

Research Report

Title: The impact of new media on motoring journalism in South Africa

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Level: Masters in Journalism and Media Studies

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Word Count: 23 754 words

Abstract

This study investigates the South African motoring journalism landscape and the impact of new media on motoring journalists. It examines the additional responsibilities and roles assigned to motoring journalists and how motoring journalists have adapted to the changing environment.

It finds that new media has changed the way journalists operate. New media has brought a transformation in the relationship between journalists, their audience, advertisers and sources. It has moved from the traditional top-down way of communicating to one where there is now a two-way flow of communication.

It is now expected of motoring journalists to actively engage with new media and new media has become an integral part of their work. Motoring journalists have had to master new media skills and motoring editors had to rethink their publishing strategies. New media has redefined the journalistic landscape and has opened new avenues for motoring journalism and improved communication between motoring journalists and their readers. New media has changed the tools and trade of motoring journalists. Motoring journalists had to gain additional knowledge, skills and digital understanding to perform their trade. Motoring journalists had to change their ways.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Rationale	13
2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	14
2.1 Defining new media	14
2.2 Defining social media	16
2.3 The move from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0	17
2.4 The effects of new media and what makes it different	17
2.5 The changing face of journalism	20
2.6 The rise of citizen journalism and crowdsourcing	21
3. Methodology	23
3.1 Background and identification of Motoring Publications	28
3.2 Background and identification of Motor Manufacturers	31
4. Background and Interview Results: Motor Manufacturers	32
4.1 Audi SA and Audi AG	32
4.2 Volkswagen SA	38
4.3 Mercedes-Benz	43
4.4 Ford Motor Company	45
5. Interview Results: Motoring Media	47
5.1 Neil Piper, Ramsay Media	47
5.2 Hannes Oosthuizen, <i>CAR Magazine</i>	51
5.3 Francois Rabe, <i>Wiel</i>	53
5.4 Pierre Steyn, <i>topCar</i>	57
5.5 Egmont Sippel, <i>Rapport</i>	63
6. Findings	64
6.1 Conclusion	71

7. Reference List and Bibliography	73
8. Annexure A	81
Annexure B	83
Annexure C	85

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Werner Theron

15 August, 2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisor Professor Anton Harber for his academic guidance, valuable feedback, help and support.

And to my wife and colleague Lara, thank you for your love, interest and encouragement and helping me find the time to complete this work.

1. Introduction

How new technology is changing journalism

The rise of new media has led many writers to examine how the new technology is changing journalism. Advancements in digital technologies have dramatically altered the practice of journalism according to Herbert (Herbert 2000). Satellite and video phones, the Internet, digital audio recorders and laptop computers allow instantaneous communication between most destinations in the world (Tapsall 2001). New media technologies have brought a number of changes of which interactivity is the most crucial change. This has changed the way consumers view and expect the delivery of news and is relevant to the way journalists operate. The ability for journalists to make use of new technologies, communicate and access information from any location has had far-reaching consequences on journalism as a profession especially in news gathering and delivery. "Such technological developments have resulted in a changing role for journalists and the need for multi-skilled journalists to operate in changing newsrooms" (Alysen et al, 2003: 225 as cited in M/Cyclopedia of New Media).

The rise of social media and further changes and impact

Latterly the rise of social media has led to a discussion about a second level of further changes and impact. "This new genre of journalism has been spurred in part by the development of web publishing tools and powerful mobile devices, combined with an increasing skepticism toward mainstream media," writes Adrienne Russel (n.d., p. 1). This has "prompted readers to become active participants in the creation and dissemination of news. Video- and text-bloggers, do-it-yourself media activists, and professional journalists are vying for the attention of the public." Boczkowski as cited by McQuail (2010, p. 289) predicts journalism will become less self-centred and more user-centred. New media has brought new ways and new models to convey information that has also changed the relationship between journalists and their audiences.

Universal McCann is a global media agency that releases a study on social media every year. They stated the following in their study entitled “Power to the people” (2009 p. 5):

Social media is a very fast-evolving landscape and one that’s taking an increasingly important role in consumers’ digital lives. Brands that want to engage with consumers in these spaces need to understand how and where and why they are using the many different platforms that enable content creation and sharing.

Wills and Bowman (2003) say that the online audience actively participates, creates and disseminates news and information on the Internet.

McQuail (2010) asserts that “traditional media” has benefited greatly from new media innovations and that new media has also brought some additional competition. He believes that new media has shifted the “balance of power” (p. 40) to the audience. There are now more options and more uses of media available. New media is also more interactive. There is also “greater autonomy and equality in relation to sources and suppliers. The audience member is no longer really part of a mass, but is either a member of a self-chosen network or special public or individual” (p. 140).

1.1 Background

How motoring journalists have traditionally operated in South Africa

The way motoring journalists have traditionally operated in South Africa serves as background to how I will examine the changes resulting from new media and what impact they might have.

McQuail (2010, p. 321) asserts that “media of all kind depend on a readily available supply of source material.” He continues “relations with news sources are essential to news media and they often constitute a very active two-way process. The news media are always looking for suitable content and content is always looking for an outlet in the news.”

Traditionally motoring journalists relied on vehicle manufacturers as their primary source of information. The vehicle manufacturers, in turn, depended on motoring journalists as a means of communicating to the motoring public. Vehicle manufacturers used to send out information in the form of media releases by fax or had it distributed in hard copy to motoring journalists. Other communication with motoring journalists used to be personal and direct via telephone, fax or face-to-face. The introductions of new or updated vehicle models were almost always done by means of an invitation to selected journalists to attend a launch function – either locally or abroad. The invitation would have been delivered by telephone, fax or post. Upon arrival at the launch journalists would have been supplied with a press pack consisting of press releases with technical data and information as well as photographs in hard copy. The vehicle manufacturers therefore decided what information they would supply. Information was thus selective and greatly determined by what the manufacturer wanted to communicate to whom and when. Motoring journalists usually had the opportunity to drive the vehicles at the launch. This was done in a controlled environment and within certain time limits. (Motoring journalists could also request to test drive the vehicles for a longer time after the official launch). They would then write their articles or reviews based on the information they received at the launch and their impressions of the vehicles as experienced during the launch. Motoring journalists could also telephonically contact the vehicle manufacturers afterwards (usually through the media or public relations officers of the respective manufacturers) if they had any other queries. Those motoring journalists that had requested to keep the vehicles over a longer period would also publish an article or review as soon after the launch as possible but would then write another article or review later, based on their impressions over time. When motor manufacturers wanted to convey additional information such as new vehicle prices, rewards, or prizes their products had won they would usually do that in the form of a press release sent by fax. Photographs would be delivered by

hand or by post. Motoring journalists' direct communication with their readers was limited to phone calls and letters by mail or fax.¹

There has been some work on how new media affects consumer journalism, including motoring journalism. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010) social media has given the consumer a number of new roles. Social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, Google and Twitter allow customers to have a bigger role in the market as they are capable of reaching and being reached by almost everyone, any place and any time, day or night. The tools of the Internet allow consumers to act as buyers and sellers on eBay, content producers on YouTube, writers on Wikipedia, and reviewers or critics on Amazon.com.

As far as consumer journalism is concerned users are becoming active reviewers. There is a proliferation of websites such as Buzzillions, ReviewCentre.com, Epinions and Mouthshut, where a wide range of product reviews are available and these aren't necessarily done by professional journalists. Vivian Wagner (2008) writes that customers are increasingly turning to each other rather than just a few experts for information and advice. Crowdsourcing is gaining power and multiple consumer reviews are more accurate than one professional view. Where consumers looking for information about services, products, restaurants or destinations had to rely on expert reviewers before, the opinions of many other ordinary people are now a mouse click away. Angie's List is one of the first companies to collect and distribute consumer reviews. Wagner quotes Angie Hicks, the company's founder who says that "reports from members are very comprehensive. You can really get the flavor of an experience."

¹ This information is based on this researcher's experience in the motor and related industries. The researcher worked at *Beeld* newspaper and is a long-standing member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. He has also managed communications for the McCarthy Motor Group for the past fifteen years and has extensively liaised with many major motor manufacturers over this period. The information was also confirmed during the interviews with motor manufacturers Audi, Volkswagen, and Mercedes-Benz and motoring journalists such as Hannes Oosthuizen, Francois Rabe, Egmont Sippel and Pierre Steyn.

In a communication piece from the University of Regina entitled “Consumer Journalism helps people make choices” (2000), consumer journalist Renee Pellerin defines her role as “... giving people information that is very important in terms of the choices that they must make in their day-to-day lives.”

Erin Locker (2010 p. 1) states that “the purpose of consumer journalism is to help people navigate a massive market filled with goods and services.”

Hannis (2007, p. 13) describes consumer journalism “as any text made available to the general public on current issues affecting consumers”.

Motoring journalists can therefore also be classified as consumer journalists. Motor reviews or tests can be classed as consumer services performed by motoring journalists. Consumers are looking to a motoring journalist for sensible advice and current information.

A one-day conference at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism was held on 20 November 2008 to address questions on how professional journalists should go about reporting on consumer issues at a time when

big-name bloggers, online vigilantes, and anonymous user-reviewers have turned word-of-mouth into a powerful weapon and traditional consumer reporters are falling victim to budget cuts (Brainard, 2008).

Locker (2010) writes that the number of in-house consumer reporters has declined over the last two decades. “An Internet revolution combined with the recent recession has accelerated the problem, completely changing the print industry.” Locker quotes Kim Kleman, editor-in-chief of *Consumer Reports*, who says that there are few, if any, designated consumer reporters in newsrooms. “They no longer have that luxury.” Walter Mossberg, *Wall Street Journal* columnist and consumer reporter, believes that more people are looking at the Internet for product information. “I don’t think there are fewer (consumer reporters). I think there are more, if you count all the many, many blogs aimed at informing consumers” (Locker, 2010 p. 1).

In tough economic times consumers look at ways of saving money. When newspapers decided to cut consumer reporting, consumers had to seek other sources of information – which they found on the Internet. This may have lead

to the rise in consumer reports on the Internet. There are a number, such as www.consumerreports.org with more than 3000 product reviews, www.consumerwebwatch.org that gives consumer information and tips and www.consumersearch.com that provides reviews and recommendations.

Now, with the Web, we are able to find out from other consumers as well as from experts, what did you buy, why did you buy it, how is this serving you, is it reliable, is it lasting a long time? says Kim Kleman, editor-in-chief of Consumer Reports (Locker 2010, p 1).

Sue Stock, retail reporter and consumer blogger for the *Raleigh News & Observer*, welcomes the new online “consumer reporters”. “Even though a lot of them are stay-at-home moms and are not journalists, they’re doing the same things I’m doing. I just have a bigger platform for it.” (Locker, 2010, p. 1).

Nicholas Lemann, Dean of Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism, said at the Columbia conference (Brainard, 2008) that the Internet was helping to change the role of the consumer journalist. He believes there is a distrust of professional opinion and of (consumer) journalists in general. Although professional consumer criticism is not perfect the “many-to-many model” and “open mic operation” of social media is not the ideal either.

According to Lemann, “Journalists are still in the business of ordering the world for people.” *New York Times* technology columnist David Pogue asserts that the biggest advantage (or change) that the Internet has brought to consumer journalism is that users are becoming the biggest source of content. There are a number of web sites that review just about anything and the reviews are not from professional consumer journalists. This, however, does not render professional reviewers (consumer journalists) obsolete, Pogue believes. Consumer journalists build a following and people get to know their taste. By knowing the taste of the consumer journalist they can judge products accordingly (Brainard, 2008). This may, however, also ring true of a non-professional reviewer who has built a following on the Internet. The danger of non-professional reviews is that they may be based on selective experiences. If one user had a bad experience they may not

comment objectively on the product. This may, however, also apply to professional reviews. The Columbia conference did agree that “there is room for professional and amateur consumer reporting in some areas to exist symbiotically (with certain exceptions in critical markets like healthcare).” One can also apply consumer journalist Renee Pellerin’s definition of a consumer journalist to that of restaurant critics or reviewers. They also face the same challenges new media presents. Kath Stone, food critic and editor of the *Food24* electronic newsletter asks, “Do restaurant critics still matter?” (Stone, 2010). She goes on to say that she is more interested in the views of ordinary people who post a review on a social page simply because they are talking to more people. She argues that the views of such people that publish on popular websites are already more influential than the traditional food critics’ opinions.

Joel Sucherman, the director of product innovation at *USA Today*, posits that “reporters are now becoming more like ‘curators of information’.”

He cites the example of Gene Sloan’s Cruise Log blog at *USA Today* (<http://travel.usatoday.com/cruises/index>). The blog aggregates professional and user information about cruises, and the expertise behind the site is provided by readers who comment, review, and rate (Locker 2010, p. 12). This raises the question whether the same can be said of the views of motoring journalists.

The Research

This research will examine the effects of new media on the niche area of motoring journalism in the South African context and see how it stands up against these theories. In addition to the question of how has new media changed the practice of motoring journalism, I will also look at the following subsidiary questions:

Has new media changed the way the industry communicates – to motoring journalists and the public?

Has new media changed the way the public access and consume motoring journalism?

Has new media changed the way motoring journalists do their work?

Has new media changed the output of motoring journalists?

1.2 Rationale

New media has drastically changed the general media landscape. It's clear that the media landscape is changing before our eyes every day. The newspapers will have to evolve to adapt to social media – just like companies have – and create a new model that supports their existence, says Scott Monty, Head of Social Media at Ford Motor Company (Hiller, 2009).

Pew research (2010) amongst US news consumers in 2010 shows “that the Internet has surpassed newspapers and radio in popularity as a news platform on a typical day and now ranks just behind TV in the US” (The New News Landscape: Rise of the Internet). South African research company World Wide Worx estimated the Mobile Application Internet base at about 9-million (2010 p. 3 of 6). More people are also now reading the news online. Motoring journalism is experiencing the effect of new media on different levels. Many more people are now expressing their opinion about cars and motoring online.

The question can therefore be asked of the extent to which new media has changed the way motoring journalists work. Historical methods of market communication have changed and journalists have had to learn new skills and capabilities that social and interactive media have demand. Media company Universal McCann (previously referred to) has found that the second most popular activity online is reviewing products. Online access therefore plays an important role in helping potential customers to find information and make decisions about, for example, the make and model of car they would buy. This type of information was not as freely available (before the Internet made it more accessible) and previously the motoring journalist had most control over the channel of communication with the consumer. Access to news has changed dramatically and with that the role of the motoring journalist. Gillmor talks about journalists in general. “Our little priesthood, where we essentially have had the final word, is unraveling” (2006 p. 67).

While much has been written about new media and its influence on general news media, very little attention has been given to the general motoring

media. As with news media, motoring media has had to adapt to the new environment. This research looks at the way motoring media has adapted (or not), how motoring journalists are coping with new media (or not), and how the motoring media roles have changed. Ultimately the question can be asked whether motoring journalists still have a role to play?

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Defining new media

The term new media was first used in the 1960s (McQuail 2005, p. 38).

Lievrouw and Livingstone (cited by McQuail 2005, p. 38) describe new media as “linking information communication technologies (ICT) with their associated social contexts, bringing together three elements: technological artefacts and devices; activities, practises and uses; and social arrangements and organizations that form around the devices and practises.” McQuail observes that the same definition also applies to “old media” but goes on to say that the artefacts, uses and arrangements are different. McQuail lists the essential features of new media as “their interconnectiveness; their accessibility to individual users as senders and/or receivers; their interactivity, their multiplicity of use and open-ended character; and their ubiquity and ‘delocatedness’”. McQuail continues to state that “the most fundamental aspect of information and communication technology is probably the fact of digitalization...” (p. 137).

Hassan and Thomas (2006, p. xviii) proclaim there is no unified body of new media theory. For the purposes of this research, though, I will (amongst others) draw on aspects of McQuail’s (2005) theories of media and theories of society: power and inequality; social integration and identity; social change and development; and space and time. These are what McQuail (p. 86) describes as the “main themes that have shaped debate during the ‘first age of mass communication’”. He believes, “Theoretical perspectives on the new media can still be discussed in relation to the same themes” even though, “only up to a point”. In respect of power, McQuail (p. 240) argues that ownership of new media in the new media environment can not be as clearly identified as that of ‘old media’; new media flow is different to that of ‘old media’ as the Internet is less subject to government and judiciary controls.

Market controls are mostly seen as negative, “particularly in the developing world” (Campbell 2004 p. 78).

According to Manovich (2006 p. 5 of 10) “the popular understanding of new media identifies it with the use of a computer for distribution and exhibition rather than production.” Negroponte (1995) suggests that new media is based on the transmission of digital bits rather than physical atoms. Pavlik (1998) sees greater user choice and control as the difference between new and old media. Williams, Rice, & Rogers (1988) identified interactivity, demassification, and asynchronicity as three characteristics of new media. Eckardt et al. (2008, p. 59) define interactivity as “associated with the use of computers that accept user input while a program is running, as opposed to ‘batch’ computers which process only preloaded data without interruption”. New media is, however, not entirely ‘new’ as the term may seem to indicate. Huhtamo (1999 p. 97) wrote: “One of the most common features of many technocultural discourses is their lack of historical consciousness.” McMillan (2002) believes “they have been growing out of ‘old media’ for some time.” Marvin (1988: 3) comments: “*New technologies* is a historically relative term. We are not the first generation to wonder at the rapid and extraordinary shifts in the dimensions of the world and human relationships it contains as a result of new forms of communication.”

Williams, Stover & Grant (1994) define new media as applications of microelectronics, computers, and telecommunications that offer new services or enhancement of old ones.

It seems that many authors have used specific identified characteristics to define new media (Williams, Rice, and Rogers, McQuail, Pavlik, Eckhardt, etc.). Interactivity, I believe, is an integral part of new media and one of the most important. Interactivity allows the user some form of control as alluded to by Pavlik (1998).

Drawing from the above authors and in an effort to simplify the definition of new media, for the purposes of this research “new media” is defined as a set of tools, products or services (web- or applications-based) that provide information or entertainment in a digital world by means other than traditional media such as television and newspapers. New media makes it possible for almost anyone to create, modify, and share content with others. It can cut out

the middle man such as the journalist. Vehicle manufacturers can therefore deal directly with their existing or potential customers. New media removes many of the barriers of communication. People's ability to communicate, share, collaborate and act has been expanded like never before. Historical channels of information such as newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television and cinema are faced with new means of producing and circulating content. Such content is increasingly social, modular and mobile.

2.2 Defining social media

When Cosme (2008) describes social or new media as a means of communication between people, he refers to dialogue within a network or community. He defines social media marketing as "focusing on establishing relationships between companies and current and/or potential customers". The active engagement and participation of users is therefore a prerequisite for a successful social marketing campaign and one of the challenges that has to be met.

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". In a speech on social media (February 2009), Dana Boyd from the School of Information at the University of California-Berkeley described social media as the "collection of software that enables individuals and communities to gather, communicate, share, and in some cases collaborate or play." Web 2.0 has created the platform for such interaction to take place for communities to "connect". Anderson (2010) describes the term Web 2.0 as "revolutionizing technologies that were enabling New Media and putting it in the hands of consumers." Social media has therefore given the user the tools (through the development of a range of software) to express their voice or opinion to millions of others.

2.3 The move from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0

Technological refinements such as broadband, improved browsers and Flash application platforms saw the move from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Social media really came to the fore with the development of Web 2.0.

Web 2.0 afforded users the platform to create content while they were mostly users of content before (Cormode, 2008).

The essential difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is that content creators were few in Web 1.0 with the vast majority of users simply acting as consumers of content, while any participant can be a content creator in Web 2.0 and numerous technological aids have been created to maximize the potential for content creation. The democratic nature of Web 2.0 is exemplified by creations of large number of niche groups (collections of friends) who can exchange content of any kind (text, audio, video) and tag, comment, and link to both intra-group and extra-group pages (Cormode, 2008).

Rosales (2006: p. xi) writes that the growth in online traffic will originate from social networks where online communities are established and where users can create and modify content. “Where 1.0 was all about establishing an online presence and providing news, info, and entertainment for users to consume, Web 2.0 is all about engaging people in many ways, empowering them to become active participants in the communication process.”

2.4 The effects of new media and what makes it different

Levin (et al) in their Cluetrain Manifesto that appeared on the Internet in April 1999 wrote:

Through the Internet people are discovering and inventing new ways to share relevant information with blinding speed. As a direct result, markets are getting smarter – and getting smarter than most companies (cited by Gillmor, 2006: p. 14).

The Internet and new media are also changing the face of journalism. "Journalism is undergoing a fundamental transformation..." writes John Pavlik (2001). He posits that new media is transforming journalism in four ways: The nature of news content is changing like never before due to new technology, the way journalists operate is changing, the face of the newsroom and the news industry are different and; he states that "new media are bringing about a realignment of the relationship between and among news organisations, journalists and their many publics including audiences, sources, competitors, advertisers and governments." Campbell (2004) sums it up by declaring that all aspects of journalism are transformed by new ICTs. Mugira (2009) argues that traditional media is slow to adapt to new media's interactiveness to include contributions from the audience. Powell refers to the huge impact new technologies have on journalism and the way they communicate with their audience, "new tools are not only affecting journalism but also the whole debate around the role journalism plays in society today" (cited by Kawamoto 2003). McQuail (2004: p. 120) refers to the fact that the audience has gained greater autonomy and equality as far as sources and suppliers are concerned. "With the new media, journalism is changing immensely. It is no longer the sermon like type but rather interactive and the audience is now part and parcel of the information gathering and dissemination. With the diffusion of new media the audience and the average users of the Internet have been empowered to receive more information than before" (Mugira). With the aid of new forms of communication such as blogging and podcasting, Internet users are no longer merely passive consumers of media, but they now actively participate therein.

McQuail (2010) speaks of the audience and "greater autonomy and equality in relation to sources and suppliers. In addition the balance of audience activity shifts from reception to searching, consulting and interacting more personally" (p140).

In summary it can be said that new media is faster, global, cheaper to produce, has lower barriers of entry, is interactive and conversational rather than lecture-style.

New media has become increasingly relevant to the way journalists operate in the new digital world. It has influenced the way news is gathered, transmitted,

received, and ultimately interpreted. This has resulted in a changing role for journalists and journalism as a profession.

“Social media and citizen journalism has turned newsrooms and news organisations inside out. It is no longer the prerogative of the privileged few who decide the what, when, where and why of a story, sometimes even the who,” writes Anupa Kurian, Readers Editor of *Gulfnews.com* (2011).

David Smith (2010) writes that social media has turned the consumer-company relationship totally on its head. Rice, as cited by McQuail (2010, p140) says that “the boundaries between publisher, producer, distributor, consumer and reviewer of content are blurring”.

Communication is no longer one way and companies don't have the power all to themselves anymore. Consumers now have a voice through social media outlets such as review websites, blogs, YouTube videos, Twitter, Facebook and other. Companies have to take notice because social media has changed the way consumers do business. It's influenced the purchasing process and customers have a louder voice than they've ever had before. Consumers are now empowered and have an outlet to express their views.

A report from Universal McCann (2008), has found that social media tools such as blogs, Twitter, FriendFeed, Facebook, and other forms of social media play a role in determining where consumers do business.

The report, *When Did We Start Trusting Strangers?* is based on a survey of 17 000 Internet users in 29 countries. It calls the new social media an “Influence Economy”. “The influence economy is all about truth and transparency. Brands that live up to their marketing promises and deliver quality products will benefit from consumer recommendation,” says Tom Smith from Universal McCann.

According to the report, “The web reduced the barriers to production and opened the channels of distribution to anyone with a desire to create content or share their thoughts and opinions”. Social media has therefore largely removed the barriers to place content on the Internet.

This has led to an explosion of hundreds of millions of content creators. Consumers have moved from being passive receivers to active creators.

2.5 The changing face of journalism

Campbell describes the online journalist's role "as a kind of quality controller, providing a check on Internet information, as a necessary, reliable, and trustworthy social functionary" (p. 252). In how far this rings true in determining the role and respect the motoring journalist still demands (or not) one has to keep cognisance of the fact that as Campbell puts it:

Audience members on the Web are no longer obliged to pay attention only to conventional journalistic frames of issues and events, and ironically perhaps, are actively encouraged to move away from conventional journalism through the provision of the layered news matrix. (p. 253).

Information can now be found at a variety of places from many different authors. Therefore the reader is no longer dependent on the motoring writer as his primary link of first-class information. Motor manufacturers release much information to the public and now use new media and other channels such as their web sites, Facebook, Twitter, promotional and marketing campaigns on the Internet to do so. For example, Mercedes-Benz had 2 666 066 "likes" (as at 28 March, 2011) on its official Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/MercedesBenz>) and the manufacturer also launched a new social network/crowdsourcing website titled "Generation Benz" (<http://www.generationbenz.com>). This is a private online community, sponsored by Mercedes-Benz, that allows members to interact in real time. Members also get information before the public, such as previews of new models before launch.

Research company, Polk, together With Auto Trader.com have determined that the Internet is where vehicle buyers spend most of their time (Polk, 2011). The majority of buyers also indicated that the Internet was the most influential source leading to their purchase decision. Social networking therefore plays an important role as an influencer. The question can be asked whether disintermediation is taking place. Are motoring journalists eliminated from the supply chain? Are motoring manufacturers cutting a direct path to the consumer?

2.6 The rise of citizen journalism and crowdsourcing

“Journalism developed as a profession where the journalist was firmly in control. They decide what is news, how it is reported, written and delivered. The prevailing dogma in journalism has been, and in many cases, continues to be ‘we write, you read’”, writes Alfred Hermida (2010) in *reportr.net*. Through new Internet technologies citizens and community groups are now able to communicate in ways that were previously the domain of media institutions.

“Participatory and collaborative media flattens and reduce the hierarchical structure of owners, producers and audiences of established media,” believes Hermida.

According to Saturday Editor of *The Times* and World Editors Forum President, George Brock, citizen journalism can simply mean a wider range of sources (Burck 2006). That is something that typically happens at bigger events where ordinary people report from the scene. The important question the consumer of news and opinion will ask is whether the source is trustworthy, says Brock.

Citizen journalism links to crowdsourcing. “Crowdsourcing, in journalism, is the use of a large group of readers to report a news story,” writes *The Online Journalism Review* editor, Robert Niles (2007).

It is different from traditional reporting in that the information is gathered through an automated agent such as a website, rather than manual collection by reporters. “Stripped to its core, though, it's still just another way of reporting, one that will stand along the traditional ‘big three’ of interviews, observation and examining documents.”

Niles asserts that the core concept is not new in journalism.

At its heart, modern crowdsourcing is the descendent of hooking an answering machine to a telephone tip line, where a news organization asks readers to phone suggestions for stories. Or asking readers to send in photos of events in their community.

True crowdsourcing involves online applications that enable the collection, analysis and publication of reader-contributed incident reports, in real time.

Unlike more traditional notions of 'citizen journalism', crowdsourcing does not ask readers to become anything more than what they've always been: eyewitnesses to their daily lives. They need not learn advanced reporting skills, journalism ethics or how to be a better writer. It doesn't ask readers to commit hours of their lives in work for a publisher with little or no financial compensation. Nor does it allow any one reader's work to stand on its own, without the context of many additional points of view.

It is for these reasons; Niles writes that "crowdsourcing ultimately will revolutionize journalism".

3. Methodology

Research Questions

Questionnaires

Since the methodology of my study was based on a qualitative research approach, I compiled a list of evaluative research questions.

The method in which data collection was conducted was semi-formal, in-depth interviews with a number of motoring journalists or editors guided by my questionnaire.

The semi-structured interviews conducted were of such a nature that each interviewee or respondent was asked similar questions. Respondents were encouraged to provide motivations or explanations for their answers.

The interviews allowed me to deviate from the questions where appropriate and ask follow-up questions based on the respondent's replies.

I made copious notes and used a recording device during the face-to-face interviews in order to capture everything that was said for later analysis.

In broad terms I interviewed motoring journalists on:

- The use of the Internet generally
- The use of social networking
- The use of blogging
- The use of interaction with readers and manufacturers
- The use of comments and feedback
- The use of digital applications

Research Methodology

Definition of Research

Research is defined as:

“...the organised and systematic method of finding answers to questions. It is systematic because it is a process broken up into clear steps that lead to conclusions. Research is organised because there is

a planned structure or method used to reach the conclusion. Research is only successful if we find answers, whether we like these answers or not. Development research is focused on relevant, useful and important questions. If there are no questions, there can be no research” (Understanding Research).

Methodological Approach

Leedy & Ormrod (2001 p. 14) define research methodology as “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project”.

While quantitative research often uses hypotheses (Leedy & Ormrod (2001: p. 60), qualitative research focuses on the answering of research questions.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used effectively in the same research project (Devi, 2009). There is, however, mostly a bias towards one or the other. I have employed qualitative research to determine the impact of new media on motoring journalism in South Africa.

The main objectives of quantitative research as described by Newbold et al. (2002, p. 59) are “generalization, explanation and prediction”. “Quantitative research deals in numbers, logic and the objective, while qualitative research deals in words, images and the subjective” (Davies, 2000).

The traditional empirical quantitative technique in market research is the survey questionnaire, administered to a stratified or random sample of a population, enabling us to draw inferences about the behaviour of a whole population from a smaller number (Davies, 2000).

Interviews

According to Kvale (1996 p. 2) “The qualitative interview is a construction site of knowledge. An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest.”

I applied qualitative research interviews to try to gain an understanding of the way new media has impacted on motoring journalists from their point of view and how they have experienced it. During the interviews people were

encouraged to convey to me the situation from their perspective and in their own words. “The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional interview,” states Kvale (p. 5). For the purposes of my research I used the “semi-structured life world interview” as described by Kvale (p. 5). Such a type of interview is one of structure and purpose and was defined and controlled by me. This type of interview captured most of the interviewees’ views on the impact of new media. I followed Kvale’s seven methods on research interviews (p. 88) in preparation for the interviews:

1. **Thematizing.** Formulate the purpose of an investigation before the interviews start. The why and what of the investigation should be clarified before the question of how – method – is posed.
2. **Designing.** Plan the design of the study, taking into consideration all seven stages of the investigation, before the interview starts. Designing the study is undertaken with regard to obtaining the intended knowledge and taking into account the moral implications of the study.
3. **Interviewing.** Conduct the interviews on an interview guide and with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation.
4. **Transcribing.** Prepare the interview material for analysis, which commonly includes a transcription from oral speech to written text.
5. **Analysing.** Decide, on the basis of the purpose and topic of the investigation and on the nature of the interview material, which methods of analysis are appropriate for the interview.
6. **Verifying.** Ascertain the generalizability, reliability and validity of the interview findings. Reliability refers to how consistent the results are, and validity means whether an interview study investigates what is intended to be investigated.
7. **Reporting.** Communicate the findings of the study and the methods applied in a form that lives up to scientific criteria, takes the ethical aspects of the investigation into consideration, and that results in a readable product.

Kvale explores the different possible philosophical approaches of Heidegger and Husserl, Merlau-Ponty, Sartre and Lyotard to highlight different aspects of

the qualitative research interview and to provide a framework for the different methodological choices that have to be made.

He also does not agree with the positivists approach that labels qualitative research as unscientific. According to the positivists approach all influence by the person or the researcher should be eliminated. Kvale argues that qualitative research does not have to look objectively, since objectivity in itself is a subjective notion. He posits that interviews can be free of bias and provide objectivity and mechanically measured reliability. This can be achieved by agreement among independent observers.

Kvale refers to an interview situation as a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. It is thus important that the interviewee feels confident to talk freely. I established a relationship of trust by briefing the interviewee before the time and supplying as much information about the research project as possible. My preparation included obtaining background information about the work of the journalists and their publications and this allowed me to steer the conversation in the appropriate direction. I followed an interview guide during the interview while at the same time allowing for spontaneous questions and comments. Subjects were allowed to talk freely and I asked them follow-up questions where applicable. I managed to keep the flow of the conversation going by keeping my questions brief and simple and listening actively. I left time for a debriefing at the end of the interview where interviewees could ask questions. I followed this up with a thank you note a few days afterwards creating another opportunity to raise any concerns. All interviewees were most cooperative and no concerns of any kind were raised.

While I made copious notes during the interview I also used a recording device to record the interviews. Recording the interviews allowed me to have an accurate reflection of what was said.

I then made verbal transcripts from the recordings before the process of interpretation began.

Methods of Analysis

Kvale (p. 189-190) describes six steps of analysis:

1. Subjects describe their lived world during the interview.
2. Subjects themselves discover new relationships during the interview, see new meanings in what they see and do.
3. The interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes and 'sends' the meaning back, ideally until there is only one possible interpretation left or the multiple understandings of a theme by the subject are known.
4. The transcribed interview is interpreted by the interviewer, either alone or with other researchers.
- 5) A re-interview. The subjects get the opportunity to comment on the interviewer's interpretations as well as elaborate on their own original statements.
- 6) A possible sixth step would be to include action. Subjects begin to act from new insights they have gained during the interview.

Kvale then lists five main methodological approaches to analysis of meaning: condensation, categorization, narrative structuring, interpretation and an ad hoc approach. According to Kvale the most frequent form of content analysis is the ad hoc approach that uses a variety of methods. For the purposes of this study I mostly made use of condensation to abridge the meanings expressed by the interviewees into briefer statements and interpretation of the deeper meaning of the text.

Validity

Kvale posits that results should be "reliable and verifiable" in all stages of social science. I attempted to verify all issues throughout the entire research process. In addition I obtained communicative validity by validating a knowledge claim wherever applicable in the dialogue of the interview.

My research was divided in two phases:

I interviewed selected journalists from the biggest and most important motoring publications and company representatives from four of the most

prominent and established vehicle manufacturers in South Africa. I also read company newsletters and communication from the motor manufacturers.

Ethical questions

I ensured that people who participated in this research did so voluntarily and were not coerced into participating. Participants were fully informed of the procedures and risk involved and gave their informed consent to participate. I guaranteed confidentiality where required and assured participants that information would only be used for purposes of research. All participants agreed on the release of identifiable knowledge and I have kept the risk of release of any information that may cause harm to anyone to the absolute minimum.

3.1 Background and identification of Motoring Publications

There are a number of motoring publications that feature on the South African media landscape. There is however a great divide between *CAR*, South Africa's top motoring magazine with sales figures of more than 90 000 according to Ramsay Media (more information below) and the other (smaller) motoring publications. South Africa's second biggest motoring magazine, *topCar* sells 70 000 fewer copies with sales figures of just under 20 000 (ads24). These two magazines are by far the most important motoring publications in the country.

Wiel, the only Afrikaans motoring publication in the country, has a circulation of 10 311 (Ramsay Media).

The Afrikaans national Sunday newspaper *Rapport* has a dedicated motoring page in every issue under the editorship of Egmont Sippel. *Rapport* has a circulation figure of 248 569 (ads24).

Daily newspapers *Beeld*, *Die Volksblad* and *Die Burger* have a motoring supplement called *Motors* with a combined circulation of 180 556 (ads24) and are therefore also important players in the market.

For the purposes of this research I therefore focused on the most important South African motoring media houses (in terms of on- and offline publications and reader numbers): Ramsay Media and Media 24. I interviewed and asked

questions of journalists from the most prominent and established publications on the Internet and printed media. Some of the printed publications appear as weekly supplements to daily newspapers and others as free-standing monthly magazines. In deciding on how many people to interview I was guided by Kvale (1996 p. 101) who states “Interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know.”

CAR magazine (Ramsay Media)

CAR magazine is South Africa's biggest motoring magazine with ABC certified average sales January – March, 2010 of 92 932, (*CAR* magazine – November 2010). Furthermore *CAR* magazine has been the leading motoring magazine since its inception and cartoday.com is a prominent motoring magazine website. More than two thirds of regular *CAR* magazine readers claim that the articles in *CAR* magazine influence the purchase of their new motor vehicle and almost the same percentage claim that the advertisements in *CAR* magazine influence the purchase of their new motor vehicle (carmag.co.za). *CAR* magazine is also the motoring magazine with the biggest market penetration (in relation to the population) in the world (Interview: Francois Rabe).

New Media

Ramsay Media is known for their early adoption of new technology and *CAR* magazine was the first local motoring magazine to enter the market with magazine content on the iPad. They can therefore rightly claim to be South Africa's “leading multi-media automotive consumer brand” (ramsaymedia.co.za).

Website

The *CAR* magazine website reaches an audience of 72 782 unique visitors with 231 580 page impressions and has 18 570 webletter subscribers (www.ramsaymedia.co.za).

Multi Media

Mobile.carmag.co.za has an audience of 14 045, the *CAR* bot on MXit has an audience of 102 780 and their Facebook profile has 4 767 fans. *CAR* has

2 956 followers on Twitter and rich content on YouTube and myvideo.
(www.ramsaymedia.co.za).

The figures are impressive compared to those of their closest competitor,
topCar (*topCar*'s figures are featured below).

Their digimag offers readers an easy-access electronic edition of the monthly
magazine.

Mobile

CAR's mobile platforms at the time of writing included: mobile.carmag.co.za
(<http://mobile.carmag.co.za>), MXit, Samsung Mobile and MTN Loaded. They
were also looking at Vodafone Live and VIA Media weekly subscription club.

Forums and blogs

CAR has an active community on CARMag.co.za in the form of a discussion
forum and blogs by their journalists.

topCar

topCar Magazine is a monthly motoring magazine that can be seen as *CAR*
Magazine's closest competitor in terms of circulation.

According to *topCar*'s rate card (2011) it is South Africa's second largest
motoring magazine with a circulation of 19 897 (ABC Jul – Sep 2010) and a
readership of 880 000 (AMPS 2010).

Website

topCar describes their website as "an interactive multimedia home for car
lovers where they can get breaking news and expert opinion, as well as
contribute their own comments, stories, photos and videos" (*topCar* Rate Card
2011).

The *topCar* website reaches an audience of 32 000 unique visitors per month
with 100 000 page impressions and 4 331 newsletter subscribers (from Online
Editor, Ashley Oldfield).

Multi Media

topCar's Facebook profile had 2 620 fans at the time of writing and 396
followers on Twitter (from Facebook and Twitter).

Mobile

topCar's mobile site can be found at m.topCar.co.za and has 5 000 unique visitors per month (information supplied in an email from Online Editor, Ashley Oldfield).

Forums and blogs

topCar also has an active community on their website in the form of a discussion forum and blogs by their audience and journalists.

WIEL

WIEL is the only Afrikaans motoring magazine in South Africa.

It has a circulation of 10 311, with 2 562 unique website users, 10 401 page impressions, 3 463 webletter subscribers and 2 690 Facebook fans (Ramsay Media).

Motors

Motors is a supplement common to three daily Afrikaans newspapers. It appears weekly in *Beeld*, *Die Burger* and *Volksblad* newspapers in Gauteng, Western Cape and the Free State respectively. It has a combined circulation figure of 180 556 (ads24).

3.2 Background and identification of Motor Manufacturers

The second research phase involved interviews with staff from selected motor manufacturers; Mercedes-Benz, Audi and Volkswagen. The interviewees were Shirle Greig, Media Product Specialist: Mercedes-Benz South Africa Group of Companies, Annelise van der Laan, Communications Specialist: Corporate Affairs from Mercedes-Benz, South Africa; Andile Dlamini, PR Manager: Volkswagen Communications and Rudi Venter, Product Planning Manager: Audi Sales and Marketing (also responsible for media communications at the time).

I managed to find past and present interviews conducted with Scott Monty, responsible for social media from the Ford Motor Company in the US, and also used the information gained from those interviews for the purposes of this research.

The motor manufacturers were chosen for their visible media profiles (as confirmed by the journalists interviewed), their size and market dominance (Volkswagen Group South Africa lead the market both in total vehicle and passenger car sales in January 2010, according to their media release).

Audi

*Rudi Venter: Product Planning Manager: Audi Sales and Marketing
(also responsible for Media liaison and PR)*

Venter is an ex-motoring journalist and joined Audi as Marketing Communications Manager. He was later promoted to Product Planning Manager but also acting as PR Manager at the time of the interview. Audi is a division of Volkswagen South Africa and taps into many of Volkswagen's resources. The corporate team is only 25 people strong and the PR department consists of one person.

Mercedes-Benz

Shirle Greig: Media Product Specialist: Mercedes-Benz South Africa Group of Companies and Annelise van der Laan: Communications Specialist: Corporate Affairs.

Volkswagen

Andile Dlamini, PR Manager Volkswagen Communications, South Africa

4. Background and Interview Results Motor Manufacturers

4.1 Audi SA and Audi AG

Use of social media internationally

Audi AG in Europe used new media to communicate with journalists on their new Audi A1 car (www.audi-mediaservices.com). This was their first entry into new media and they used social media to supply information and transmit images to motoring journalists. To this end they had recently made a new research tool available for download free of charge at Apple App Stores. Once journalists have installed the program, they can use all of the app's content without even being online. Audi's on-the-go press database immediately updates every time a user's iPhone, iPad or iPod touch connects to the Internet. Journalists therefore have quick and direct access to the latest Audi press texts, photographs and videos. They also have one-touch direct access

to Audi contacts. The app allows Audi to transmit news and images in a particularly user-friendly manner. The home page is continuously updated and journalists can find up to 20 relevant news items regarding Audi. Users view content by means of a media-rich ticker. Photos, videos, and complete press releases configured specifically for the iPhone can be found there. By using a scroll menu at the top of the app, a filter can be activated to display topic-specific articles such as company news, product information, motorsport results or lifestyle topics. This is similar to what Audi Media Services provides on its media website and in the same detail. The *Contacts* category allows journalists to find the relevant contact person from the company and enables them to get in touch from the app. The contact information can also be saved directly in the journalist's own directory.

The free downloadable tool is, however, not only available to journalists. End users, bloggers and Apple fans are also allowed to install the program on their iPhone, iPad or iPod touch to access a public area of the Audi Media App.

There is a password-protected section, though, which only registered journalists have access to exclusive press materials and the Audi contact persons (www.audi-mediaservices.com).

Local launch using new social media

New media has only recently started to feature as part of Audi's communication (towards the end of 2010) but has "since accelerated" (Audi newsletter, January 2011).

Interview Results

Audi's slow adaptation to social media is partly due to senior management's inexperience with regards to social media. Social media was until recently still much in its infancy in terms of being accepted as a proper media channel. Not too many people understood it or saw the real value thereof, believes Venter. Audi's communication is very clinical and precise. They changed their communications when they launched the Audi A1 to cater for the younger market. The A1 is aimed at young techno-savvy people and Audi therefore believed social media to be the appropriate media channel to be used for this particular model. Pop star Justin Timberlake also featured on clips developed for Audi's new media but this was a completely "out of the box" concept for

them. With the launch of the Audi A1, Audi South Africa put a strong emphasis on getting people to visit their Facebook page. They set a target of 3 000 new fans in three months but had 2 000 fans within a few weeks and a few months later almost 7 000 people had clicked on the 'Like' button on Audi's Facebook page.

In addition, Audi Corporate sent out an electronic mail to 32 000 people on their database and an additional 800 people had also registered on their specially-developed Audi A1 microsite (www.audi-microsites.com/a1onlinespecial/). The objective of the e-mail was to drive more people to join their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/pages/Audi-South) while at the same time offering them a chance to win a prize. They had a total of 1 739 members who had joined their Facebook page a month after it was launched and those members were also added to their Audi A1 database, and further A1 communication was sent to them (interview Rudi Venter).

But Venter says that this kind of communication would never be used for their premium models. Venter believes new media will become more important but more specifically in the marketing arena. He does not feel it will replace the traditional means of communication to the media. Here it is important to draw a distinction between media communications and marketing communications. The promotion of their vehicles through new or social media is very much seen as a marketing function and that is aimed at the public rather than motoring journalists. Social media therefore plays a more important role in the marketing department of Audi SA than it does in the media and PR department. According to Venter, press communication requires a more personal approach therefore new media plays a less important role in that context. The launch of the Audi A1 has allowed the company to venture into new media. Although they had looked at it in the past, the A1 gave them entry into new media space.

Use of blogging

Media celebrities were given the Audi A1 to drive over the December, 2010 period, with the provision that they would write a blog about it. The line-up included Anele Mdoda, a radio presenter with 13 000 followers on Twitter. The

advantage of using such personalities is that it is their impressions of the car that are communicated and not that of Audi, which may be seen as biased, believes Venter.

Venter acknowledges the right of bloggers to have their say. He finds it problematic, though, that someone can say something that is completely unjustifiable and there is no way to control it. He says that it is not possible to correct or contradict statements posted on a blog, whereas with journalists if they write something that is technically not correct you can address that. He appreciates the fact that good motoring journalists have an opinion and that they can express that opinion on a blog when reporting about a car. He finds the fact that some journalists just rehash the press releases they are given not to be ideal practice. His view is that people who blog about cars or their experiences "is a bit of a mixed bag, and offer different opinions." Venter is adamant that he wouldn't write a blog. He doesn't personally respond to queries on the Audi A1 Facebook page either. The company's marketing agency will approach him with questions raised there and they will then respond. The agency therefore handles the social media side. The agency is seen as expert in the field and is therefore entrusted with the responsibility. It is noteworthy that the company does not follow a more direct approach as this method slows their reaction time down considerably.

Social media's influence on buying patterns

Although Venter says that it is nice to have bloggers and people that can identify with them and what they write, he is not of the opinion that someone is ever going to buy a car (or not) on the strength of what someone said on a blog or Twitter. He uses the Wheels24 website (wheels24.co.za) as an example. The site receives a lot of comments on articles. "Some are good, some are horrendous and some are just illiterate," he asserts. Although people read what other people say, he doubts that too many people take it to heart.

Some people may base their purchase decisions on what motoring journalists write, but Venter believes that most people use such articles as a means of information gathering. He states that the South African motoring public is extremely brand and image conscious. The premium segment where they

(Audi) compete is very fickle. He says that people who spend large sums of money on cars, choose their preferred means of transport based on the fact that it is the most recent and hottest on the market, or it is seen as a status symbol or, because they are brand loyal. Brand loyalty plays the smallest part. Venter still believes that the customers who drive their premium cars aren't as active on social media. A viral campaign aimed at the younger drivers of their Audi A1 would therefore be more successful than one aimed at their premium model customers. The availability of their products is important. People aren't really prepared to wait for a vehicle and will switch if something else comes along. Even though people read motoring publications such as online resources to gather information, Venter believes that they have already made up their minds before the time. If someone has put their mind to a specific car and if the journalist is positive about it, it supports their decision – if the journalist is negative towards the car, the customer sees them as biased or uninformed. Most consumers in the premium sector are very certain of the type of car they want to buy, according to Venter. This is somewhat different in the general sector as consumers in this sector are looking for value as opposed to image and may take more cognisance of what journalists say. The quality and availability of the product the motor manufacturer puts on the market is the decisive factor to gain market share. Product speaks for itself and the records show that every brand that has shown great growth has had a good product behind it. Product is what is on the road, what people see and what they aspire to. Venter cites the example of motor manufacturer Hyundai that was in financial difficulty in South Africa some five years ago. It is not the media or even marketing that helped them back to recovery, it was the right product offering, he believes. They launched the right vehicle (such as the Getz) at the right price. You still have to communicate, though, to reach new consumers through different media channels. Here new media does play a role, he believes, together with the traditional channels. In order for the motoring press to play a role you have to have the product. You can't communicate if there is nothing to say. You can't go to the press if there is nothing to talk about.

The use of comments and feedback

When people use the new media forums to complain, Audi's marketing agency responds on behalf of the manufacturer or refers it to Venter if they can't resolve it. Audi doesn't have a social media manager and they don't plan on appointing somebody either.

New media and communication with motoring media

Audi's method of communication with the media in South Africa does not make as much use of new media as in Europe and the US, although there are signs that this is changing and that they are catching up. Journalists there have access to information through Apple apps and other forms of new media. Audi South Africa has a dedicated media portal where journalists have access to releases, information, graphics and photographs but they did not (at the time of writing) have an Audi press Facebook page like some other international motor companies have. Audi predominantly uses email or the phone to communicate with journalists. Venter tries to keep it personal – a phone call is much better than an email, he says. Invitations to launches and press releases are usually sent via email.

It seems that the company is slow to move on from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and beyond as far as communication with motoring journalists is concerned. At the time of writing Audi SA was not looking at communicating with the motoring media on social media sites in the near future. Media liaison has remained the same for many years, with the only change being in the means of delivery of material. Whereas releases and photos were delivered by hand, they are now sent by email. Personal relationships are still best, maintains Venter. They do, however, see social media as a very effective way of communicating with the (younger) public. Venter says people open their hearts, communicate with emotion and it becomes very personal.

They are, however, using social media more for their models aimed at the younger generation.

Has new media reduced the importance of motoring journalists?

Venter still believes in communicating with motoring journalists on a more personal level such as a phone call or face to face. One can assume that the limited number of motoring journalists in South Africa allows for more personal

contact although they do post their releases on a media website and since my interview have introduced a fully functional mobile website aimed at motoring journalists. They also still believe that the motoring media has a huge role to play. Venter is of the opinion that you can't replace the expertise and the journalistic skills that motoring journalists have. He does, however, admit that not all motoring journalists are equally professional.

He says that there are a handful of core motoring journalists that are very professional. They are serious about motoring journalism as a career; they have good driving skills and can test cars properly. However, he feels that a large proportion of journalists are just in it for the lifestyle – getting the cars and going on trips. That is the South African motoring media landscape, according to Venter, and they have to work with all of them. He values the role of motoring journalists and doesn't believe that motor manufacturers will reach a point in South Africa where they don't need the motoring media.

The role of the motoring journalist has not become less important. The motoring press does provide much value in terms of press coverage measured in column centimetres, says Venter. Should they work out the value in terms of media space, it is substantial. The media value is much higher compared to monies spent on marketing. Even when judging coverage solely from an awareness point of view, print coverage is considerable, he says. Smaller motoring companies – especially vehicle importers – that have tried to manage without a dedicated media person have fallen off the radar. In Venter's view, when media publications do a comparative vehicle test between different manufacturers, the product that is less in the "public eye" is inclined to be forgotten. When the media writes positive articles about their product these are often used as marketing tools. The articles are distributed to dealers and in some cases to the public as reprints or reproduced on their website.

4.2 Volkswagen South Africa

Background

International social media use

Volkswagen has one of the largest international social communities in the automotive industry with over 500 000 fans on Facebook and over ten million

visitors on YouTube since the company profile was set up at the end of 2008. Volkswagen research from 2010 to determine the media use amongst the 14-29 age group (also known as the digital natives) shows that 57 percent of people in the USA use online sources prior to buying a car, while the remainder prefer to seek advice direct from the dealer (www.volkswagen-media-services.com).

The study confirms that the social web is an important resource for the company's marketing and communication activities. Fifty percent of respondents follow product recommendations in social networks. Volkswagen is also not considering appointing a social media manager, but the marketing departments do keep an eye on social media activities.

Even though Volkswagen has not done any local research at the time of writing, results of web studies in Germany have not only fundamentally changed customer-supplier relations there, but have also had an impact on their communication strategy – including with the motoring media. Facebook and YouTube users have become important partners for motoring companies in Europe whereas communication was conducted through traditional media in the past. Furthermore, the respondents to the study are convinced that the significance of mobile social networks will increase in future. Volkswagen makes good use of social media internationally. For the first time in its history the company launched the Polo GTI on Facebook in June 2010 (in Germany) and they are looking at doing more new vehicle launches in this manner.

Local use of social media

“As customers become increasingly active online, it has become imperative to provide an online experience that is as engaging as it is informative,” writes Tarryn de Klerk, Senior Brand Manager, Volkswagen Sales and Marketing in a bulletin to dealers dated 7 April 2011. “The Volkswagen brand has embarked on a strategic journey of integrated marketing communications that encompasses the full scope of the digital realm, with customer centricity and engagement at its core.”

Interview Results

All Volkswagen advertising launch campaigns have had a strong focus on digital marketing in the last three years consisting of elements such as

customer relationship emails and their website. "Going forward, every Volkswagen marketing campaign will ensure an integration of social media and mobile marketing with the traditional marketing mix in a way that best serves and engages the target audience," Volkswagen says.

The Volkswagen website was accessed by just under 1.23 million customers in 2010 and is now the key source of product and brand information for customers.

The Volkswagen brand launched a Facebook page in May 2011 and a campaign for the New Polo GTI was central to the launch of the Facebook page. The Polo GTI was launched exclusively online (a first for a Volkswagen brand in South Africa) and plans were put in place to host an interactive celebration of Volkswagen's 60 years in South Africa on the Volkswagen Facebook page. Going forward, all new product launches and campaigns will be communicated through both the new website and Facebook page. The more traditional digital channels such as online banners, emails and SMS/MMS will still be used. Volkswagen were also working on the conversion of their website to a mobi site, as 39% of urban South Africans and 27% of rural users are browsing the Internet on their phones (Dealer Bulletin, April 2011).

Communication with motoring press

Volkswagen South Africa has started new vehicle launches on social media, but introduces new models to the motoring press by inviting them to physical locations where they get to see and drive the car. Information is packaged in a press release with photographs on CD. Some of the motoring journalists that attend Volkswagen launches locally do usually blog or tweet about the models to their readers though. Younger motoring journalists make more extensive use of their iPhones and post photos and update their pages from where they are, e.g. at the Paris Motor Show. They keep their readers informed with updated news and detail on Volkswagen products. New media allows motoring journalists to create an interest among their readers and encourages them to read further. Motoring journalists are therefore at the forefront of new media.

Use of social networking

To this end, Dlamini asserts (interviewed 2010) that new media is the way forward and he is looking at new media ideas for the future. He particularly enjoys the immediacy of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. He says that Volkswagen would be at a disadvantage if they didn't have information available online. Traditional media will, however, still play its part. He says if they don't use new media they will miss out on additional opportunities. New media is more accessible, immediate and also more interactive. Competition amongst journalists and publications has become fiercer as they race against time to get information out. They can't afford the time to wait for printed publications to appear anymore. They now need to maximise the information they have and spread it as far and quickly as possible. They now have different platforms to publish immediately e.g. online (while more detailed information appears in printed publications).

Use of blogging

Another step in the direction of Volkswagen South Africa's use of new media is the launch of the new Passat in 2011, where they will make use of bloggers to report on the car. Similar to Audi, they will give the car to bloggers for a certain time period to test and write about. Interestingly, the bloggers they have identified do not have particularly keen motoring interests, but rather write about everyday issues. Although this concept is still at experimental level, Dlamini believes there is nothing to lose.

Are bloggers a threat to journalists? Dlamini divides bloggers into two categories – those with a good technical knowledge about cars and who write in specific detail, and those who write in more general terms. Some bloggers with a big following may even enjoy the same credibility as motoring writers. But he says bloggers won't replace journalists and are not a threat to them; they are a supplementary source of information and part of the communication chain.

New media and communication with motoring media

Volkswagen SA does not use new media to the same extent as their international counterparts when communicating with motoring journalists.

Dlamini believes communication through email, and releases and pictures on CD still have a place, and he still uses these channels to communicate with the motoring media.

Volkswagen launched a very effective campaign aimed at the younger generation with the run-out Citi Golf where people shared their motoring experiences online. This worked particularly well for a number of reasons: it was extensively promoted during a two-week road show and a campaign in traditional media; many young people own a Citi Golf as it is a more affordable entry-level car and the campaign therefore drew a good response from young people who are more active and engage more on social sites; the Citi Golf is an icon in South African motoring and has been for more than 30 years. Many people identify with it and a large number of people had experiences to share. The company views the multi-award winning 'Goodbye Citi' campaign as the current benchmark – "integrating every aspect of the digital world and providing customers with opportunities to engage with the Volkswagen brand" (Dealer Bulletin, April 2010).

Has new media reduced the importance of motoring journalists?

Motoring journalists still have an important role to play, Dlamini says. They, too, embrace and use new media.

Dlamini says motoring journalists do play an important role in the buying decision. Although people who are interested in purchasing a car are generally well informed, they do value an opinion from a valid source. People do follow the opinions of motoring journalists and they even approach editors or journalists personally to gain their view about a car they want to buy. Even though they know what they want, they need confirmation from a credible source to support their decision. People view journalists from established publications as credible, as they have come to know them over the years. These journalists have successfully managed to gain the same credibility and sometimes even more on new media.

Dlamini does not believe that new media will dilute the importance of traditional media or the role of the motoring journalist, nor that it will change the influence of traditional media. He believes that new media has to support traditional media. New media can trigger people to go to print media and print has more detail. He cites the example of *CAR* that uses its online presence to promote its printed product. *topCar* is doing the same.

4.3 Mercedes-Benz

Interview Results

Mercedes-Benz's parent company, Daimler AG makes good use of the various communications opportunities of social media.

Twitter

They use Twitter to instantly supply and update information on a wide range of topics (<http://twitter.com/daimler>).

YouTube

Daimler publishes multimedia material on a range of relevant corporate topics.

Facebook

The company is active on Facebook and has a large following.

Daimler-Blog

Daimler employees post articles in blogs about their daily activities and business.

Use of social media for vehicle launches: Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG

The Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG has had an online presence since its world premiere at the 2010 International Motor Show. This was in the form of a web special (www.mercedes-benz.com/sls-amg) and was further extended with the addition of an interactive guided tour of the AMG development plant.

Furthermore, three online magazine editions provided extensive information on the performance ("Milliseconds"), the lightweight construction ("Milligrams") and the design ("Millimetres") of the SLS AMG.

The vehicle also had a presence on a variety of social media platforms.

Mercedes-Benz launched a reporter blog (www.sls-amg-reporter.de), where car enthusiast, Matthew K. posted reports, pictures and video clips of his travels as an SLS AMG reporter. Matthew K. also interacted on Twitter

(<http://twitter.com/slsamg>) and Facebook. In addition, an official fan page on the world premiere of the vehicle was set up within the Facebook social media community (www.facebook.com/MercedesBenz).

A new, free iPhone application called "SLS AMG" was later designed to give players an experience of the new super sports car.

Mercedes-Benz South Africa

Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) is bound by the directives from their parent company, and follows the traditional way of communicating with the motoring media. They therefore do not overstep the international boundaries set in Germany and do not interact with motoring media on social media sites locally. They find personal communication with the motoring media as the "proven and tried and tested" way. Media releases and photographs are sent by email and other contact is either by phone or personal (interview Greig and Van der Laan).

New media and communication with motoring media

Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) finds personal communication with the motoring media as the "proven and tried and tested" way. New media has not changed the way MBSA goes about new vehicle launches and their modus operandi is still to supply information in written form as well as on CD handed out to the motoring media at launches.

Other media releases and photographs are sent via email and they post releases and pictures on selected media sites such as www.quickpics.co.za. This site carries information and photographs from almost all motoring manufacturers. MBSA finds that posting their releases on the website has reduced the number of requests for information and photographs as the media now have an "online library" where they can access all the information they need. They have also found that motoring journalists make fewer mistakes as they now have the facts on their computer screens. It is also easier to refer to past information, as the releases are filed in a logical manner. MBSA has had offers from companies to do podcasts on their behalf, but that is not something that they have actively pursued yet.

Has new media reduced the importance of motoring journalists?

Van der Laan and Greig from MBSA agree that the motoring media still has an important role to play and that the opinions of motoring journalists are highly regarded by the general public. The motoring media interprets and communicates the information they supply to the public. Motoring journalists have expert opinions, they have worked hard to gain those opinions and the vehicle manufacturers respect them for that. Although the public is more immediately informed because of new media, it has not taken anything away from the status of motoring journalists, they believe.

4.4 Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company in the US conducted a six-month social media experiment called the Fiesta Movement in which they identified 100 people who they regarded as social influencers and who already had their own social communities. These individuals were already actively involved on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube and had their own blogs. Ford gave them Fiestas to drive for six months and asked them to share their experiences - telling other audiences about Ford Motor Company.

The Fiesta Movement was most successful. The 700 videos produced by the 100 people generated 6.5 million views on YouTube. There have been more than 3.4 million impressions of Fiesta Movement on Twitter and the photos were viewed more than 670 000 times (SMI 2010).

All of their content was then aggregated in one place without censorship or editing. In effect these people were telling the Fiesta story rather than motoring journalists as in the past.

Following their "Fiesta Movement" new media campaign where Ford internationally made use of web resources like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to generate brand awareness, the company expanded their new media campaigns to include dealerships with the launch of the 2011 Fiesta internationally. Dealerships were asked to join the "Retail Movement" in advance of the Fiesta's 2011 launch. Participating dealers had to commit to using social media for their marketing and in so doing could recoup up to 80% of their costs. This was just another way for Ford in the US to encourage and

educate their dealers to make use of new media and become part of their new media efforts (Read 2009).

Ford Motor Company in the US went further when they launched their 2011 Explorer on Facebook as opposed to following the more traditional route of a motor show or press event. The company took a gamble to debut such an important and popular vehicle in a non-traditional way but it paid off. Following the reveal on 26 July 2010, visits to Ford Explorer pages increased by as much as 104% on some motoring websites (Read 2009). Ford's Facebook reveal generated a 200% bigger return than most Super Bowl ads do and at a fraction of the cost. Where car companies see a rise in shoppers of about 14% after a Super Bowl commercial, Ford's share of SUV shoppers jumped a massive 52% (Read 2009).

At the time of writing Ford was seeking “bloggers, social media mavens and Facebook friends” to submit a video application in order to be selected as one of 100 people to drive the 2012 Focus around southern France or Spain in 2011. The campaign is called “Ford Focus Global Test Drive” with the aim to create excitement ahead of the vehicle’s launch (Ford Focus Global Test Drive on Facebook).

Use of social networking

Scott Monty, head of social media at Ford Motor Company in the US, states that social media amplifies and complements their traditional media activities. Social media is not replacing anything, he says, but is an absolute way for them to engage with their customers when and where the customers want. “We need to be able to supply people with information where they can help tell our story themselves” (Marketing Magnified 2010).

Monty also believes that companies should determine if and where their customers are active in the social space. It is important for such companies to engage with their customers where they are present and where they want to be connected to. In other words motor companies should be in the same space as their customers.

We have had a very open atmosphere in terms of experimentation and the willingness to try new things. We have a really progressive and curious executive team that realizes the power of (social media). They

may not necessarily know how to use all the tools themselves, but they understand fundamentally that this is the way the world is going, and that this is the way we need to continue to grow and evolve Ford Motor Company. Our leadership team sets expectations and objectives very clearly, and they trust the team that works for them to be able to do the same, to come to the table with the appropriate tools and the appropriate level of expertise to accomplish those goals (Marketing Magnified).

5. Interview Results Motoring Media

5.1 Neil Piper, Publisher Ramsay Media (publishers of *CAR* magazine)

The following information was obtained from an Interview with Neil Piper:

Publisher: Ramsay Media

Introduction

The advent of new media forced Ramsay Media to relook at the way they position their publications. Previously, the magazine was central, with one or two brand extensions around it. With the proliferation of media and all the new and different media platforms, they changed their strategy to put the *CAR* brand at the centre with all the extensions around it. The printed magazine is now only one of the extensions while the other things do they do, such as events, social media, supplements, shows, etc. all form part of promoting the brand.

Their aim is to drive people from one platform to the next – magazine to website, website to mobile, mobile back to magazine – they are keeping their audience constantly on the move.

Use of the Internet generally

New media has also forced motoring magazines to have a prominent presence on the Internet. Ramsay Media believes that they need to be present where and when readers want to communicate with them. Their strategy is to be seen and engage with their readers on as many relevant platforms as possible.

This is along the same thoughts as Ford Motor Company, where Scott Monty, Head of Social Marketing says, "Social Media is absolutely a way for us to engage with the consumer when and where the consumer determines (Marketing Magnified 2010).

Use of social networking

The journalists at Ramsay Media are therefore expected to provide content for those platforms and also to engage with their readers on such platforms. This also permeates their marketing offering, as advertisers are no longer satisfied with having a presence only in their printed magazine anymore. This concurs with the view of Grueskin et al. (2011 p.4 of 5) who proclaim, "Digital platforms provide another way for advertising departments to attract new clients and retain old ones. For salespeople who don't feel they have enough arrows in their quiver, online and mobile can be a way to get a reluctant advertiser into the fold." Ramsay Media therefore provides other new media platforms as well, where their journalists have secured a following and readers often visit to look at content. It is crucial to provide quality content on such platforms and it is the responsibility of their journalists to ensure the excellence thereof.

They go to great lengths to ensure that their content meets the needs of their audience and believe that specialist content – such as they provide – will always be in demand. Journalists that provide general content may suffer due to new media, but the same does not apply to specialised motoring content. Social media is going to get bigger and better and it is going to get harder for the general media to survive but there will always be a place for specialist media. People will always want advice when it comes to topics like vehicles or technology, Piper believes.

CAR magazine has also made a conscious decision to break down the barriers between the Internet, mobile and print media. Previously the editor of *CAR* magazine was responsible for content on *CAR* magazine only. They had another editor for the Internet and yet another editor for mobile. Different teams worked on different platforms. Now all journalists write across all platforms. *CAR* magazine publisher Neil Piper believes that *CAR* magazine will always remain a strong brand as it has a long heritage and strong reputation that is jealously guarded. This is the "trust" McQuail may refer to

when he says “there is still a perceived need for reliability in news and the trust that some news sources...have earned cannot be dispensed with or easily substituted” (2010, p158).

Use of interaction

For Ramsay Media, the conversation with their readers starts two to three months before the magazine comes out in print. In a process of excitement-building they work all the social media platforms to drive readers to the newsstand to buy the magazine. Rich content such as video or sound bytes now form part of their media package and they even have a dedicated TV division and editorial team that does a digital road test every month. This they do to provide rich content for the website.

Readers want to see *CAR* and *Wiel* journalists on social sites and this also helps the journalists to grow their profiles. Readers relate to different members of the editorial team and they each have a different following, which is further enhanced with *CAR* news on their website. This entails a short summary of what the *CAR* journalists have been doing over the last month. *CAR* magazine is the first motoring magazine in South Africa to be available on iPad through an app they have developed and they include interactive elements, such as motor exhaust sounds.

CAR uses Facebook to engage in dialogue with their readers and to get people talking about the brand. It is also a way to let them know what is happening on all the other platforms. They use Twitter as a direct communication medium to let people know what they are doing and at which location or event they are. They feel it is imperative to give readers what they want and that their readers are also getting more demanding. *CAR* Guide, “the heart and soul” of *CAR*, is now also available on their website, which provides all the information readers could require on cars, such as technical detail, pricing and road tests. The website, however, is not a duplication of the magazine and each carries its own specialised content.

Ramsay Media has invested in content software programs to help them upload copy, photos and videos from anywhere in the world where there is an internet connection. They therefore now update their readers no matter where they are, even if it means putting in extra hours at foreign locations.

Use of blogging

There are many people that blog about cars on the Internet. Piper believes that blogs have their place, however, these represent an opinion of a non-professional rather than expert advice, so although *CAR* magazine and *Wiel* let people have their say on blogs they host, they do need to manage them. They see to it that bloggers keep within the guidelines of civil interaction and should someone become abusive, personal or insulting they remove them from the site. Piper says *CAR* has a proud heritage and their journalists are respected. New media has not changed the trust that people have in *CAR* magazine. Piper believes that should one compare *CAR* with one of the world's most popular television motoring programmes, *Top Gear* (watched by 350 million people in 170 countries each week (Chang 2010)), the difference lies in the quality of journalism that *CAR* has produced for more than five decades and the solid buying advice they give. *Top Gear* is about fun and entertainment whereas readers trust *CAR* for guidance when they look at buying a new car. *CAR* has earned that respect and they need to protect that, believes Piper. Whereas *Top Gear* is aimed at entertainment, *CAR* too, provides entertainment but rather on their other new media platforms. Road tests lie at the heart of what they do and are the reason why many readers buy the magazine. Even though new media has not changed the way they perform their road tests, it has changed their job functions. In terms of time management, they had a month to produce a magazine and that was their only job. Now they have a multi-platform work schedule. They look at what new vehicles are coming, list all their media platforms and then determine what can go on what platform. They also decide who is going to do what on each platform. A lot of planning happens upfront. Piper says time management has become more critical.

“Journalists just don't have the time they had anymore. They are working much harder and have to work a lot smarter.” They also have more of a public profile than they had in the past. Piper believes that Ramsay Media is at the forefront of social media. He says that Haymarket, the biggest automotive publisher in the UK, has learned from them in terms of social media, following them six months later.

Use of applications

Piper says that everyone is now looking at social media as the future, with iPads and tablets changing reader behaviour and rich content. Although the iPad was not yet available in SA at the time of writing, *CAR* was already on the iPad internationally. Piper's thinking is in line with marketing and media information company Nielsen that states

The growing popularity of connected devices - from tablet computers like the Apple iPad to smartphones, portable games players, and eBook readers like the Kindle and Nook – is already changing how some consumers engage with media. It is also creating new opportunities and challenges for a broad range of companies. Publishers, media companies and application developers are eager to know whether they should optimise their content for particular devices (nielsenwire, 2010).

Piper believes that the iPad will take off in a big way. "Customers are looking for more. Just being on one platform is not good enough anymore," he says, "and that again changes the way motoring journalists work."

5.2 Hannes Oosthuizen

Editor: *CAR* magazine, Ramsay Media

The following information was obtained from an interview with Hannes Oosthuizen.

Use of the Internet generally

The editorial team at *CAR* magazine only actively started to engage with new media just over a year ago. Some of them were active in their personal capacities on Facebook and Twitter before the time, though. It was only after they realised that they were getting good traffic from selected links they posted on Facebook that they decided to do it in a more structured way.

Use of social networking

CAR now has a dedicated person that posts news on Facebook and Twitter. Oosthuizen's view is that Twitter is far more useful for journalists. Facebook is used more like a forum for interaction, while one can use Twitter as a tool to get stories. He selects a few sources he wants to connect with and follows them. It has, in fact, changed the way he starts his day. In the past he would visit some websites and see what they have as leads to find stories. Now he mostly goes to Twitter and maybe one other website. Twitter has therefore become a primary source of information and leads for him. More people from the motor industry are also joining Twitter which makes it even more useful to Oosthuizen. He says it is, however, necessary to first build a following on Twitter, which takes time. Twitter will continue to grow and become an even more important part of his job, he believes. He constantly tweets and finds it very useful.

Motor manufacturers also follow motoring journalists on new media. They become followers on Twitter and when a motoring journalist tweets something on their product it is not uncommon for them to respond. Oosthuizen tweeted about a customer who had a problem and the manufacturer then responded the same day.

CAR journalists use Twitter and Facebook to pull people through to their site while they use Mxit as an income generator by selling car exhaust ringtones. He believes print is still king in South Africa and they still generate the bulk of their income from the magazine. *CAR* has experienced a drop in circulation over the past two years, which they ascribe to the recession and to a lesser extent, social media. They do expect social media to continue to have an effect on their circulation and therefore plan to make changes to the content of the magazine. They want to move away from the magazine being a window on the motoring industry where they cover and record everything. That puts a restriction on space and is not viable. Now with social media the magazine will become more of a features and entertainment platform with bigger spreads and more of a reading and entertainment experience. Their website will become news-driven with updates, fresh news and more in-depth buying information, data and advice. The distinction between the magazine and the website will become more apparent. British *CAR* magazine followed the same

strategy about four years ago, but Oosthuizen says “it almost destroyed them.” It was too early then, but the time is right for them to make that change now. With social media, printed motoring magazines can’t claim to carry breaking news anymore as this has appeared in social media long before the magazine hits the shelf. This strategy is in accordance with other motoring magazines: “With all the Internets out there, how can a monthly magazine do breaking news with a straight face?” asks *Car and Driver* Editor-in-Chief, Eddie Alterman in an editorial on Jalopnik (Alterman 2009) “It can’t, which is why we’re not doing it anymore”.

Alterman has therefore replaced the pages in the magazine previously devoted to automotive news with infographics, technology, and humour pieces.

CAR magazine has replaced breaking news with “really spectacular features” in print and does the hard news online. New media has forced them to move away from the core of the magazine at the moment – vehicles launches, tests drives etc. – and rather do that on the website. The website is therefore also becoming more important. Other motoring magazines are following suit, says Oosthuizen.

Use of applications

Oosthuizen foresees that the iPad may replace the printed magazine, but it will still be a magazine – just on an iPad. He sees the iPad as having a similar content as the magazine – articles that people will read when they have more time. Rich media that can be added to the iPad offers an enhanced package – so it has to affect the printed magazine.

5.3 Francois Rabe

Editor of *Wiel* – South Africa’s only Afrikaans motoring magazine

The following information was obtained from an interview with Francois Rabe.

Use of the Internet generally

Every member of the editorial staff at *Wiel* has a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Previously the editorial staff’s titles were linked to the roles they had

to perform. That does not exist anymore as they have had to become multi-skilled.

Use of social networking

The team at *Wiel* now records videos, is active on Facebook, Twitter and manages the *Wiel* website. Each carries the responsibility to contribute. Social media has added much more pressure on editorial teams. Motoring journalists do not only perform one function anymore; their responsibilities have increased considerably and require a lot more of their time and energy. Social networking is a consistent process and has to be done daily. The magazine – even though it takes a month to put together – only happens once a month whereas social media happens all the time.

Use of applications

The motoring journalists at *Wiel* operate on the principle that the role of the journalist is to inform, educate and entertain. Readers should be informed (provided with value) and at the same time entertained. That is where the iPad has a huge role to play with providing much more entertainment, they believe. Unlike magazines, the iPad is not static and provides much more entertainment value. Journalists have to be a step ahead and ensure that they know more than their readers. Information is now much more freely available and readers can, and do, check on facts. Rabe believes that social media works better when aimed at the younger market and cites the example of the launches of the Ford Fiesta and the Audi A1. Both vehicle models are aimed at the higher entry-level or younger market and have made extensive use of social media as part of their social campaigns. Rabe believes social media has also forced motoring journalists to “delve deeper”. With so much communication on social media it is the motoring journalist’s role to look behind the hype and find the real data. They speak to the developers, engineers etc. and bring readers the stories they would not otherwise be able to find themselves. Readers now expect motoring journalists to have a social media presence and report on these platforms.

Use of interaction

Wiel receives huge amounts of email and regards that as a more personal way of communication compared to social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Email is a direct interaction between them and their readers. They can ask questions directly and be answered in the shortest possible time. Such interaction does much to build a relationship between journalists and their readers and bring the readers closer to the magazine. Rabe says this also applies to other forms of social media. Social media helps to build the brand of both journalists and the publication they represent. Social media also impacts on the roles they have to perform, and journalists at *Wiel* are assigned responsibility for different forms of new media. It takes up a huge proportion of their time, and eats away at the available time they have to put the magazine together. It does, however, broaden their public profile. The editorial team at *Wiel* values each reader and they go to great trouble to ensure they engage with the users of new media. Rabe believes that new media will play an even bigger role in the future and foresees what he terms “hybrid media” coming to the fore. This is a combination of the kind of media we have at present (traditional and new) combined with even newer technologies. He believes only the best motoring journalists will survive in future, and that motoring journalists will become more specialised with only those that have created an online presence prospering. Some motoring journalists (such as Hannes Oosthuizen, the editor of *CAR*,) have managed to build an international following and secure their positions in the media world. Motoring journalists need to be on top of their game all the time. The *Wiel* readers are well informed and are quick to point out mistakes or comment if they believe something is wrong. The motoring journalists at *Wiel* therefore have to ensure their work is of the highest standard – both in print and digital media. They also need to respond to their readers in the quickest possible time as this is what their readers have come to expect. In keeping up with readers’ demands, their website is being changed to include more interactive media such as video. This brings forward another dimension of their work as they not only write about cars but now also videograph and talk about cars on air. This is to further increase the entertainment value of the website while not duplicating the magazine content. Providing entertainment as opposed to only

information has thus become an important element. To this end, Ramsay Media even has a dedicated video team that sometimes accompanies journalists.

Communication with motor manufacturers

Motor manufacturers now mostly communicate electronically with motoring journalists. Even though some may still supply printed press releases it is mostly done via email or downloaded on dedicated motoring media websites such as www.motorpics.co.za or www.quickpic.co.za. Though the names of the websites may imply that they provide “pictures” both photographs and news releases are posted here. Rabe finds this especially useful as it serves as an archive at the same time, with accessibility at any time of day or night. This has sped up their work tremendously as previously they had to either phone the manufacturer with a request or had to wait for material to arrive either by post or hand delivered. This also makes the production process more flexible as new photos can be included up to the very last minute. Journalists are also notified as soon as something new is posted ensuring that they are kept up to date. Rabe views the media sites as an “invaluable resource” and also believes that it has helped the manufacturers to better communicate with motoring journalists. Information therefore has become more accessible and has made their work easier. It has made the relationship with motoring manufacturers less personal, though, as there is less direct communication. Rather than communicating with the journalist, motor manufacturers now post the information on a media website that is operated by a third party.

In spite of the fact that the public now has access to so much more information about any car they are interested in, Rabe believes that the opinion of the motoring journalist has become more important. From his experience he has found that people have researched a car before approaching them for information they cannot find anywhere else. Motoring journalists therefore still need the edge to provide the answers and are respected for that. They are seen as opinion leaders and are valued for their opinions. There are some people that take the word of motoring journalists as

gospel (Rabe). Some motoring journalists have huge followings on new media sites and have great influence.

5.4 *topCar*

Editor: Pierre Steyn

Assistant editor: Angus Thompson

Online editor: Ashleigh Oldfield

The following information was obtained from an interview with Pierre Steyn, Angus Thompson and Ashleigh Oldfield.

The editorial team at *topCar* believes new media has changed the way motoring journalists operate as they don't work for a printed product as such anymore but rather for a multimedia brand, of which the printed magazine is but one part. It is still the most important part though.

Use of the Internet generally

The editorial members at *topCar* don't publish data as they used to do. Such data is now widely available on the Internet and other forms of digital media, and they have to be "more entertaining and escapist". People wanting facts and figures can find them much more easily, more quickly and cheaper on the Internet. The *topCar* staff therefore don't stop supplying facts and figures but just put it on a different platform, such as their website or mobile and not in the magazine as previously.

Though their main objective is still producing a "beautiful magazine" – as it is still the main income driver – they also "multi-focus".

Steyn sees the magazine as the engine to which they can attach a range of other platforms and therefore does not see the Internet replacing the magazine for some time. They do make money off the Internet, so it is possible, but they also foresee that the Internet is going to change with the introduction of tablets.

Use of applications

Steyn believes that tablets present a host of new opportunities. Rafat Ali, founder of successful digital news site, *paidContent*, agrees and is confident

that touchscreen devices will soon become the dominant form of news dissemination (Hoffman, 2010).

It almost takes motoring journalists back to the more traditional way they did things. Rich media are going to become much more accessible and that will change the media landscape. *topCar* is already downloadable as a tablet application and the reader's experience is enhanced by the inclusion of rich media which changes the way they do things, producing content for different applications. Content is now digested differently by their readers, be that in the magazine, on their cell phones or on tablet. This requires better planning and more work.

Use of social networking

Online Editor Ashley Oldfield's responsibility is to recruit as many followers on Facebook as he can and he interacts with users on Facebook and Twitter as much as possible. Their presence on these platforms, he believes, can create additional readers for the magazine. As soon as news arrives they send it through to all channels available to them. New technology also helps them to interact with their audiences and *topCar* editor, Pierre Steyn, takes video or photographs at events such as the Paris Motor Show and sends or uploads them within seconds to their audience. Motoring journalists that don't use new technology in this way are at a disadvantage, they believe, because readers or users will go where they can find such information. This also creates the function of brand ambassador for the journalists at *topCar* and it is one that they take seriously. Oldfield spends a great proportion of his time on Facebook and Twitter and that has demanded additional input from the editorial team.

Now, when they are away on a new model launch, they update their Facebook and Twitter pages all the time and also have to be more accessible. Previously they would attend a launch and only write about it for the magazine that would appear at the end of the month. Social networking has changed that. They now post on Twitter before, during and after the launch and post news on Facebook.

They also produce rich media such as video for applications such as YouTube and Facebook, and package the magazine for iPad. Although there are still

motoring journalists that are specialists and who don't engage with social media, they are in the minority and Steyn believes that this is a luxury that no-one will be able to afford much longer. He does expect his team to be comfortable with new media and to use it to their advantage. Facebook has also raised the profile of motoring journalists.

Use of comments and feedback

Whereas many people used to be on an online forum, Steyn believes that has declined and they have now migrated to other applications such as Facebook. At *topCar* everybody needs to know how to upload articles and photos on applications such as Facebook or websites. Each new media application has its own focus and they select what to do on each. Certain things they only do for the magazine, others for the website, mobile or tablet. Each one of them has separate audiences (with some overlap) but a big advantage for them is that it widens their scope. Each of the applications has a specific net that catches a certain audience. They therefore promote and bolster their brand on all of the above platforms. This also helps them to offer an advertiser a "360 degree solution" and not only the traditional advertisement in the magazine anymore. Their challenge is to have a very clear focus as to what they only do in print, only do on the web, mobile, etc. Each medium therefore needs a strategy so that the same information is not duplicated on each platform. Offering the magazine content in tablet form is the next natural progression and the way to generate income in new media is getting people to pay for the content.

Use of interaction

The only form of interaction *topCar* had in the past was in the form of a typed or handwritten letter or even a phone call.

Now this has all changed and there is much more interactivity. The team also feels obliged to respond on comments or queries on the *topCar* website and other applications. There is therefore a much better two-way flow of communication than in the past. Angus Thompson cites the example of F1 Motor Racing where new media has allowed supporters to follow the race lap for lap. For them to report on the race in the magazine some weeks later does

not make sense. They therefore do a synopsis, analysis or in-depth article of what F1 followers won't have seen on new media or don't have access to. They have a very clear focus of what they want to do in print compared to what they do in new media. The magazine is divided into three distinct sections; the first third is "what you would call a traditional motoring magazine" and the way most motoring magazines looked before the advent of new media (testing and reviewing cars, motor shows, industry news, column and letter page). The middle part is the heart of the magazine and consists of motoring features such as the history of a vehicle brand, etc. These are the kind of stories that readers won't find anywhere else. The last third of the magazine carries articles such as analysis of car sales, explaining technology etc. There are certain editorial pillars and they meet each one of them. Steyn believes that people spend up to two hours reading the magazine while the maximum time online is no more than five minutes. The magazine therefore aims "to give you the story behind the story" and supply information not available anywhere else. Some people still buy the magazine for the buyers guide in the back but that is changing and more people refer to the Internet for that kind of information. Interacting more with readers has allowed them to understand their market better. They say that readers are not scared to tell them what they like and what they don't like. This is the kind of information they had to source from market research in the past and with new media they don't have the need for that anymore. They can even ask readers what they like and the response gives them a good indication of readers' preferences. Steyn doesn't believe that new media has changed the ethics, values and beliefs of motoring journalism. He says what has changed is the way they interact with new media and how they now embrace new media. He does believe that there is some sub-standard journalism present in new media but says that is the reason that people will always come back to trusted brands. Readers are better informed so motoring journalists must ensure that they meet the expectations of their readers and know more. There's no room for mistakes because you are going to be called to account for those mistakes.

Use of blogging

Even though blogging about motoring is popular, bloggers don't have the benefit of such a large audience as the journalists of *topCar* have. They also don't demand the same respect and authority as someone that has built up credibility over many years. It is for these reasons that the *topCar* team members don't view bloggers as a threat or imposing on their territory. Steyn and his team also don't view blogging as an imperative and therefore don't blog themselves. "Most bloggers are just ordinary people that write about something they love," they say. They are not concerned about the many people blogging or writing online about motoring either, as they believe that "quality shines through". They don't see motoring bloggers as a threat to motoring journalists but rather just as another competing medium requiring them to be better, more reliable and more credible in their work. Motoring journalists build their credibility by being experts, delivering work of high standard and minimising mistakes. People are buying their opinion and that is what they are selling. Their jobs are to define and capture what a vehicle is and whether it works for its application or not. Many readers already have the technical detail and statistics and it is their job to give the reader a reason to read. Steyn asserts that *topCar* is a respected brand and people respect what they do and therefore value their opinion on a vehicle. He compares their job to that of a movie critic – people know what the movie is about but still want the critic's opinion on it. Some journalists have a very strong following on social media platforms and this also then extends to print. Media24 changed their *Wheels24* website (the biggest motoring website in South Africa, according to Steyn) and newsletter to give their journalists more of a voice. They used to be very news driven (being a subsidiary of news24), according to Thompson (who was seconded to *Wheels24* for a six-month period to help them better engage with their readers) and his task was to bring their personalities to the fore, give them more of a voice and make their opinions stand out.

New media brings challenges in terms of time and logistics. The team now has to do more in the limited time they have and adapt their writing and "packaging" to the different media. It is no longer a case of attending a vehicle launch and writing the story when they get back to the office in time for the

production deadline of the magazine. Motoring journalists have therefore had to become multi-skilled. Steyn believes that motoring journalists perhaps find it easier than other general journalists to use new technology as they work with it all the time in the cars they test. They therefore have a natural interest in new technology as motoring technology improves all the time and they have to understand and adapt to such technology in order to explain it to their readers. Printed magazines can not claim to be first with the news anymore. Thompson cites the example of international motoring magazines such as *Auto Digest* and *AutoBild* whose ethos and editorial policy was that of "breaking news". They have had to change these as news appeared on the Internet long before they could publish. These magazines are still struggling with the transition and are losing readers as a consequence. It is no longer possible for printed magazines to be first with hard news and they have had to adapt or die.

Communication from motor manufacturers

According to Steyn motor manufacturers have a lot of catching up to do in so far as communication with motoring journalists by means of new media is concerned. They don't fully realise the reach of new media and can do much more. Some manufacturers are connecting with them on Facebook but at a slow pace. There is almost an apprehension, according to Thompson, and they don't truly appreciate the value of new media.

Although some manufacturers, such as Ford Motor Company, launch some of their products directly to the public, motoring journalists still receive most information well in advance of the public. Some respected motoring journalists, such as Georg Kacher, even drive the vehicles as early as two years before they are launched. Some motor manufacturers may also offer certain journalists or publications prior exposure to vehicles before the official launch to the other motoring media. The challenge for motoring journalists is to ensure they hold on to that esteem and in so doing remain the first to receive new information. In this respect they need to be more proactive and be the first with the news.

Vehicle manufacturers will never be able to communicate as effectively with the public as they do in their magazine, says Thompson. Their communication

is selective and they may be seen as biased and only promoting their brands, where respected motoring magazines have the audiences vehicle manufacturers want to reach. New media has given more people a voice but what defines them is their audience and how much value their audience attaches to their voice.

5.5 Egmont Sippel

Editor: Motor Beeld, Volksblad, Die Burger and Rapport

Multiple recipient of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists Journalist of the Year Award

The following information was obtained from an interview with Egmont Sippel.

Use of the Internet generally

Sippel sees new media as an “immediacy platform” that leaves no room for in-depth reporting. He says it is aimed at very specific and time-sensitive information. He cites the example of F1 reporting where in the past he found it very difficult to find the grid positions of the cars after qualifying on a Saturday afternoon. That information is now immediately available, but the value of such information after the event has also become less important, as journalists have moved on to report about the race or post-race reports. He believes the quality of information has declined as the emphasis is now on speed of output rather than analysis. Sippel is the only journalist of those interviewed that raised the issue of loss of quality. The other interviewees believe the quality can be as good but the information not as comprehensive as in print where there is often more time to add in-depth information and analysis.

Use of interaction

Sippel says that new media involves readers more and makes them part of the process. He also believes it is important to communicate with his readers and they enjoy interacting with him. New media has improved the relationship with motoring journalists. Readers feel they can communicate with motoring journalists. They feel part of the fraternity and it makes them feel important.

Use of social networking

Sippel says new media has allowed more people a voice and opinion, and more people now have the opportunity to “voice their expert opinion”. He is concerned, though, that the competition to get the news out as quickly as possible can lower the standard and quality of journalism as this does not allow for much time and even less analysis. “The only requirement for new media is speed,” says Sippel.

Sippel says most people read his articles because he is a good writer. They spend more time reading his articles and his work is therefore not as suitable for new media where users spend much less time reading. It is the work of the motoring journalist to present an objective opinion to their readers, he says, as communication from motor manufacturers can not be seen as being objective. They will not highlight the weak points of their products and should they boast about the strengths of their vehicles, they are seen as biased.

6. Findings

A discussion of the findings of the above research establishes how new media has impacted on motoring journalism.

The findings also reveal the extent to which motoring journalists have adapted to new media and it may serve as an indicator of the future (or changing practice) of motoring journalism. It also provides a view of the changing relationship between motoring journalists, their readers and vehicle manufacturers.

The changed relationships

New media has indeed fundamentally changed the relationship between (motoring) journalists and their public as Bardoel and Deuze (2001) allude to. New media has changed the traditional “top-down” relationship to one in which there is now a two-way flow of communication. This applies to all three parties – motoring journalists, their readers and the motor manufacturers. Audi writes about “a brand that is no longer solely represented by its marketers, but increasingly, by its market too...” (*Audi Insight* newsletter received on 15 April 2011). Andile Dlamini from Volkswagen also indicated in

his interview that Volkswagen Germany have identified Facebook and YouTube users as important partners for motoring companies. This is in line with Pavlik's (2001) writings that "new media are bringing about a realignment of the relationship between and among news organisations, journalists and their many publics including audiences, sources, competitors, advertisers and governments."

The motor manufacturers were fairly restricted in terms of the communication channels at their disposal in the past. They now also use new media to communicate directly with the public as is evident from the interviews with representatives from Audi, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and information gathered from Ford Motor Company. Audi refers to "something money could never buy: a voice not just 'above' the people (through traditional means of marketing), but now, 'amongst' the people (*Audi Insight* newsletter received on 15 April 2011).

Motor manufacturers exploit social/multimedia channels and most produce sophisticated, media-rich websites and are supplementing those with an online presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social networks. "Mercedes is obviously realizing that their market is about to change, writes McGrath (2008), commenting on the manufacturer's use of new media. He states "that it is a good move for Mercedes as they will gain a younger audience as well as get feedback from them."

They have therefore changed their ways as Gillmor (2006: p. xxvi) suggested new media requires: "Everyone, from journalists to the people we cover, to our sources and the former audience must change their ways".

The process of disseminating information and more specifically, attaching a value or opinion to a specific make or model of vehicle, that was the (almost exclusive) domain of the motoring journalist, is still an important function of the motoring journalist. Rudi Venter of Audi states that you can't replace the expertise and the journalistic skills that motoring journalists have.

Even though the motoring journalist now competes with a myriad of other "reviewers" posting their opinions on a number of websites, blogs and forums such as imperiaselect, Ileadmotorcars and usedcarsza, motoring journalists are still valued for their professional opinion. "People will always want (professional) advice when it comes to topics like vehicles or technology,"

says Niel Piper from Ramsay Media. Singer (as quoted by Campbell, 2004) supports this view when he writes: "You need someone who can provide you with a condensed version of everything important that happened in your world that you trust... (which) is something that's clearly lacking in a lot of the online world."

"Today's journalists need a wide range of knowledge, technical skills, and digital savvy," according to Kawamoto (2003).

This is particularly true in the case of the motoring journalists interviewed. All the journalists at *CAR* magazine work on print and new media platforms. Where some journalists used to work on either print or online they are now expected to work across all platforms. They had to acquire the "knowledge, technical skills, and digital savvy" in order to perform the tasks that are expected of them. They are therefore working longer hours and doing more work.

New media has also allowed motoring publications to offer their advertisers exposure on additional platforms. Ramsay Media offer the other new media platforms where their journalists have secured a following and readers often visit to look at content to advertisers as well.

Use of new media requires journalists to juggle a number of (new) balls.

There is much more time pressure on editorial teams and they have to think on a wider scale. There is no place for a motoring journalist that wants to play the traditional role and only write copy for print. Motoring journalists now have to know social media and know how to complement one with another rather than duplicating. *Wiel* editor Francois Rabe foresees that editorial teams will have to become bigger in future to accommodate the additional media platforms for which they have to cater.

Motoring journalists also need to adapt their writing style as they cross from creative writing in the magazine, to short, concise writing on the Internet or social networks.

Oldfield says the way journalists write is also different. The main consideration on the Internet is to get the content uploaded as quickly as possible and the style of writing is more concise. Their research has shown that readers only spend 3-5 minutes on the web so the copy needs to be precise, concise and to the point. Magazine writing on the other hand is more in-depth and "more

thinking goes in there". The magazine also affords more space and people spend more leisure time reading it. Motoring journalists also have to switch between different styles the whole time. An additional challenge social media brings is that the motoring journalist should become a true expert in his or her field. Motoring journalists need to become more specialised and even more knowledgeable.

Pavlik (2001) lists four ways new media is transforming journalism: the nature of news content is changing; the way journalists operate is changing; the face of the newsroom and the news industry are different and; the relationship between the parties is different. His observations are reinforced by Steyn who states that journalists have had to become more multi-skilled. Steyn believes there is still a place for somebody that just writes, "but those people are becoming fewer." Motoring journalists have a busy travel schedule and their tools aren't limited to a pen, notepad and camera anymore. Pavlik (2001: p. 199) refers to the changing tools of journalists. Now, when they cover a story they have a sequence of writing. In the case of *CAR* magazine they first post the story on the web and then 'talk' about it on Facebook and Twitter. When they get back to the office, they write the creative piece. When the magazine goes on sale they again 'talk' about the story that appears in the magazine on Facebook and Twitter to create hype and expectations. The journalist therefore also plays a marketing role.

With motoring (and other) news so freely available online, motoring journalists have to go a step further "to get the story behind the story". This they do by taking a different approach, finding the source to get more information or looking for additional quotes. On the print side, they step away from the news angle and do more creative stories.

Motor manufacturers have now also started following motoring journalists on new media. They become followers on Twitter and when a motoring journalist tweets something about their product it is not uncommon for them to respond. *CAR* magazine editor Hannes Oosthuizen cites the example of a vehicle owner who had a complaint relating to her vehicle. The manufacturer in question failed to respond for three weeks until Oosthuizen tweeted about it. The manufacturer then responded the same day.

In the age of new media it is essential for motoring journalists to have the right equipment to do their jobs. Material has to be uploaded as it arrives. Ramsay Media has invested in content software programs to help them upload copy, photos and videos from anywhere in the world where there is an internet connection. They therefore now update their readers no matter where they are, even if it means that they have to put in extra hours at foreign locations. New media has added new responsibilities and roles to the job description of motoring journalists. The branding of motoring publications has become much more important than in the past and motoring journalists are expected to actively promote and even market the brand for which they work, across all platforms – traditional and new media. Motoring journalists are acutely aware of this added responsibility and have accepted that as part of their job. They have realised that building and maintaining a respected brand is what differentiates them in the new media world and makes them stand out. They realise that they are brand ambassadors acting on behalf of their publications and as such have to carry that responsibility. They also realise that they have an added responsibility to their readers to be present on new media forums. Their readers expect them to be active on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter – and they are. Journalists have become important as individual brands with the support of the publications they write for. They will, however, not become stronger than the brand they work for, believes Niel Piper, publisher of *CAR* magazine. The publications provide the credibility for the journalists and it would be very difficult for them to gain the same credibility without the support of their publications. The top motoring publications have broken down the barriers between print and social media, and motoring journalists don't have the luxury of working on only one medium anymore. Therefore, motoring journalists have had to become multi-skilled and have succeeded in adapting their writing to the different social media platforms. The printed publication is now only one of many platforms on which they communicate. This has made their work much more time intensive and where in the past they had a week or month to put together a motoring supplement or magazine, they now have the added burden of posting daily on social media.

This has lifted their profile and they are more in the public eye. Motoring journalists have become more accessible to the public and with that, increased their following, particularly on new media. Their opinions also seem to carry more weight. Magazines have had to rethink their publishing strategies and have made a clear distinction between the content they post on each platform. It is not viable to carry breaking news in the printed publication anymore and they have found other social media platforms for that purpose. They have had to become more creative in their printed publications and many have added additional feature articles. They meticulously plan their work for each month and each editorial member has a very clear understanding of what they will be doing in which media. Motoring journalists have embraced new media and see it as complementary to the printed product. Some publishing houses are even generating profit from new media although the printed product is still the main income generator.

Motoring journalists have certainly adopted new media, one of the reasons being as Pierre Steyn, editor of *topCar* said “They are used to new technology in the cars they test.” Motor vehicle supporters, too, favour technology and it follows that they will also have adapted to new media. While motoring journalists have made the leap to new media, the vehicle manufacturers have not changed their way of communicating with the motoring press as much. They send press releases and photographs by email to the journalists and also post releases and photographs on dedicated media sites. Many prefer personal contact with the journalist and would therefore rather make a phone call than send an email. While many motor manufacturers make use of social media (as evident in my interviews) they still predominantly use traditional media. The global nature of new media means that local journalists draw a lot on the international social media campaigns whereas the local manufacturers focus on traditional media.

It is clear from the above research that new media has drastically changed the way motoring journalists work. It has added many more media outlets for their communication and it has become an integral part of their work. They have adapted remarkably well to the new demands made on them and have enthusiastically embraced the new media landscape. They are well prepared for the changes taking place in the media environment and are able to make

the transition to new media with relative ease. Motoring journalists working for respected publications have established themselves as experts in their field and that is perhaps the most important attribute they need. They have managed to create a presence on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Journalists from *CAR* magazine and *topCar* are active on these sites with regular postings and tweets about motoring.

The heart of motoring journalism has not changed, says Steyn. Motoring journalists are still content producers; even though the mediums have changed, the essence of what they are doing remains the same.

Motoring manufacturers, however, still use traditional means of communication as stated by Venter, Dlamini, Van der Laan and Greig.

Though press releases are now sent in electronic format they still favour communication in press release form.

Dependence on vehicle manufacturers

Motoring journalists are adamant that they are not dependent on vehicle manufacturers to perform their duties. They are acutely aware that they have worked hard to earn a readership; that their readerships belong to them and that they write for their readers and not for the manufacturers (interview Pierre Steyn). Steyn appears unfazed by the possible threat of advertisers withdrawing their support due to negative reporting. This is due to the fact that his publication does not solely rely on advertising revenue from the motoring manufacturers but has many other advertisers as well. In this regard it does not seem as if new media has changed the relationship between manufacturers and motoring journalists. Motoring publications are also expanding and increasing their reach substantially as *CAR* magazine and *topCar* are performing very successfully with their presence on a number of social media platforms. This way they enlarge their audiences and can offer (additional) advertisers more exposure over a wider range of media platforms. *CAR* magazine therefore claims to be South Africa's "leading multi-media automotive consumer brand".

6.1 Conclusion

The rise of new media has led motoring publications into the new digital world. According to Steyn, *topCar* is still very much active in print and print is still the main income driver. Yet they have managed to successfully make the progression to new media and have created a strong social media presence. Motoring journalists now place posts on Twitter before, during and after a vehicle launch and post news on Facebook. They also produce rich media such as video for applications such as YouTube and Facebook and package the magazine for iPad (Steyn interviewed 2010).

Although the public accessibility of automotive web-based media has empowered motoring enthusiasts to create their own content, this has not posed a threat to the position of the traditional motoring journalist.

Rather, the established and respected brands in motoring journalism, such as *CAR* magazine and *topCar*, have embraced the arrival of new media and have brought their brands right into the forefront of online communication and journalism.

CAR magazine and *topCar* have spent much time, money and energy on a diverse cross-platform strategy consisting of a successful print magazine, a digitised magazine website, online newsletter, and Facebook and Twitter platforms.

They now offer specialist content through a variety of different media. This has also given them the opportunity to generate additional revenue.

The digital world has also allowed motoring journalists to produce new and interesting ways of displaying content. They can now provide in-depth audio-visual content in more imaginative ways than ever before. At the same time readers still hold motoring journalists to principles of good journalism and expect thorough research and reporting (Rabe 2010).

Overall, new media has changed the practice of motoring journalism. The online world now serves as an extension of motoring journalists' work and has opened new avenues for motoring journalism. Motoring journalists have to work harder and their work extends way beyond the printed media. They have gained additional readers and have reached them through new media. They are able to communicate more directly and speedily. Even though the way motor manufacturers communicate with motor journalists has not changed

dramatically, motor manufacturers now have found a way to communicate with their consumers through new media. Consumers have more access to more information and there is a two-way flow of communication. New media has opened new avenues for motor journalists, motor manufacturers and consumers.

Further suggested research

I recognise that the field of new media is such a vibrant and dynamic one that some of the findings and conclusions I reached at the date of submission may be outdated in a few months.

It may therefore be interesting to note what changes have taken place after some lapse of time by means of follow-up interviews with the relevant people in the motoring and/or journalism fields.

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8. Annexure A

Interviews: Vehicle Manufacturers

Audi

Rudi Venter: Product Planning Manager: Audi Sales and Marketing

(Also responsible for Media liaison and PR)

Interview conducted on Friday 29 October 2010 at VW/ Audi Head Office, Midrand

Mercedes-Benz

Shirle Greig: Media Product Specialist: Mercedes-Benz South Africa Group of Companies and Annelise van der Laan: Communications Specialist: Corporate Affairs.

Interview conducted on Friday 11 November 2010 at MBSA head office at Zwartkops, Pretoria.

Volkswagen

Andile Dlamini, PR Manager Volkswagen Communications, South Africa
PR Manager Volkswagen Communications.

Interview conducted on Friday 29 October 2010 at VW/ Audi Head Office, Midrand

Interviews: Motoring Publications

Car Magazine

Editor: Hannes Oosthuizen

Interview conducted on Friday 12 November 2010 at Zwartkops Race Track, Pretoria.

Ramsay Media

Niel Piper: Neil Piper is the publisher of Ramsay Media's automotive titles including CAR MAGAZINE and Wiel.

Interview conducted on Monday 8 November 2010 at Ramsay Media in Pinelands, Cape Town.

Rapport Motors and Motors Beeld, Volksblad, Die Burger

Editor: Egmont Sippel

Interview conducted on Wednesday 15 December in Sandton.

topCar

Editor: Pierre Steyn, Assistant Editor: Angus Thompson, Online Editor:

Ashleigh Oldfield.

Interviews conducted on Monday 8 November 2010 at Media24's offices in

Cape Town.

Wiel Magazine

Editor Francois Rabe

Interview conducted with Francois Rabe on Monday 8 November 2010 at

Ramsay Media in Pinelands, Cape Town: Rabe is the editor of Wiel. Wiel is

part of Ramsay Media.

Annexure B

Research Questions Motoring Journalists

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How an important role do new media play in your business? e.g. email, Facebook, blogging, Twitter, iPad, iPhone, iPod.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you presently apply new media? e.g. your website, newsletters, mobile.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you plan to expand your use of new media?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has new media changed the way you practice motoring journalism?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has new media changed the way you work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has new media changed the output of motoring journalists?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has new media changed the way the industry communicates – to motoring journalists and the public?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has new media enabled your readers to better communicate with you? If yes, has this contributed to a better relationship with your readers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you think motoring journalism also has a role to play in the field of consumer journalism?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you believe new media has improved the standard of motoring journalism?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you believe new media has and will change motoring journalism? <p>It seems impossible to compete with new media on breaking stories. Have you made a conscious decision on how to handle this?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you connected new media to your business objectives?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges new media present?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many of your customers are online? <p>How do you know that?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you done any research on new media? <p>If so, what?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are bloggers any threat to journalists and your online publications? <p>If so, how do you react to that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much do people value the opinion of bloggers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has new media raised any ethical issues? <p>If so, what?</p>

Annexure C

Research Questions Motor Manufacturers

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you presently use new media to communicate to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the public- the mediae.g. email, Facebook, blogging, Twitter, iPad, mobile etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the message you're trying to bring across in new media? Is it a corporate marketing or brand-building message or model-specific?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How an important role do new media play in communicating with your target audience? Has it overtaken the role of traditional media or if not; do you expect it to? Do you favour certain new media?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have new media influenced your relationships with motoring journalists? Has it improved the flow of communication, strengthened or weakened relationships?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have new media influenced your relationships with your target audience? Do you now find you have easier and more direct access to your customers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you now communicate directly with the public? If yes, how?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you use social platforms to engage with consumers and involve them in your brand? e.g. Facebook, Twitter. <p>Have you embarked on any social campaigns; if yes, how did you measure the success thereof?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe that new media allows you to better communicate with your customers without the help of the motoring media. <p>If yes, in what way? Do you believe that new media can eventually play a similar role to that of the motoring journalist or substitute the role of the motoring journalist?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you now approach the launch of a new vehicle model compared with before the advent of new media? e.g invites, distribution of press releases, photos etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you gauge the effectiveness of new media? <p>Do you have measurements in place and if so what?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you plan to use new media in the future? <p>Do you plan to make more use of new media?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New media is developing all the time. Do you think this will influence your relationship with motoring journalists over time?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe the importance of the motoring journalist has diminished with the introduction of new media?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you connected social media to your business objectives? <p>Do new media feature prominently in your strategic objectives?</p>

- Have you done any research on new media?

If so, what?

- Has new media raised any ethical issues?

If so, what?