

DISCUSSING THE NEW DYNAMICS OF NEW MEDIA:
SELF-CARE AND SAFETY AT THE DIGITAL FRONTLINEEYEWITNESS MEDIA AND DATA SECURITY AS
THE RISING DYNAMICS OF NEW MEDIA

Today, we are passing through an era in which we can easily observe that many deep-seated and widely accepted paradigms and practices are being challenged by new ideas and understandings. From politics to human rights, from governance to journalism, a broad range of areas with their corresponding theories and frameworks, have started to fall short in addressing and explaining the emergence of new trends and practices that have entered our daily and professional lives.

New media and its tools are definitely some of these new concepts that successfully challenge the traditional ways of performing journalism at many levels. Digital media, one of the strongest features of new media, has gradually been strengthening its position vis a vis conventional media's broadcasting and publishing. As digital and social media have majorly expanded their roles in journalism, they have also naturally brought about new opportunities, challenges and dynamics. Among these, eyewitness media and digital security appear to be outstanding issues that greatly matter for journalists and everyone who is professionally involved in the digital landscape.

Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul was pleased to host a public panel on March 15, 2016 expanding upon these issues. Two prominent speakers, Susan McGregor, Assistant Director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism and Assistant Professor of Columbia Journalism School, and Sam Dubberley, Co-Founder of Eyewitness Media Hub and former Fellow of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism shared their knowledge and research findings with a broad spectrum of attendees, including agency-related and independent journalists, staff of civic organizations and scholars. The presentations of Susan and Sam shed light on the global contexts around eyewitness media and data security, while the subsequent discussions among the speakers and audience added local context to the issues. All the participants actively discussed the position and stance of Turkey within the wider global picture.

EYEWITNESS MEDIA OR
USER-GENERATED CONTENT (UGC)

Sam Dubberley has been working on the concept and impact of eyewitness media for many years. The findings of the latest research study that he conducted with colleagues from Eyewitness Media Hub, reveal an essential problem many professionals working with eyewitness media face.¹ To be more precise, eyewitness media or user-generated content (UGC) refers to amateur images or videos captured by random people who accidentally witness an event and share these on social media. UGC consists of nonprofessional media content produced by nonprofessional people. Sam Dubberley explains UGC as the "random footage of a wrong person in the right place at the wrong time."

Every single day, millions of people upload their own eyewitness material on social media, thus creating a very large pool of content for news-gathering teams working within journalistic and humanitarian organizations. These teams, as part of their jobs, go to their offices, sit in front of their laptops, go online and collect images and videos from all over the world.

The research provides very significant figures on how much eyewitness media journalists and humanitarian workers are being exposed to and how frequently they find it to be traumatic. A full 70 percent of humanitarian workers view UGC at least once per week, while the numbers for journalists increase to more than 90 percent for the same frequency. Although journalists seem to be more vulnerable to UGC at first sight, humanitarian workers do not seem to be safer at all. In fact, 24 percent of humanitarian staff see traumatic eyewitness media on a daily basis, while the number for journalists is 12 percent. These findings demonstrate that journalists and civic workers are constantly being exposed to unedited images and videos of bombings, executions, tortures and killings without actually getting into war zones.

Tables show the frequency of exposure to work-related eyewitness media and to traumatic content.¹

TABLE 1			
Frequency of exposure to work-related eyewitness media	Total Percentage	Percentage Journalists	Percentage Human Rights / Humanitarian Workers
Daily	44%	55%	28%
Several times a week	34%	34%	35%
Once per week	4%	2%	7%
Several times a month	12%	7%	18%
Once per month	2%	1%	4%
Less than once per month	4%	1%	8%
n = 209			

TABLE 3			
Frequency of exposure to traumatic eyewitness media	Total Percentage	Percentage Journalists	Percentage Human Rights / Humanitarian Workers
Daily	17%	12%	24%
Several times a week	37%	40%	33%
Once per week	8%	7%	8%
Several times a month	21%	24%	17%
Once per month	7%	6%	%
Less than once per month	11%	11%	11%
n = 209			

WAR FRONTLINES VS. DIGITAL FRONTLINES

The emergence of UGC and the new way of gathering data has reduced the need for journalists to risk their lives by going to the frontlines of a conflict to try to collect data. Instead, a new frontline, the digital frontline, has emerged enabling safer working conditions while also allowing journalists to collect a much broader range of data from the field, which normally would be impossible to do when actually deployed in the field. Despite all of its benefits, however, the digital frontline cannot create a fully safe working environment. Journalists and staff who work with unedited violent content from numerous frontlines on a regular basis still run a high risk of being traumatized. According to the research, a significant number of professionals working with UGC experience an adverse effect in their private and professional lives. Up to 40 percent of UGC workers feel very high personal adverse effects in their personal lives while 20 percent have the same problem in their professional lives. What is even worse is the fact that vicarious trauma in many cases leads to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may compel people to take long term leaves and even resign from their posts.

Table show the perceived adverse effect of traumatic eyewitness.³

TABLE 5			
Perceived Adverse Effects of Traumatic Eyewitness Media on Personal and Professional Lives	Total	Journalists	Human Rights / Humanitarian Workers
High and very high personal adverse effects	40%	37%	44%
High and very high professional adverse effects	20%	16%	25%
n = 209			

Because UGC is a relatively new emerging trend, managers of news agencies and humanitarian organizations usually are not aware of how disrupting UGC-related work could be. Today's managers urgently need to become informed of this new phenomenon of news-gathering and develop awareness of its side effects. It is important to acknowledge that vicarious trauma, to a great extent, could be handled through managerial changes. The research shows that taking regular breaks, access to training, positive

reinforcement by managers and peer support networks are among the most prominent measures that could prevent serious adverse effects.

Turkey, as one of the highest social media users in the world, is a hub for accidental journalism, as Sam Dubberley has put it. Turkey hosts rich resources for eyewitness media. This equips Turkey with great power to enrich its media capacity, while it also increases the vulnerability of its journalists given the high possibility that agencies could remain indifferent to UGC's psychological risks in the future.

DYNAMICS AND VULNERABILITIES OF THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

Another great concern of today's journalists is the issue of digital data security. Increasing usage of digital and social media has enhanced the need to secure online data of professionals more than ever. Many agencies and independent journalists face a high risk of being hacked or traced and thus losing confidential information. Even the simple action of hacking one email address within a journalistic organization could harm the whole agency since usually all emails would be tied to each other within the general content management system. This exhibits the vulnerability of both individuals and larger organizations to the complexities of the digital landscape.



Cyber attacks could cause serious damage to the reputation of individuals and agencies, and could even prevent one from surviving in the sector. No doubt that there are many people and companies in the world who would need to reconsider leaving the business if their private information is publicized.

Susan McGregor, who has largely been working on these issues, asked, how could professionals protect their digital information and what are some of the basic practices they could implement to increase their safety? She shared her knowledge on some of the major dynamics of data security that would help reduce the risk of being hacked or losing data.

¹ The report "Making Secondary Trauma a Primary Issue: a Study of Eyewitness Media and Vicarious Trauma on the Digital Frontline" is available on the Eyewitness Media Hub website:

<http://eyewitnessmediahub.com/research/vicarious-trauma>

² Figures are taken from the report. For online access:

<http://eyewitnessmediahub.com/research/vicarious-trauma>.

³ Figures are taken from the report. For online access:

<http://eyewitnessmediahub.com/research/vicarious-trauma>.

DATA SECURITY

"Awareness" appears to be one of the most important dynamics of data security. This involves having the basic knowledge on how the internet actually works, how emailing systems operate or how a tweet gets posted online. Although very few people know about how these processes take place, a fundamental knowledge of these could make a great difference to one's online behaviours and thus digital security.



"Authentication" or in other words, the idea of "are you who you say you are?" is another principal dynamic of cyber security and in fact is directly related to the issue of awareness. Authentication concerns all the complex relationships between digital identity and protection.

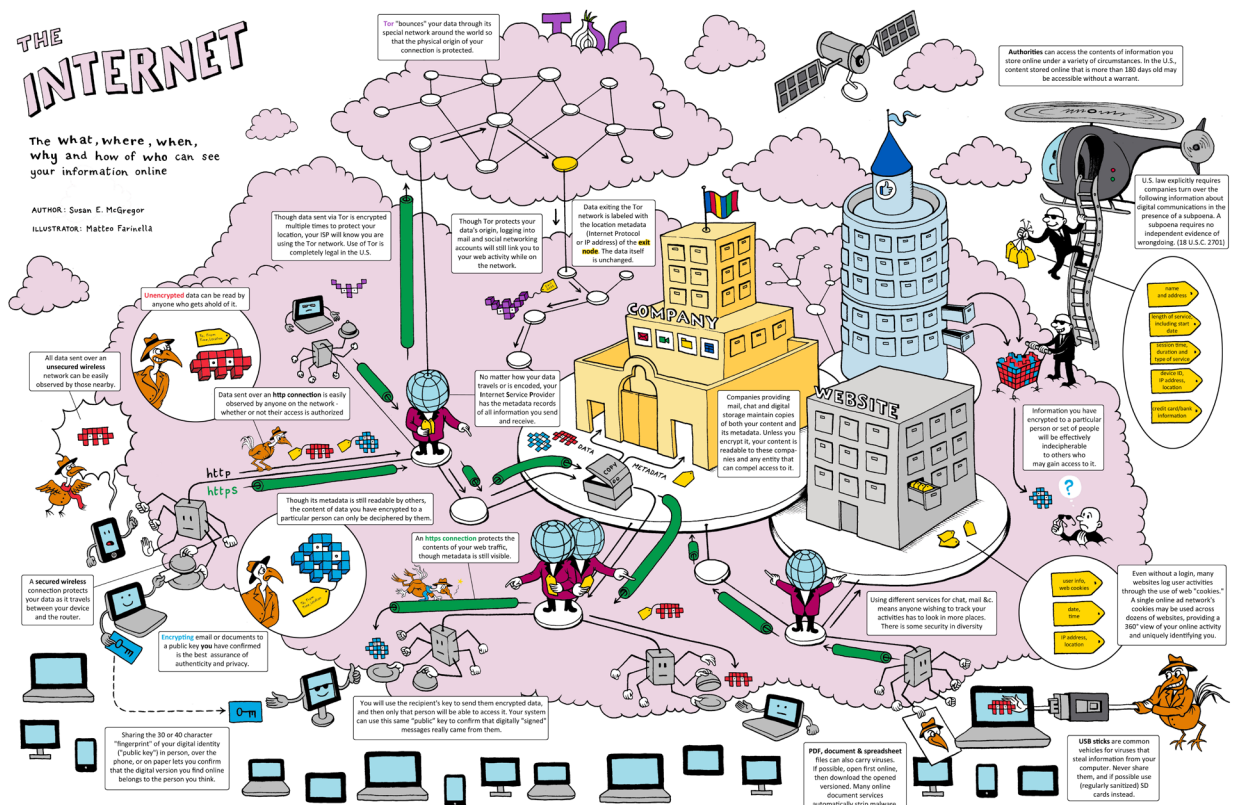
Many people, being unaware that they could be tracked and tricked easily, oftentimes type their credentials basically because they forget their passwords or want to log-in to a website. These type of unwary online actions could lead to problems with security. Not only basic personal information but also meta data in general - information on who one is emailing or calling and when, as well as relatively precise location information about the devices used - could easily be used to track individuals and agencies. In fact, most organizations and individuals are hacked through basic phishing attacks and malware, and not through sophisticated technical attacks.

The processes of "the Internet" seem to be extremely complex to many people, with much of the terminology difficult to grasp. However, a certain level of knowledge and awareness on operation systems and minor changes in practice could create a big difference in one's digital safety.

The poster is the latest resource of The Tow Center for Digital Journalism. It is a resource for newsrooms interested in improving their digital security and source protection practices.

"The What, When, Where, Why and How of Who Can See Your Information Online" is an illustrated overview of the mechanics of the Internet, including everything from how your computer connects to a wifi hotspot, to what is (and isn't) protected by an https connection. The detailed illustration also includes explanations of what "metadata" is typically stored by digital companies and available to (U.S.) authorities, as well as demonstrating the functions of digital security technologies like Tor and encrypted email. ⁴

The Internet: The What, When, Where and How of Who Can See Your Information Online



⁴ For online access to the poster:

https://towcenter.gitbooks.io/understand-your-internet-the-five-w-s-of-informat/content/the_image/index.html

The third important component of information security is to understanding the law. Journalists and members of humanitarian organizations need to be informed well about the legal framework the countries in which they operate. This knowledge could prevent them from taking controversial steps and could help to keep key information confidential while staying within the legitimate framework.

Nevertheless, having knowledge of and staying within legal frameworks may not always guarantee protection. In some instances, legal frameworks could be challenged by authorities and journalists could end up endangering the confidentiality of their research. These cases happen even in the United States where there are supposedly very strong press freedom laws. The shield laws in the United States underline the right of source protection and give the right to journalists to keep their sources confidential. This means, a journalist does not have to share who the source or person is for that particular information. Although the issue of source protection, at the first glance, seems to be a separate issue from data security, many times they simultaneously fall within the concerns of a journalist.

The very interesting case of James Risen of The New York Times constitutes a great example of this. The case presents the limits of legal frameworks and how basic digital data could be used for challenging it. The government of the United States in 2011 approached James Risen and tried to learn from whom he received secret government information. When Risen refused to testify, the authorities checked his records of telephone calls, email and text messages and computer files. Relying on these records and based on the frequency of communication between Risen and Jeffrey Alexander Sterling, the judge was convinced that the latter was the source of Risen. In this case, the authorities used metadata to persuasively identify a journalist's source, effectively bypassing the protections supposedly afforded by the shield laws. This shows how easily the dynamics of new media can turn into vulnerabilities for journalists and professionals.



WAYS OF ADDRESSING THE DYNAMICS AND VULNERABILITIES OF DIGITAL JOURNALISM

Eyewitness media and data security, as new waves of new media, occupy an important space in the lives of today's journalists. It becomes obvious that these two concepts will only become more relevant and significant with the increasing usage of digital platforms for news gathering and publishing.

Junior journalists and students of journalism would especially be dealing with these issues as they are and will be entering the sector enthusiastically. That is why, it becomes a necessity to be able to define and address these matters correctly. The role of education and universities, at this point, emerge as great assets that would provide newcomers with a certain level of knowledge and awareness that would help them to protect themselves of the side effects of these new ways of performing journalism.



Susan McGregor underlines the fact that each year the number of international students studying at Columbia Journalism School are increasing and has actually almost doubled in the last years. She believes that this is a very positive development while it has its own challenges for educators as well. Since the rules, regulations and practices of journalism vary from country to country, there is no uniform way of collecting data, writing stories and publishing them. In some countries, reaching data becomes a serious obstacle while in some others it is not even a concern. With all the differences in laws and practices, there lies an important duty for the scholars. Creating awareness in students of journalism about the challenges and adverse effects they could face, including the possibility of being constantly exposed to violent content and the risks of cyber security, is essential.

Moreover, it is the responsibility of scholars to arouse an awareness in students that the theory and practice of journalism do not always converge. Many students, when they enter the sector, may see that they cannot implement the things they learned, both because of the conditions of the business sector and differences among countries. The role of education and its impact on young journalists could allow a shift in the dynamics of digital media and there is a high chance that the vulnerabilities of today could become advantages in the future.

Columbia Global Centers promote and facilitate the collaborative and impactful engagement of the University's faculty, students, and alumni with the world to enhance understanding, address global challenges, and advance knowledge and its exchange.

The eight global centers—located in Amman, Beijing, Istanbul, Mumbai, Nairobi, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, and Santiago—form the core element of Columbia's global strategy, which is to expand the University's ability to contribute positively to the world by advancing research, learning, discussion, and discovery around the most important global issues through a truly global perspective.

Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul was launched in November 2011 and is directed by Ipek Cem Taha, a Turkish journalist and businesswoman, and a graduate of Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs and its Graduate School of Business. A hub for students and scholars from Columbia and universities in the region, the Center hosts several educational programs: the Summer Program in Byzantine and Ottoman Studies; the Global Seminar on Byzantine and Modern Greek Encounters; the Summer Program on Democracy and Constitutional Engineering; and the Summer Program in Balkan Transcultural Studies. Initiatives facilitated by the Center in cooperation with Columbia faculty and regional partners include: Studio-X Istanbul, the Istanbul Documentation Project, Women Creating Change, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the Regional Network for Historical Dialogue and Reconciliation. Freedom of expression, film, entrepreneurship and public health are other ongoing areas of programming, while the Global Center in Amman is a close partner on issues of regional concern.





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