has the potential to cause confusion for unofficial accounts, such as the RCN Facebook group, or indeed anywhere a crest, logo, unit (such as a ship), or even person in uniform is featured prominently. Accounts such as this may seem to be official, and have no obvious disclaimer otherwise.

Some of the conversations on these sites, such as the RCN Facebook group, are blunt, critical and directly comment on government policy. One such example is an early April 2014 story of a major who is suing the Canadian government for unreimbursed losses incurred on the

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[278] Parks Canada, *Going Social @Parks Canada…*, 4.

sale of a house due to a posting. Comments on the site criticized the move policy, those

administering the policy, and even politicians – clearly falling outside of acceptable public

communications protocol.[279] While the conversation occurred within a "closed" group, as

previously discussed, the group's composition is not tightly controlled, and the conversation

could have been forwarded to other parties.

Particularly due to the lack of a defence-wide social media image, it is also easier for

anyone to create a social media account purporting to represent a unit or organization – or even

individual – within the CAF. [280] The case of "Cpl Bloggins" is an example whereby a CAF

member created a Facebook page – anonymously, but clearly as a member of the CAF. The page

had insulting, racist and sexist photos and comments, once again clearly breaching CAF

policy.[281] Two people were eventually arrested in this case, and the story made national news.

While most would recognize these types of accounts as unofficial and not representing the CAF,

the casual observer could mistake this as official, with the organization's reputation potentially

suffering.

The free and open nature of SM platforms makes these challenges difficult to counter

through policy. It would be implausible to force non-official accounts to label themselves as such

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[279] Department of National Defence, *DAOD 2008-2 Media Relations and Public Announcements* (Ottawa: DND Canada 1998), http://www.admfincs forces.gc.ca/dao-doa/2000/2008-2-eng.asp. prohibits DND/CAF members from discussing government, DND or CAF policy in their official capacity.

[280] Impersonatin of individuals is becoming so problematic that websites have been set up, such as the *Wall of Shame* or *Stolen Valour*, to identify fraudulent military identities. BGen Giguere, the current Commandant of the Canadian Forces College, is himself one of many victims of Facebook fraud. CJ Grisham, "The "Face" of Military Dating Scams – The Wall of Shame," *MilitaryGear.com*, 28 July 2010, http://asp militarygear.com/2010/07/28/the-wall-of-shame/. Stolen Valour Canada, last accessed 24 April 2014, http://www.stolenvalour.ca/.

[281] Department of National Defence, *QR&O 19.14 – Improper Comment* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2000), http://www.admfincs forces.gc.ca/qro-orf/vol-01/chapter-chapitre-019-eng.asp#cha-019-14 states that, no CAF member may do or say anything that may discredit the CAF or its members.

(except perhaps by the third party platform provider, depending on its policy), for instance, and it would be virtually impossible for all the potential "official-sounding" names and domains to be reserved by the organization itself. The organization could employ people to police the Internet for unauthorized use, although not all unauthorized use damages the organization, a factor which could be considered as well. While not official, many SM accounts are well-intentioned and further tell the story of the CAF and its members.

In all likelihood, the best way to differentiate any account as official or not would be to create official accounts that are clearly labeled as such, as demonstrated by the Toronto Police. By creating obvious, consistently formatted accounts, the CAF could better control perceptions, as well as "own" the space potentially belonging to it. For example, MARPAC and the West Coast Navy Facebook pages clearly show the distinction between an official and non-official page, making it relatively easy to distinguish between the two. While the time and effort involved would make it exceptionally difficult to create a site for every unit, formation and command in the CAF, to say nothing of the cost of doing so, the establishment of official accounts for major CAF organizations would be a helpful way to counterbalance those who purport to represent the CAF, whether their intents are benign or hostile.[282]

Returning to the official use of SM by the organization, a sufficiently devolved policy allows a certain amount of latitude and responsiveness. The RCN, for example, has delegated SM account management to its public affairs staff – each formation is responsible for managing

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[282] While the stated purpose of this paper is to discuss official uses of social media, the issue is sufficiently confusing – both due to lack of clarity in the DND/CF guidelines, as well as due to possible perceptions by the public – to warrant discussing this issue amongst official policy issues.

its own accounts, with pan-navy accounts managed by Navy Public Affairs staff in Ottawa. This allows the organizations to be fairly responsive, within the required rules and regulations.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect is the bilingualism requirement. The TBS *Guideline* states that all content is to be posted simultaneously in both official languages (except information posted by third parties). However, the *Guideline* recommends creating separate English and French accounts as best practice, and if the department receives more questions or comments in one official language, the same information must then be provided on both accounts in both languages.[283] This means that the bilingualism of PA staff is key in determining the rapidity and flexibility of SM activity. If staff is unable to translate content adequately, it must go to translators, who typically take days to a full working week to translate. If this is required, it has a direct impact on the efficient management of the social media account. While this may function adequately for pre-planned content, delayed responses may seem to indicate that the organization is not responsive, professional, or even authentic. Further challenges arise in the translation of tweets, as adapting a 140-character English tweet to the more wordy French, while keeping the same content, is often difficult.

The challenges associated with abiding by myriad government rules and regulations in the creation and management of accounts have caused many to ask why the government can't be more like the private sector. Why can't the government allow people to exercise common sense, and let loose their creativity, so that they are empowered to act quickly, creatively, personally, and thus within the spirit of social media? Coca-Cola, for instance, has a revenue of $35.1 billion

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[283] Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guideline on Official Use of Social Media…*, 10-11.

(slightly greater than the entire country of Costa Rica), and has products in 200 countries worldwide.[284] The company's home page boasts of key corporate facts, such as how many products they have, how long the company has existed for, and the fact that it produces 1,322,000 tweets per quarter.[285] It has more than 81 million likes on its main Facebook site, with a lively and animated discussion taking place. And yet – the company's social media policy is a two-page document, with five rules for employees' personal SM use, and seven for that of company spokespeople. Two of those are as simple as, "if in doubt, do not post," and, "remember the Internet is permanent."[286] If a company so vast and diverse can garner such interest and be an unarguable social media success, then why can't the government simplify its policies and trust in its people?

There are in fact many reasons. Governments, more than businesses, are accountable to the people – they must be accessible to all, and they must uphold the policies and guidelines that they themselves have created (such as the *Official Languages Act*, the *Federal Identity Program*, the *Privacy Act*, to name but a few). It is not the government's job to necessarily be popular, interesting or amusing. Governments' goals aren't to sell a product, but to serve and be accessible to the entire populace, even though this may at times slow communication.

In fact, in the United Kingdom, it has been found that the acute attention to detail and care of use shown by the public sector in its SM activities have contributed to higher levels of

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[284] Kim Bhasin, "15 Facts About Coca-Cola That Will Blow Your Mind," *Business Insider*, 9 June 2011, http://www.businessinsider.com/facts-about-coca-cola-2011-6?op=1.
[285] The Coca-Cola Company, "Our Company," last accessed 23 April 2014, http://www.coca-colacompany.com/our-company/.
[286] The Coca-Cola Company, "Social Media Principles," last updated August 2013, http://assets.coca-colacompany.com/3f/33/9099818649d09dd1c638643c394b/social-media-principles-english.pdf.

trust in public rather than private sector SM accounts.[287] David Elms, head of the media sector

in KPMG, the company which undertook the study, explained that, "evidence suggests a more

mature approach to social media [in the public sector]. It may be born out of the fear of the

repercussions that lost data will bring, or recognition that there is a duty of care to manage

information securely."[288] While many criticize government regulations as stultifying and

restrictive, it just may well be that those restrictions will in the long run instill increased

confidence in that institutions' communications.

This is not to say, however, that there is no room for improvement. Many point to other

militaries, such as those of the U.S., U.K., or Australia, as being models that the CAF should

follow. The USN, for instance, released its Social Media Handbook in 2010. It is in many ways

similar to the DND/CAF Guidelines that were published in 2011. Both encourage the use of SM

as a way of interacting with the public. Both provide criteria for use, include relevant regulations

to keep in mind, and mandate that a central public affairs body approve the creation of an

account. The DND/CAF policy does admittedly list more rules and regulations, as well as a

recommendation for legal advice prior to account creation. However, there are a number of

regulations cited within the USN document as well, warning its people to respect operational

security (OPSEC), avoid political commentary, and respect copyright and trademark rules,

among other considerations to keep in mind, such as dangers surrounding online relationships

between members of the chain of command, paid submissions and self-promotion.

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[287] Warwick Ashford, "Public sector leads on social media use, says KPMG," Computer Weekly.com, 28 November 2012, http://www.computerweekly.com/news/2240173022/Public-sector-leads-on-social-media-use-says-KPMG.
[288] Ibid.

However, the USN social media presence is massive compared to the RCN, being involved in Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr, Google+, YouTube, Tumblr, Myspace and its own site, *Navy for Moms*.[289] These sites are all clearly and obviously linked from the Navy's website, and can easily be found on its home page (which even contains an option to live chat with a navy expert). Using this approach, from the USN's home page, one can clearly see which accounts are official, creating both clarity in identifying and ease of accessing official accounts.[290] While there is likely to be duplication of user count due to some accessing multiple accounts, the reach of these sites is impressive – the USN reaches 1.88 million people each week via its official Facebook pages alone, reaching more than 2.65 million weekly through all its SM platforms.[291] The USN SM presence is engaging, interesting, and clearly professionally done, and its high followership reflects that.

But, this success comes at a price. While the U.S. Navy Chief of Information (CHINFO) only has four people in its Emerging Media team,[292] the USN invests heavily in its communications efforts, with nearly 2,400 people in public-affairs related positions, and members navy-wide participating in SM efforts.[293] For instance, one ship – the aircraft carrier

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[289] United States Navy, "Social Media," last accessed 23 April, 2014, http://www.navy.com/social-media.html.
[290] Indeed, a Google search on USN Social Media prioritizes these links, making it easy to find these official sites immediately. By contrast, a Google search on RCN Social Media shows news articles that mention the RCN and social media. In terms of searchability, the Canada.ca website does list officially recognized social media accounts, although not all accounts are listed. Departments generally have links to their own social media accounts, some more obviously than others, but do not link to the government-wide compilation. Government of Canada, "Social media," last modified 31 March 2014, http://www.canada.ca/en/social/index html?_ga=1.38649450.819313500.1391740361.
[291] Kathleen Gossman, "Navy + Social Media = Success," Enveritas Group, 20 July 2013, http://enveritasgroup.com/2013/07/20/navy-social-media-success/.
[292] Lynne Thompson, "Social Media Measurement: How the U.S. Military Evaluates Success in its Social Media Programs" (USAF Seminar Paper, National Defense University, 2013), 17.
[293] A 2009 wikileaks document shows nearly 2,400 names listed as belonging to Navy Public Affairs: Wikileaks,"US Navy Public Affairs Officers Directory," 22 May 2009,

USS Carl Vinson, has a larger dedicated media department than the RCN's entire combined public affairs team (including both coasts, the naval reserve and RCN headquarters).[294] While the 30-person team onboard the Carl Vinson do more than social media, as they also produce a ship's newsletter, motivational posters, and perform other communications-related tasks, it's an immense team, clearly demonstrating that the USN places a high priority in this area.[295] Thus, the success of the USN in the realm of social media, while perhaps partly attributable to its policy, is also a factor of its resources, and the consequent (or at least related) ability to manage its efforts in a cohesive and coordinated matter.

Policy is indeed an important factor in social media success or failure, as organizations must be permitted and enabled to engage in SM. However, some blame a muted CAF social media presence largely on policy – a failure to encourage DND/CAF SM use, or the myriad restrictions imposed by GC policies. While the many rules and regulations governing SM do limit spontaneity and creativity, one must keep in mind that other government departments are making social media work for them to a much larger degree than the CAF. Health Canada, for instance, has nearly 110,000 Twitter followers, and its Healthy Canadians Facebook page has more than 24,000 likes. Environment Canada has 111,000 Twitter followers, and nearly 13,000

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http://wikileaks.org/wiki/US_Navy_Public_Affairs_Officers_Directory,_22_May_2009. While not all of these may have a role to play in SM efforts, the investment in communications is noteworthy, considering the RCN equivalent is approximately 25 people. To put this in perspective, the active duty, or regular force, component of the USN is nearly 324,000 (United States Navy, "Status of the Navy," last updated 23 April, 2014, http://www.navy.mil/navydata/nav_legacy.asp?id=146), as opposed to 8,500 regular force members in the RCN. If both navies were the same size, proportionally, the RCN would have approximately 950 public affairs employees.

[294] Peg Fitzpatrick, "Connecting Military Families with Social Media," *The Huffington Post*, 29 March, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peg-fitzpatrick/connecting-military-famil_b_4670683.html .

[295] Ibid.

likes on Facebook.[296] This may be due to a number of reasons – interest and relevance to Canadians, the number of people allotted to SM efforts, its priority within the organization, or any of a whole host of factors. Therefore, policy, while important, is only a starting point. It serves as an underpinning for social media efforts and sets certain parameters. It is then up to the SM account managers to work within the bounds of that policy, to inform, communicate, exchange information, and hopefully, to inspire.

CONCLUSION

Despite the large and growing fascination with using social media as a way to reach out to Canadians, traditional media is here to stay. Many traditional media organizations are trying to adapt to meet the challenges of the Internet and the social media era – although many have failed to do so. However, as a whole, the market reach of traditional media is still above that of social media in the area of news reporting, and many of those who are most successful in the social media realm are journalists themselves. In addition, cross-sharing of content between the two types of media is growing. By and large, continuing to focus on traditional media as a mainstay of communication efforts continues to be a worthwhile strategy for public affairs practitioners.

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[296] One must also be careful not to place too much emphasis on number of employees when considering the relative success of social media efforts. Environment Canada has fewer than 7,000 employees, compared to DND/CAF's nearly 100,000, and its total communications staff numbers fewer than 20 people, 40 if one considers the department's entire web team. DND/CAF, by contrast, has more than 500 people engaged in communications efforts: David Pugliese, "Veteran DND public affairs staff quitting over interference: report," *National Post*, 25 September 2011, http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/09/25/veteran-dnd-public-affairs-staff-quitting-over-interference-report/

However, the explosive growth of social media is undeniable, and the medium is here to stay. While it may not be the communications panacea that many see consider it to be, to ignore this growing trend is to risk being perceived as archaic and out of touch. Although most campaigns largely attract those who are already interested in or affiliated with the military, building and maintaining communications with that core audience is important, and furthermore, from time to time, an event or issue may expand that audience.

Finally, it is important to "own the space" when it comes to practicing social media. There are people who wish to discuss the CAF in social media – if it is others and not the CAF who are doing the communicating, the resulting message may not be what is desired, and an opportunity to control the CAF brand may be lost.

At the same time, one must be aware of the return on investment of these endeavours. While calculating the precise ROI may not be possible, considering reach and engagement of social media efforts are basic measures that one must consider in judging the success or failure of a SM campaign. Given limited time, the opportunity cost of these efforts need to be kept in mind as PAOs and the CAF leadership decide how much of their time should be devoted to SM campaigns. Time spent on social media is that which cannot be devoted to other efforts, such as community or stakeholder outreach, or media relations.

Before embarking on a social media campaign, a PA practitioner must at a minimum understand the effect to be achieved, the target audience, and the amount of time that can be devoted to social media efforts. The platform(s) must be chosen with these factors in mind. The

establishment, content creation, monitoring and response to even one social media account can take one to several hours per day, which must be budgeted for if these efforts are to be successful. More accounts are not necessarily better, as poorly managed accounts can be at best unhelpful, and at worst, damaging. Successful social media campaigns are those which engage, provoke thought and interest, and are well-targeted for the intended audience.

Finally there is the question of policy. While Government of Canada rules and regulations do place boundaries on social media creativity and efforts, and may affect response time (often depending on the bilingualism of public affairs personnel), the most important factor is in fact departmental SM policy, since the number of approvals required is frequently the most difficult hurdle to overcome. While it is impossible to compete on the same level as multinational corporations with large staff and budgets, and which consider social media part of their marketing campaign, some government departments have shown that it is possible to run an interesting, engaging and relevant social media campaign that is followed by more than a hundred thousand Canadians.

Therefore, every communications medium has its place in the repertoire of public affairs officers, and social media is no different. While social media participation has its place, engagement must be considered carefully, given the time required, as well as potential risks and pitfalls associated with its use. Social media needs to be considered in this context – as a useful tool, but one of many in the public affairs toolbox.

Appendix 1, Common Measurement Tools for Social Media Campaigns

Salesforce Radian6 – Originating in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Radian6 is a popular platform

which is used by businesses, not-for-profit organizations and governments in order to help them

monitor mentions, sentiment, find influencers, as well as compare themselves against

competitors. Most Fortune 100 companies use this service,[297] which is priced at between $600

and $10,000 per month, depending on the scope of services required.[298] While costly, the service

is comprehensive, tracking hundreds of millions of sites, including blogs, Twitter, (publicly

shared content on) Facebook, video-sharing sites such as YouTube, photo-sharing sites,

mainstream media, forums, and comments.

Sysomos – This is a company that originated in Toronto, Ontario, before it was taken over by

Marketwire, a press release distribution service. The company offers two products, Heartbeat and

Media Analysis Platform (MAP), at two different price points (starting at $550 per month and

$2,750 per month, respectively).[299] Sysomos considers social media conversations as part of the

"Five W's":

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[297] Marshall Sponder, *Social Media Analytics: Effective Tools for Building, Interpreting, and Using Metrics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013), 94.

[298] Deidre Drewes, "Radian6 Review: Great for Brands, Not for Agencies," *Dragon Search Marketing*, 10 August 2012, http://www.dragonsearchmarketing.com/radian6-review/.

[299] Deidre Drewes, "MAP & Heartbeat: 2 Social Media Monitoring Tools, 1 Company," *Dragon Search Marketing*, 31 March 2012, http://www.dragonsearchmarketing.com/sysomos-map-heartbeat-review/.

> Who is doing the talking, and what kind of influence do they have? What are people talking about? When did the conversations occur? Where did this happen? Why are the conversations happening and are they positive or negative?[300]

InsideView – This is a company which is focused on small to medium-sized businesses, and also monitors mentions, company information online, and some tracking alerts. While much less comprehensive than either of the two aforementioned companies, the cost reflect that, starting from free, and with the first of three paid plans starting at $29 monthly.[301]

HootSuite – Hootsuite is another Canadian company, based in Vancouver. It is another platform that assists with social media management. It allows organizations to manage their social media accounts from one dashboard, and can even combine different social media analytics tools themselves, such as Google Analytics, Facebook Insights and Twitter to create a social media activity report.[302] This service can be free, but includes an upgraded service with multiple price points starting at approximately $10 per month.[303] The Social Media Account Management Tool will be supplied by Hootsuite, and will thus become part of the DND/CAF analytics arsenal in the future.

Klout – Klout is a free application that measures a different sort of metric - the "influencer," the person that by virtue of their connections, enthusiasm or skill, has the ability to influence others

[300] Judith Aquino, "Find the Right Social Media Monitoring Tool," *Destination CRM.com*, June 2012, http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Editorial/Magazine-Features/Find-the-Right-Social-Media-Monitoring-Tool-82502.aspx .

[301] Ibid.

[302] Albert Mora, "Pros and cons of HootSuite," *Hi!Social The Engagement Blog*, last accessed 23 April 2014, http://www.hisocial.com/blog/en/pros-and-cons-of-hootsuite/.

[303] Ian Anderson Gray, "7 Reasons NOT to use Hootsuite," aig.me, February 2014, http://iag.me/socialmedia/reviews/7-reasons-not-to-use-hootsuite/.

in a way that matters to the company in question. Within the Twitterverse, Klout tries to define

the "true reach" of potential influencers.[304] Klout considers 30 factors of an individual, including

his or her followers, tweets, re-tweets, replies, comments, favourites, the groups he or she is

affiliated with, and those groups' own ability to influence others.[305] In this way an organization

can see which of their followers have the ability to spread their message further and wider. While

Klout began by monitoring Twitter, it now includes Facebook, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn

and Foursquare.[306]

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[304] Powell, Dimos and Groves, The ROI of SM…, 251.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Jon Dick, "Here's the Impact of 3 Million Re-tweets on Your Klout Score," The Official Klout Blog, 5 March 2014, http://blog.klout.com/category/understanding-the-klout-score/.

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