ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Staying Ahead of the Digital Tsunami: The Contributions of an Organizational Communication Approach to Journalism in the Information Age

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This essay addresses the challenges facing journalism in the information age by advocating for the study of journalism from an organizational communication perspective. The communication field has maintained an illogical divide between journalism and organizational communication scholarship. First, I present an overview of subdisciplinary identities. Second, I argue for an organizational communication approach to the study of journalism and refer to an empirical study as an exemplar of this approach. Finally, I present ideas for future research regarding the study of journalism and these subdisciplines. This approach is applicable to settings like newspapers, television news, and other media organizations. Analyzing journalism from an organizational communication perspective can connect academic subdisciplines and aid practitioners in understanding a rapidly evolving media landscape.

This essay addresses the challenges facing journalism in the information age by advocating for the study of journalism from an organizational communication perspective. I argue that the field of communication has maintained an illogical divide between journalism and organizational communication scholarship. Digital media products and services have impacted how audiences consume news and information. Additionally, legacy journalism organizations are competing with a multitude of "digital players" that "have exploded onto the news scene" (Mitchell, 2014, para. 2) and are fighting to maintain sustainable business models. Analyzing technological disruption in journalism from an organizational communication perspective can help

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scholars make stronger connections between academic subdisciplines by providing insight into the evolution of news and media organizations and by engaging with and questioning the normative implications of a changing media environment. Additionally, combining perspectives can help practitioners better understand, predict, and adapt to a dynamic media landscape.

First, I present an overview of how field identities are bounded. Second, I outline the argument for an organizational communication approach to the study of journalism. I refer to an empirical study that applies sensemaking and organizational identity theory to examine communication and change within public radio stations to show how this approach can be useful. Finally, I present ideas for future research with regard to the study of journalism and media organizations and the subdisciplines addressed.

The title of this essay stems from a comment made by a Senior Executive of a public radio station:

> [Our station] is healthy and vibrant and thriving at the moment. That is not likely to remain the case unless we make some very substantial changes around how we deliver our content to our listeners and users on every platform and every tool that they choose to consume news and information here. … The reality is that the digital tsunami will crash right over us and wash us away if we don't stay ahead of it. (Senior Executive, WBUR)

While the struggles of some institutions, like newspapers, have been as well documented (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012), this quote captures an intense fear that reaches across a range of media organizations. This station is an example of a relatively successful, news-oriented public radio organization. While not all news and media organizations are struggling for survival, even relatively successful ones are dealing with fears about keeping up with a changing technological environment.

The empirical study included in this article shows how organizational theories can be used to better understand how news organizations are changing in response to perceptions about the rapid pace of technological change. Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking, along with organizational identity theory, represent ways of examining how actors face equivocal or ambiguous situations in their organizational environment (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Both theories are closely connected to the field of organizational communication and provide an avenue for examining organizing processes by focusing on the social construction of meaning (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). While the study of journalism practices, audiences, and normative implications continues to remain important, there is a simultaneous need to examine the structures, strategies, and processes that contribute to organizational performance and survival in this industry.

The following section provides an overview of organizational communication and journalism studies' subdisciplinary identities and highlights some divergences and connections. As Feldner and D'Urso (2010) state, academic disciplines need to frequently contemplate their own identities because of ever-changing social conditions. These authors argue that from an organizational perspective, identity means not only what makes an entity unique but also what makes one simultaneously similar to and different from others. This perspective, rather than a social identity-based perspective

of identity (e.g., one's professional identity), makes sense as a way to discuss identity at the level of academic disciplines. I also show how the self-definitions of certain fields can unintentionally constrain scholars from bridging subdisciplines and examining problems from different angles.

Defining organizational communication and journalism studies

In order to provide an overview of field identities, I examined a selection of texts including research handbooks; professional association division descriptions; including the International Communication Association (ICA)'s Organizational Communication and Journalism Studies Divisions; and information about field-specific academic journals.[1] With this overview, I argue that mixing these subdisciplines can benefit our understanding of journalism by broadening how we study news organizations and the people involved with news production.

Organizational communication

Organizational communication is a subdiscipline that resists simple definitions (Deetz, 2001). The unifying component to most definitions involves a focus on what happens within or among organizations, where *organization* can be broadly defined as something that entails "the existence of social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinating activity, organization structure, and the embedding of the organization within an environment of other organizations" (Miller, 2015, p. 11). The description of the ICA Organizational Communication Division highlights how communication informs organizing across many contexts such as "health care, community cooperatives, government and nongovernment agencies, global corporations, profit and not-for-profit organizations, and virtual and geographically colocated work … " (Scott, n.d.).

Organizational communication has evolved from a close relationship with the management community, to a more methodically and theoretically diverse field (Putnam & Mumby, 2014). Some examples of topics studied include "organizational identity, organizational culture, globalization, power, leadership, and organizational socialization" (Putnam & Mumby, 2014, p. 2). It is notable that there are no dominant connections to specific practitioner communities (like journalism institutions), and there are relatively weak connections to mass communication and media effects research.

Journalism studies

Journalism studies have developed in relation to a practitioner community (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). The ICA Journalism Studies Division seeks to address "journalism theory, journalism research, and professional education in journalism" and has a context-specific focus on "how journalism works, across temporal and geographic contexts" ("About Journalism Studies," n.d.). In general, journalism studies tend to maintain a closer connection to mass communication

scholarship. In many universities, journalism departments are separate from communication departments, sometimes physically as well as intellectually. Yet, there are also examples of interdisciplinary influences on the field, such as works by sociologists like Gans (1979) and Tuchman (1978; see Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009, for a historical overview).

Differences and intersections

The emphasis on a broad versus narrow research context represents one key difference for both subdisciplines. Although the scope of organizational communication topics of interest can be expansive, this fosters both innovation and specialization within organizational communication itself. Journalism studies' industry emphasis provides a targeted focus, while leaving room for different theoretical and methodological approaches. However, this preciseness can also constrain scholars whose research questions or approaches might appear tangential to core assumptions about relevance, for example, comparative perspectives with other industries.

The underlying values guiding these fields also impact research. Organizational communication scholarship seeks to understand organizations and organizing, and there is often an implied, if not overt, value placed on the performance of organizations and organizational members. Journalism studies research seeks to understand journalism as a social institution that informs democratic discourse and is unique in the prevalence of research informed by sometimes-unquestioned normative perspectives (Craig, 2009, p. xi; Kreiss & Brennen, 2016). The influence of Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1963) and social responsibility and libertarian perspectives (Nerone, 1995) echo in more recent observations about the amount of scholarship that positions the press as "a benevolent force of social good, essential to citizenship … [that] constitutes a 'fourth estate' or plays a 'watchdog role' by providing a check on excesses of state power" (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009, p. 8).

Siles and Boczkowski (2012) advocated for journalism researchers to take an "epistemological break" in order to question their assumptions and terminologies. I argue that both fields should take this a step further by questioning and exploring implicit or explicit underlying value systems because these inform how scholars select and interpret topics of potential research, the types of questions asked, and how scholars evaluate the significance of each other's research. For example, in whose interest is an organizational study being conducted (managers, employees, etc.)? What happens when a news organization is viewed in terms of its performance without an emphasis on normative assumptions? What can different value-based approaches tell us about the impact of organizations (both journalism *and* nonjournalism organizations) on democratic processes and outcomes? These types of philosophical questions can be addressed more effectively from an interdisciplinary perspective.

There are several intersections that we can build upon to bring these subdisciplines together. Previous research has touched upon some organizational topics within a journalism industry context, for example, economic and industry-level problems (Giles, 2010; Robert Picard's works on the newspaper industry), the profession of

journalism (Lewis, 2012), and journalism practices (Boczkowski, 2004, 2010; Usher, 2014). Yet, studies on the impact of communication within organizations have been few (some examples include Evans, 2015; Neff, 2015; Usher, 2012).

One important area in which organizational communication can contribute to the study of journalism is regarding how communication technologies influence planned and unplanned organizational change. The rapid pace of technological change impacts how audiences engage with media as well as how organizations operate. For example, how and why is communication within journalism organizations impacted by information and communications technology (ICTs)? How and why do shifts in technologies inform organizational development and change? How do employees view their evolving media environments? How do connections between organizations (e.g., partnerships) impact media entities? These types of questions can be used in coordination with questions focused on the work of journalists.

To demonstrate how the study of journalism can be enhanced from an organizational perspective, I draw upon data from a study on the public service broadcasting industry. In the following section, I show how the application of an organizational communication perspective can be used to better understand changes occurring in media organizations.

Disruption and change in public radio stations

Public radio stations in the United States represent a critical source of news programming; in some communities stations are the main source for local news (Waldman, 2011). Although public media institutions are not commercial entities, the repercussions of digital media disruption threaten their economic viability (Waldman, 2011). At the same time, digital technologies provide tremendous opportunity for reaching audiences in new ways. While many public media entities are taking steps to compete in digital media arenas, the industry has been held back by legacy culture and infrastructure, and faces increased competition (Evans, 2015). For many organizations, their long-term survival means approaching audiences and programming in new ways; something that cannot happen without organizational transformation.

Literature overview

One theoretical approach to analyzing these issues stems from literature on sensemaking and organizational identity. Here, I am not attempting to show a one-size-fits-all approach to combining organizational communication and journalism perspectives; rather, these are examples of theories that have deep roots in organizational communication scholarship (Putnam & Mumby, 2014) and can provide relevant insights into journalism organizations.

Sensemaking can be defined as the ongoing social process through which people derive meaning from equivocal situations or situations that "seem to have more than one meaning" (Weick, 1979, p. 4; 1995). Sensemaking theory explores how people seek to reduce equivocality by processing information, coming to a shared

consensus, and reflecting back on previous experiences to inform their actions. Weick's concept of sensemaking positions communicative action as the means by which individuals make sense of situations in response to occasions of uncertainty or ambiguity (Herrmann, 2007) because "situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence" (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409). Thus, it is through sensemaking that people produce and reproduce their organizations. Organizational identity involves how people within organizations make sense of the collective identity of their organization through communicative activities like "rituals, ceremonies, and stories" (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994, p. 243). Weick's (1995) notion of sensemaking is intertwined with how identity construction is enacted, and how identity informs organizing.

Past research (Dutton et al., 1994; Gioia & Thomas, 1996) shows that organizational identity is developed through sensegiving as well as sensemaking processes. Sensegiving is the use of communication to inform sensemaking processes within organizational settings (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). For example, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) applied sensemaking to study a planned organizational change process at a university. They found that the leader of the university fostered strategic change within the organization by "engag[ing] in cycles of negotiated social construction activities to influence stakeholders and constituents to accept that vision" (p. 434). The sensegiving approach presents a strategic view of how communication can be used to prompt sensemaking in others.

Organizational identity can become more salient when agents, such as employees, are reacting to a major change like a fork-in-the-road situation (Whetten, 2006), or an external threat (Tripsas, 2009). Along these lines, technological changes can amplify ambiguity in organizations and challenge organizational identity. Tripsas (2009) argues that even minor changes in technology usage within organizations can have repercussions for organizational identity because identity percolates through "routines, procedures, information filters, capabilities, knowledge base, and beliefs of an organization" and individuals use organizational identity as a filter for the interpretation of external stimuli (p. 454). If a new technology challenges an organization's identity, an organization may fail to notice its importance, or may take an inertial stance and fail to adapt to the technology in question (Tripsas, 2009)—a point that can apply to many news organizations in recent decades.

This theoretical overview is used to analyze the following questions regarding public media organizations:

1. RQ1: How are individuals making sense of organizational changes occurring in their organizations related to digital media?
2. RQ2: How are managers attempting to lead organizational changes in this context?

These questions illustrate some key points established in the initial section of this article. Notably, journalism studies research is not asking enough questions about organizations themselves. Gaining a better understanding of organizing processes

and structures within journalism institutions can allow scholars to bridge subdisciplinary perspectives and contribute to new insights about newsmaking processes. The first research question addresses sensemaking regarding the ambiguity of organizations in flux. The second question addresses the management of change in media organizations.

Method

The data analyzed in this article are part of a larger study about technology and organizational change in public media organizations. Interviews were conducted with 66 individuals working in public radio stations, and 9 individuals affiliated with related organizations such as NPR Digital Services and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). In this article, organization names are used but the names and job titles of interviewees are kept confidential.[2] The purpose of the interviews was to understand how organizations are adapting to a rapidly changing media environment. Participating organizations were approached based on a purposive sampling typology that included organizations undergoing change, that produce some amount of their own content, and were widely viewed by a range of public media experts as being innovative in the audio space (Appendix A). Most stations are located in large markets in different regions of the United States, and two smaller market stations (NCPR and Folk Alley) were included for contrast. I attempted to interview at least one top-level manager and one digital media or Web employee from each organization (Appendix B). Semistructured interviews were conducted in 2012 and 2013 in person, over the phone, or via Skype, and lasted from 40 minutes up to 2 hours (Appendix C).

Thematic analysis was used to examine the interview data (Roulston, 2014). I analyzed interview transcripts with a coding and categorization process to derive common themes using the data analysis program, MAXQDA (2014). First- and second-round coding procedures were conducted in order to assess the patterns and to group these patterns into broader thematic categories (Saldaña, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This method of qualitative coding is informed by grounded theory in that theory was the starting point but emergent patterns were expressly allowed to occur (Charmaz, 2005). For example, while interview questions did not ask participants to describe *identity*, identity-oriented patterns emerged across interviews. Throughout this process, I discussed findings with academic colleagues and practitioners with expertise in public service broadcasting and journalism to help gauge validity of interpretation. See Appendix D for a summary of categories used for analysis.

Results and discussion

Interview data show how organizational members are facing equivocality stemming from a rapidly changing media landscape. The pace of organizational change has been uneven at the station level. According to a Senior Executive at the Public Media Futures Forum, station managers have been throwing a lot of "spaghetti against the wall" but there has been no strong "culture of regular change" in many stations or

at National Public Radio (NPR) itself. Another recent trend has been the influx of people coming to radio from newspapers (e.g., leaders in KPCC, KPBS, and WBEZ) because of the widespread downsizing of the newspaper industry. For most of the stations in this study, a journalism ethos permeates the organizational culture.

Sensemaking and change
The first research question addressed the ways in which individuals were making sense of organizational changes related to digital media. Most of the interviewees described a paradoxical situation—public radio stations were faring relatively well; yet, there was a deep sense of urgency for change and fear of repercussions if change did not occur fast enough. This urgency centered on perceptions about the speed at which digital technology is changing. From a nonstation perspective, one interviewee stated:

> [Bigger radio stations] haven't felt the pressures that newspapers felt where … all of a sudden they went off a cliff and everything had to change and it was just a debacle. But some people have been saying they feel like that could happen to them in the future. (News/Content Executive, NPR Digital Services)

This view was echoed with greater urgency at the station level. A Senior Executive (KCRW) likened the current state of radio to the plot of the film *Singin' in the Rain,* which featured the rapid shift from silent films to "talkies"; the implication was that radio was not changing fast enough, and it seemed inevitable that an even greater technological disruption will happen overnight. Akin to the notion of a "digital tsunami," a Senior Executive at KPCC stated that "urgency has increased or accelerated in the last 2 years" and that if they do not make progress in the next few years they "will go the way of the 78 recording." These dire metaphors and stories demonstrated how sensemaking discourse focused on digital media as both a threat and driving force for organizational change.

The *nature of change* addresses whether change is viewed as continuous versus discontinuous, for example, a planned organizational change (Gioia, Patvardhan, Hamilton, & Corley, 2013). Several respondents stated that the pace of technological change was so rapid that it was hard, if not impossible, to do long-term planning. According to a Senior Executive at KPCC, the rate of smart phone and tablet adoption causes "our head [*sic*] to explode." Two years prior, KPCC's strategic focus was on developing a desktop computer strategy with a complementary mobile side; now this has been inverted. They have been focusing on developing applications and have increased investment in mobile Web. Notably, like most of the stations, KPCC's biggest audience and source of funding still stem from broadcast radio.

The pervasive sense of urgency was tied to the uncertainty of the pace of technological change and resulting ambiguity about the future of this legacy broadcast industry. Increased ambiguity related to technological change in organizations can lead to a greater need for sensemaking and can impact conceptualizations of organizational identity (Tripsas, 2009). This shared sense of urgency can also be viewed as both reactionary and strategic in that it allowed for managers, in particular, to cultivate sensegiving with regard to promoting organizational change. Without a sense of

urgency, change can appear less necessary to organizational members. The ambiguity stemming from uncertainty about the nature and pace of technological change also informed the prevalence of identity discourse.

Organizational identity frameworks

The second research question focused on how changes were being implemented at a managerial level. Identity was used as a sensemaking mechanism (Weick, 1995). Within a sensemaking framework, the identity of individuals as organizational actors impacts how they enact their environment. This use of identity discourse is important as a communication process that bridges individual sensemaking and managerial descriptions of organizational change initiatives. Two dominant sensegiving frameworks emerged in which identity-oriented language was central.

Production: Identity as medium versus content. The first frame dealt with the production of content. Across organizations, one consistent perspective was that organizational changes meant a shift from being a *radio broadcast* company to a *content-driven* company. This perspective emphasized content quality and production as compared with analog broadcasting. This attempted shift in organizational identity was used as a sensegiving tool by managers, particularly for employees with a strong loyalty to traditional radio broadcasting who were being asked to spend more time on multimedia tasks (e.g., recording and editing video, not just audio).

This organizational identity shift was evidenced in managerial discourse about transitioning from being broadcast to content companies. For example, a News/Content Executive of WBUR stated that they were shifting from being a "radio" to a "media" outlet. By focusing on media rather than on radio, this approach was used to deflect concerns such as fears about redirecting resources away from high quality radio production. Additionally, many stations attempted to create value by producing more of their own content, rather than relying primarily on programming from distributors like NPR. By emphasizing content, some managers were also better able to facilitate structural shifts, for example, by reorganizing news departments around specific content areas or verticals, like environmental news, rather than medium (having separate departments based on radio, Web, IT, etc.).

Distribution: Identity as platform versus platform agnostic. A second frame used by interviewees focused on distribution, meaning a shift from the primacy of analog radio for the distribution of content to a multichannel approach described as "Web-first" or "platform agnostic." For example, at KPBS, nearly every managerial interviewee described the identity of their organization as *not* a radio station, but a "shipping department" like FedEx or UPS, in which the goal was to get content to audiences in any form demanded. While this term was less popular with some employees, it reflected how the station managers were trying to influence sensemaking among organizational members by encouraging the shift from seeing themselves as separate TV, radio, and digital departments to a more unified division focused on distribution. A Senior Executive at CPB referred to KPBS and stated that innovators in radio tended to

be stations "where they no longer dictate themselves as radio and TV organizations" but rather act as "conveners in their community." To this executive, the shift away from platform represented both new ways of thinking about the community-centered mission of public radio and an emphasis on distribution in a global sense.

As these findings indicate, the strategic use of identity frames demonstrates how leaders are attempting to build organizational capacity for change by transforming the way employees think about their organizations as well as their own labor. Sensegiving was thus a form of internal strategic communication designed to help shift professional and organizational cultures. These results fit with literature showing that sensegiving can be viewed as a mimetic process of identity establishment used to foster organizational distinctiveness, where distinctiveness is important to enhancing competitiveness in a crowded marketplace (Gioia, Price, Hamilton, & Thomas, 2010). Tripsas' (2009) take on technologies as "identity-challenging" also fits this situation in which ICTs both challenge station identities and present new opportunities for organizational- and industry-level change.

Even in organizations in which many adopted the same strategic language (e.g., "We're a shipping department."), there were challenges, such as employee concerns about shifting organizational priorities and work overload. Thus, a stronger understanding of how people in different roles (digital media employees, journalists, technology support workers, etc.) make sense of changes can be helpful for supporting organizational change efforts and addressing roadblocks to employee participation and buy-in. In addition, paradoxical ways of viewing technological change represent a challenge to those leading organizational change efforts. For instance, when technological change appears constant and unremitting, maintaining a sense of urgency for change among organizational members may become problematic.

In terms of underlying subdisciplinary assumptions, this empirical example places value on positive organizational change that includes participation from a range of actors and ultimately aids institutional performance. Connecting these findings with research emphasizing alternative value systems, as well as related issues like content development, can be valuable next steps. For example, how does our understanding of sensemaking, sensegiving, and organizational identity discourse among organizational members shed light on the work and impact of public media journalists? And how do these findings relate to the public service-based cultures of these organizations?

Conclusion

Journalism organizations are facing a range of challenges and opportunities connected to technological and social change. This article points to the value of scholarship that bridges organizational communication and journalism studies subdisciplines, and highlights questions that interdisciplinary research can address regarding the values and goals underlying different research traditions. Additionally, the empirical section of this paper provides an example of how an organizational communication

approach can be used to analyze journalism organizations facing disruption and change in the information age. By incorporating research questions and theory about organizational members and organizational change with questions stemming from journalism studies' perspectives, scholars can provide a more multifaceted understanding of media industries.

This organizational approach to studying public radio stations can be applied to other settings like newspapers, television news entities, and even entertainment corporations. The empirical findings also point to avenues for future research, for example, examining how organizations deal with perceptions about the pace of technological change and the way people plan (or fail to plan) for the long-term future of their organizations, and how sensemaking and sensegiving influence the work of journalists. Further research can engage with related approaches like organizational culture theory, in which culture can be considered the context for the social construction of organizational identity (Mills & Bettis, 2006). Critical approaches to organizational communication can also evaluate issues of power in media organizations; for example, by examining resistance to organizational change, or other topics like how organizations are dealing with a lack of diversity among public media leadership (Falk, 2015), content (Downs, 2015), and audiences ("Audience: Cultural, connected, intellectual and influential," 2015; Everhart, 2010).

With regard to the communication subdisciplines, meta-analytic approaches can be employed to get a more complete picture of topics covered in journal articles in both disciplines. A discourse analysis of the stated significance of articles (answers to the underlying "So what?" question) would provide insight into the philosophical values that drive published research. Future research can also examine communication and journalism educational programs to assess how schools support relationships across subdisciplines and the reasons why some schools may maintain more limited interactions with other fields. In summary, by analyzing journalism from an organizational communication perspective, researchers can provide greater insight into an influential industry in a time of seemingly constant change, and bring communication subdisciplines closer together.

Notes

1 I cross-referenced journal titles listed in a top 50 category of communication journals ("Journal Rankings on Communication," 2015) with journals that fall under the headings of professional communication associations including the International Communication Association and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. I reviewed the descriptions and aims and scopes of a selection of journals that deal with journalism and organizational communication scholarship.

2 The interview data referenced in this article stem from a larger, mixed methods project that examined technology, innovation, and organizational change in a sample of U.S. public radio organizations. This project was approved as an exempt study by the Institutional Review Board. This ethics approval process included, among other things, approval of the interview guide as well as specifications for how I planned to address participant

confidentiality. As a component of the consent process for interview data collection, I asked each participant about his/her preference for confidentiality; for example, if I could use his/her name and job title, if she/he wanted some degree of confidentiality like a generic job title, or if she/he preferred anonymity (not using any identifying information including his/her organization's name). I respected the decision of each interviewee. Nearly all interviewees gave permission to use their full names, which is not always the case in organizational research. This may be partly attributable to the journalism backgrounds of many interviewees. In this article, I provided a greater degree of confidentiality for all interviewees, even if they allowed the use of their names, by using generic titles to indicate interviewee roles in their organizations. Table A2 in Appendix B provides a list of interviewees' organization names and generic titles. Generic titles include: *Senior Executive*, which encompasses CEOs, General Managers, and those in similarly top-level positions; *Digital Media Executive*, which encompasses Vice Presidents of Digital Media or Interactive or the equivalent role; *News/Content Executive*, which includes News Directors and Editors, and other content leaders; *Employee* and *Journalist*, which includes staff personnel.

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Appendix A

Table A1 Interviews Were Conducted With People From a Sample of Organizations

Organization	Location	No. of Interviews	Station Type and Format
American Public Media/Minnesota Public Radio (APM/MPR)[a]	Saint Paul, MN	2	NPR member, news
Marketplace (owned by APM)	Los Angeles, CA	8	Radio content
Folk Alley (part of WKSU)	Kent, OH	1	Music, Internet only
KCRW	Santa Monica, CA	3	NPR member, news and music
KPBS	San Diego, CA	7	NPR member, news
KPCC (Southern CA Public Radio)	Pasadena, CA	5	NPR member, news
KQED	San Francisco, CA	4	Dual-license, NPR member, news
Houston Public Media (KUHF)	Houston, TX	7	Dual-license, NPR member, news
KUSC	Los Angeles, CA	4	Music
North Country Public Radio (NCPR)	Canton, NY	1	NPR member, news
Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB)	Portland, OR	3	Dual-license, NPR member, news
Chicago Public Media (WBEZ)	Chicago, IL	6	NPR member, news
WBUR	Boston, MA	4	NPR member, news
WLRN	Miami, FL	10	NPR member, news
WNYC	New York, NY	1	NPR member, news
Individuals from entities including NPR, CPB, PRI, and public media consultants/experts		9	

[a]MPR is owned by APM. Of those two interviewees, one worked with MPR directly and one was a high-ranking manager at APM. The questions asked to both pertained to public radio and MPR.

Appendix B

Table A2 List of Interviewees

Organization	Role Category
American Public Media/Minnesota Public Radio	Digital Media Executive
American Public Media/Minnesota Public Radio	Senior Executive
Center for Investigative Reporting	Senior Executive
Independent Consultant	Media Consultant
Corporation for Public Broadcasting	Senior Executive
Corporation for Public Broadcasting	Senior Executive
Folk Alley	News/Content Executive
Houston Public Media	Journalist
Houston Public Media	Senior Executive
Houston Public Media	Digital Media Executive
Houston Public Media	News/Content Executive
Houston Public Media	Digital Media Employee
Houston Public Media	Digital Media Employee
Houston Public Media	Digital Media Executive
KCRW	News/Content Executive
KCRW	News/Content Executive
KCRW	Senior Executive
KPBS	Senior Executive
KPBS	Journalist
KPBS	Journalist
KPBS	Digital Media Employee
KPBS	Digital Media Employee
KPBS	News/Content Executive
KPBS	Senior Executive
KPCC	Senior Executive
KPCC	Journalist
KPCC	News/Content Executive
KPCC	News/Content Executive
KPCC	News/Content Executive
KQED	News/Content Executive
KQED	News/Content Executive
KQED	News/Content Executive
KQED	Digital Media Executive
KUSC	Senior Executive
KUSC	Digital Media Employee
KUSC	Consultant
KUSC	Board Member
Public Media Futures Forums	Senior Executive
Marketplace	News/Content Executive
Marketplace	Digital Media Executive

Table A2 Continued

Organization	Role Category
Marketplace	Senior Executive
Marketplace	Digital Media Executive
Marketplace	Financial Analyst
Marketplace	Consultant
Marketplace	Engineer
Marketplace	Former Employee
NCPR	Senior Executive
NPR Digital Services	News/Content Executive
NPR West	News/Content Executive
Oregon Public Broadcasting	Digital Media Executive
Oregon Public Broadcasting	News/Content Executive
Oregon Public Broadcasting	Senior Executive
Public Radio International	Digital Media Executive
University of New Mexico	Journalism Professor
WBEZ	Senior Executive
WBEZ	Digital Media Employee
WBEZ	Digital Media Executive
WBEZ	News/Content Executive
WBEZ	Digital Media Executive
WBEZ	On Air Talent
WBUR	Senior Executive
WBUR	News/Content Executive
WBUR	Digital Media Employee
WBUR	News/Content Executive
WLRN	Digital Media Employee
WLRN	News/Content Executive
WLRN	Digital Media Executive
WLRN	Digital Media Employee
WLRN	Senior Executive
WLRN	Journalist
WLRN	Senior Executive
WLRN	News/Content Employee
WLRN	News/Content Executive
WLRN/McClatchy	Senior Executive
WNYC	Senior Executive

Appendix C

Subset of interview questions
- Describe your role at _____. How long have you worked here?
- Talk about any recent changes at this organization (structural, leadership, strategic, etc.).
- Tell me about the digital media strategy of the organization.
- For example, online, mobile, social media.
- How would you describe the near term strategy regarding digital media (e.g., moving content across platforms, etc.)? How would you describe the long-term strategy?
- What were some of the challenges or constraints to implementing strategy? To implementing recent organizational changes?
- If you could change anything in your organization what would you change?

Appendix D

This section provides more detail about the qualitative coding process used to evaluate interview data. *Organizational change* was analyzed based on Gioia et al.'s (2013) depiction of dimensions of change: "*pace* of change ('shorter time horizons' vs. longer periods), *nature* of change (continuous vs. discontinuous), *source* or impetus for change (internal vs. external), and *context* of change (technological changes, high-velocity environments, mergers, etc.)" (p. 139).

Identity, an emergent thematic category, was evaluated based on how people described their professional identity via "I statements," and organizational identity through statements about "we" as an organization. In vivo (verbatim) statements about "identity" and "(our organizational) culture" were included as emergent themes in this category. The terms "identity" and "culture" were not used in interview questions but were instead introduced by many of the interviewees.

Table A3 Codes and Descriptions for Interview Analysis

	Description	Implications	Example
Theory-driven themes: _Organizational change_			
Urgency	Paradoxical mix of urgency and relative success; need for auto-disruption	Sense of urgency pushes organizational change even in relative successful entities	"All of a sudden [newspapers] went off a cliff and everything had to change and it was just a debacle. But some people have been saying they feel like that could happen to them in the future" (News/Content Executive, NPR Digital Services)
Pace of change	Continuous, need to keep up	It also reflects a panic about keeping up and being nimble	"I've known we've needed to make changes but urgency has increased or accelerated in last 2 years" (Senior Executive, KPCC)
Emergent themes: _Identity frameworks_			
Production frame: Medium versus content	From a radio company to creators of content; from a focus on the traditions and value of radio as an analog medium, to a focus on the quality of content itself	Sensemaking and sensegiving strategies are being used to bring people along with changes	"The idea was to, as a station, break down the barriers between … departments and come up with a new way to manage ourselves and not … as primarily a radio station, but as a media outlet that puts out contents on multiple platforms serving multiple audiences" (News/Content Executive, WBUR)
Distribution frame: platform versus platform agnostic	From analog-first broadcasting to "shipping departments" for content; deemphasizing radio and instead focusing on distribution platforms and getting content out to people	As in with previous code, this reflects another discursive approach to sensemaking and sensegiving in order to change how people make sense of their organization	"Internally, we don't think of ourselves as a TV station or radio station. They're just a shipping department" (Senior Executive, KPBS)