COVERING THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE OF 2010: HOW JOURNALISTS USED TECHNOLOGY TO CAPTURE THE CONDITIONS OF HAITI IN THE AFTERMATH

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The research and writing of this thesis is dedicated to those who made this project possible. To my husband, Greg, who told me I could do this and supported me until this day. To all who were sounding boards in my professional and personal networks, as well as my friends and family. To Dr. Kimberly Meltzer for her guidance as a journalism scholar, advisor, and coach. To Dr. Diana Owen for her expertise, input and guidance with survey analysis. To my thesis discussion group: Kate, Rebecca and Jess for their constant input and encouragement.

Lastly, to the many who survived the devastating earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010, and to the journalists who strive to share their stories.

MILDRED FRANCES PERREAULT
# Table of Contents

Abstract................................................................................................................................. iv

Preface: Why Haiti and the Earthquake?.................................................................................1

Chapter 1: Literature Review.................................................................................................4

Chapter 2: Haiti History, News Coverage and Setting the Scene.........................................28

Chapter 3: Methods of Research..........................................................................................42

Chapter 4: News Coverage of the Haiti Earthquake.............................................................54

Chapter 5: Survey and Interview Findings from Journalists Who Covered Haiti.............70

Chapter 6: Discussion of Research Themes and Concluding Remarks............................94

Appendix A: First Day of Haiti Earthquake News Coverage Wordle....................................110

Appendix B: Timeline of Haiti’s Natural Disasters...............................................................111

Appendix C: Recruitment Email............................................................................................112

Appendix D: Journalists Who Participated In Survey and Interviews...............................113

Appendix E: Online Survey..................................................................................................114

Appendix F: Sample Survey and Interview Questions.......................................................129

Appendix G: Informed Consent Document for Interviews..................................................130

Bibliography..........................................................................................................................132
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ABSTRACT

For decades, Haiti has been repeatedly troubled by devastation and disasters that pull at the heartstrings of the international community. In recent history, Haiti struggled under a military dictatorship in the 1980 and 90s, faced numerous hurricanes, and weathered destructive tropical storms. On January 12, 2010 the international community once again watched as Haiti suffered through a devastating earthquake that killed close to 300,000 and injured thousands more.

This paper will examine the processes by which information was collected and distributed by journalists in the month after the Haiti earthquake, by examining the newswork of journalists. This project will show that media coverage increased as technologies became available to journalists. This increase yielded a broader awareness of the tragedies in Haiti. Relationships between journalists, their technology use, and how they went about the newswork of covering the earthquake’s aftermath were examined through a survey and online interviews. By looking at the news media technologies used, the resources tapped and the frames used in journalism coverage, this project uncovered details concerning these relationships. Technology became imperative in the news coverage of the recovery efforts and as technology use increased, but journalists did not solely rely on technology to communicate and gather information. This paper will also examine the challenges journalists face as they covered the earthquake crisis, and how as a group they influenced the information shared with their audiences.
In the practice of full disclosure as a journalist, it is important that I share a little about my personal and professional background. This study is informed by my professional experience working for the Wellington Town Crier, and The Palm Beach Post in Palm Beach County, Florida. For three years I lived and worked as a journalist in Palm Beach County, Florida. During that time, the people I met changed the way I view the world.

There are two predominant minority groups in Palm Beach County, a Hispanic conglomerate (Guatemalan, Cuban, Puerto Rican) and a growing Haitian population. During my time in Palm Beach County, I compiled police blotters for many of the county’s cities that were published in two different papers. Many of these reports involved crimes committed by or against people of Haitian origin who had relocated to the U.S. Most of these reports involved domestic disputes, as did many of the police reports. But sometimes they were violent acts, as in the case of the Dunbar Village Rape Case where several Haitian young men under the age of 15 repeatedly and violently raped a Haitian woman (The Palm Beach Post, 22 June 2010). The woman was not familiar with the U.S. police system and walked eight blocks to the hospital; destroying much of the criminal evidence in the process. The police department had to search for someone with psychological credentials that could also speak Creole to interview the woman.

I also encountered the Haitian community in the public education system, where teachers and school officials learned Creole in order to communicate with their new Haitian students. These schools had programs in place for Spanish speakers, and even
adult education programs for Spanish speakers—and now had to address the needs of a growing Haitian population.

During the 2005 Hurricane Season, Haiti was pounded by three hurricanes and a number of tropical storms. Two of those storms also brought torrential rain and wind to Palm Beach County. Even as a reporter covering the worst hit neighborhoods of Palm Beach County, I could not help but feel for the people of Haiti whose homes were badly constructed and destroyed by these storms. People in Palm Beach County were concerned about palm trees falling onto their houses, collapsed pool screens, and leaky roofs. In Haiti people were homeless, jobless and looking for an opportunity to leave their disaster-stricken island nation. Hurricanes Wilma, Katrina, and Rita, were all major tragedies in the U.S. (with Katrina overshadowing them all). Haiti experienced these three storms and more. However it appeared as if Haiti was expected to deal with what it was dealt by Mother Nature without much international or U.S. government assistance (Girard, 2010). In 2008 Haiti experienced four more storms further crippling the country’s infrastructure (Perito, 21 Jan. 2010).

Then the January 12, 2010 earthquake happened. That frame changed. Haiti was still a poverty-stricken country, but now it was an international concern. Whether the international community’s sudden broadened interest in Haiti was because of the death toll or not is a question for another day. What perplexed me is why journalists felt more inclined to pack-up their camera bags, satellite phones and laptops, and head down there, as opposed to previous natural disasters. For that reason, when starting this study, I had a desire to look at how journalists cover Haiti and the difference in coverage of Haiti between then and now. How did journalists do their work? Why did they go to Haiti?
Could they do their work with technologies while based in the U.S.? If so, what was the purpose of going to Haiti? Did the Haiti earthquake possess some unique phenomenon compared to other natural disasters?

With these ideas in mind, I formulated this study. While journalists answered many of these questions, they also created new questions. This study provided a piece of the puzzle into how journalists cover natural disasters and crises, and why technologies have changed the way they do newswork. As a journalist, the goal of my study is to contribute to the body of newswork research. It is my hope this research will contribute both to the academy as well as to the training and preparation of professional journalists who cover crises.
CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

As the U.S.-Haitian immigrant population continues to grow, the interest of Americans in Haiti has also grown. Perhaps this is one reason why the January 12, 2010 Haiti earthquake, which killed and permanently injured hundreds of thousands, became a top news story in U.S. newspapers and television stations, even in the early hours of the tragedy. There were more than 3,000 stories published in print and produced for broadcast in the 10 days following the earthquake (Ferris, August 2010).

For decades, Haiti has been repeatedly troubled by devastation and disasters that pull at the heartstrings of viewers. As a developing country off the southeast coast of the United States, the challenges facing Haiti are closer to the United States than they may seem. One in every 20 Haitians is living and working in the United States (Migration Information Source, 2010). More than half of Haitian Diasporas live in the states of Florida or New York, and these groups raise a large amount of aid money for the people of Haiti (Migration Information Source, 2010). This project examined at how journalists considered their coverage of the catastrophe as important in helping the people of Haiti, and provided insight into their motivations for reporting on some aspects of the disaster and not others.

This research study examined the news coverage in the month following the Haiti earthquake on January 12, 2010. By examining journalistic practices, this paper questioned how technology became imperative in the coverage of the recovery efforts. As journalists increased coverage and gained sources by using technology, more people were made aware of the circumstances of those in Haiti. Past research on news coverage of natural disasters has focused primarily on environmental and political implications of
the disasters. Other research has focused on how natural disasters are sensationalized by journalists and news organizations. Historically, newwork studies have looked at how journalists interact with each other and do their work (Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 31-50). As new media technologies are introduced into the processes of newwork, the steps journalists take must be done more quickly. Technology has already been identified as a key actor in the coverage of the earthquake. Following the Haiti earthquake news professionals pointed out the role of new media in relation to news coverage—some supported its use and others questioned the validity of sources obtained through new media (Palser, 2010). As far as the relationships between journalists and these new media technologies in newwork, there is a research gap. Since the earthquake little academic work has been presented on the topic. In addition, very little research has been done to convey the relationship of journalists and the creation of a story revolving around a natural disaster that morphs into a media event, like the Haiti earthquake.

This paper investigated the connections between news, the people putting news together, and the technologies they use in that process. News people were key players in the relay of information to and from Haiti. Technology gave the people of Haiti a way to communicate their needs to the news outlets’ audience, but often those messages were moderated by reports and news-websites. These outlets also provided the audience a way to communicate indirectly with the people of Haiti. The framework of the interpretive community of journalists also informed this study (Zelizer, 1993), as did sociological studies of newwork (Fishman, 1980; Ehrlich, 1996), and studies that looked at the actor network of journalism work (Plesner, 2009). This study also looked at the idea of how news framing at the micro-level can lead to agenda setting on the macro-level.
Interpretive communities are like social networks where journalists determine the protocols and actions of their work. This study examined how developing countries have been brought into the international journalistic sphere with the introduction of technology-dependent news reporting.

**Newswork Studies, Journalistic Interpretation**

The flow of news during a natural disaster is widely affected by and dependent upon certain standard sources for information about world events. In the 2010 Annual Report on American Journalism, *The State of the News Media*, published by the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), research showed that journalists and audiences are depending upon each other more. The PEJ study asks:

Among the critical questions this will pose: Is there some collaborative model that would allow citizens and journalists to have the best of both worlds and add more capacity here? What ethical values about news will settle in at these sites? Will legacy and new media continue to cooperate more, sharing stories and pooling resources, and if they do, how can one operation vouch for the fairness and accuracy of something they did not produce? (Pew PEJ, 10 Aug. 2010).

The study goes on to talk about how social media is changing the very actions of the journalist as he or she attempts to merge his or her idea of journalistic practice and newswork with social media use. Journalists have held the key to what is news for decades, and even in the early 1920s journalists were already seen as professionals (Zelizer, 1993: 220). The collaboration of journalists over time has created journalism guidelines. Journalists have decided what is “fit to print” or “air” or “launch.” This study looked at national media, which localize their message for a United States audience.
While most disasters are “local or regional phenomena,” the Haiti earthquake was one that reached a threshold of newsworthiness (Anderson, 1965; Larson, 1977; Zelizer, 1993). Beyond just being newsworthy, the coverage of the earthquake dominated the news. In U.S. newspapers, online, on network and cable television, and on radio Haiti was the most heavily emphasized topic during the week of January 11 through 17 and 18 through 24 (PEW PEJ News Coverage Index: January 11-17, 2010; Jurkowitz, 2010). This is best seen in the *PEJ News Coverage Index: January 18-24*:

Coverage of the disaster in Haiti was most intense in the early part of the week, accounting for 38 percent of the overall newshole on January 18 and 19. And much of that initial coverage focused on the increasing sense of desperation and danger in country. (Jurkowitz, 2010).

Haiti news coverage also dominated social media with 43 percent of the news links in the blogosphere referring to the Haiti disaster (PEJ New Media Index: January 11-15, 2010). The role of the news media is becoming more collaborative, with journalists from multiple news organizations and agencies working in the field to provide insider information to the public. Some of these journalists are working together, and others are using online accomplices. Still others are freelancers working for several news outlets.

On their own, stories do not “contain news-values” (Berkowitz, 1997: xi). The journalists and the audience assign news-values. The process of gathering, editing, and producing information to be distributed—or newswork—infuences the value and form of the news, as people choose how to portray the story and showcase the facts.

One way in which newswork has been studied is through the framework of journalism as an interpretive community. Although different news platforms structure
stories differently, all contain the desire to inform a public. Text publications rely mainly on inverted pyramid design, while television emphasizes the visual or thematic reporting, but both seek to create a narrative. This narrative is deeply rooted in the ritual of journalism (Zelizer, 1993: 27). Rituals are a stock set of skills and practices. The interpretive community of journalists creates a discourse that decides what is and is not news. And this discourse is proliferated through informal talks and media retrospectives (Zelizer, 1993: 27). This discourse creates shared interpretations that yield normative practices. The influence of these normative practices perpetuates itself within the society of journalists:

Through discourse journalists create shared interpretations that make their professional lives meaningful; that is they use stories about the past to address the dilemmas that present themselves while covering the news (Zelizer, 1993: 27). Journalists are often considered an authority on the event, because they can give an eyewitness report. They can be places and see things the audience cannot physically see. Stories are pieced together by journalists and packaged for the public as the journalist applies his or her experiential skills to that report. Sometimes there are multiple interpretive communities that begin to change the theme of interpretation—by overlapping each other, however, these trends rarely penetrate more than one journalistic event unless they enter the journalistic discourse. “Through discourse they set standards of evaluation to praise more journalistic coverage,” setting the norms practiced today by journalists (Zelizer, 1993: 233). Journalists discuss and consider these standards of practice as they do their work. Often, these standards have become part of written history, as historians study news to develop a fuller picture of the past. While journalism
still “ends where history begins,” journalism is becoming history more quickly (Zelizer, 1993: 233).

Newsworth studies have begun to change as the journalism field has relied more on technology. The social science study of newspeople and others in mass communications has become increasingly relevant, specifically with the introduction of new technologies. Newsworth studies have sought to examine the processes of news making primarily through a social science lens. Information is readily available through the web, and often re-circulated throughout the media audience. This approach sometimes fails to recognize “the relationships between the production process and social setting that yield particular themes, songs, stories, or images in popular entertainment” (Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 33). Social science often neglects important factors by focusing on particular relationships. Studies done by Peterson, Berger and other social scientists looked at the meaning of the work in relationship to the product—but did not assign a direct correlation between the two (Turner, 2000; Nolan, 2008: 738). In past studies, too much emphasis was put on the economic or market structure of journalism. Focusing on structural factors does not enable understanding of relationships between newspeople and the networks that exist within the journalistic community. These studies do not show direct relationships between the actions of people doing newsworth and technology. There are also tensions when attempting to study journalists, and debates over what and who should be studied. According to Deuze and Marjoribanks, these tensions create a crux for social science research:

We think these tensions, first, journalism as a structure of newsworth and the agency of newworkers, and second, journalism as a self-organizing social system
and as an ensemble of individualized acts, may provide crucial markers for further analyses of mapping of newswork (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009: 559).

Deuze and Marjoribanks saw a gap in the research, and saw room for scholars to examine how reporters, editors and producers function when they are not in the same newsroom and more dependent on technology to communicate. They pointed to studies done concerning online news production and how interactions and collaboration of newsworkers created an extension of the traditional newsroom dialogue. This study looked to fill that gap through an examination of the interactions of journalists with each other, how those journalists used technology to do newswork, and how these technologies helped and hindered their communication with sources.

Even more so today, journalists are influenced by public information and communication. Often their information is self-verified, meaning the news audience cannot verify for themselves what a journalist has done or seen (Zelizer, 1992: 66). The audience must blindly trust the journalist. As audiences gain more access to multiple news sources through the Internet, they can compare those news sources. While they have access to more information, they are still unable to tell the story as a journalist would from halfway around the world. There are several reasons while the public at large does not achieve the same product or conversations as the journalism community. For one, journalists are able to obtain information, and thus shape the news in a way that the broader public will understand (Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 35). They can color a story with details, but not bury the most important information. In practicing objectivity, journalists must draw attention to events, without expressing their own personal agendas. Objectivity creates challenges for a journalist, because the journalist must not only draw
on his or her interests or concerns, but strive to consider the opposite opinion and perspectives. This is a large task, and is becoming larger still. Carey saw how journalists could adapt to the news culture of their time (Carey, 1996). He observed that the history of news has shifted through time and while there are always stories and people to tell them, those “ways” are always changing. While Carey saw journalistic practices as purely commercially motivated at times (Carey, 1996), but Ettema and Whitney saw other purposes for newsroom organization. They saw the journalist and technology as actors in news production (Ettema and Whitney, 1987).

Newsrooms can verify facts and clarify journalists’ words. The journalist cannot function alone. He or she must have sources, and others to interact with to form stories. Reich calls this process “news initiative” (2006). Other scholars have called this process “enterprise journalism” (Reich, 2006: 498). Literature that looks at agenda building and sociology of journalism has also neglected to see the power relationships between journalists and sources (Reich, 2006). The news production process involves sources and journalists. According to McManus, the “news process” involves both news discovery and reporting (1994). There are many places where that process can be shortened or lengthened because of access to information, and this study looked at that process and how technology contributed to that process. Technology could, like a source, decrease dependence on first-hand sources, allow for a broader amount of information to source, change the reporter’s initial focus or concern, and transform the gate-keeping techniques of a source (Reich, 2006: 500). The bottom line is the news gathering process takes time and tact.
This study focused on the actions of individual journalists as part of a broader body that spontaneously organizes itself around certain practices. This organization of media is often (1) a loose form of bureaucracy, (2) with established routines and conventions, and (3) is able to manage organizational conflicts (Ettema & Whitney, 1987). That said, there are few formalized documents pertaining to newswork as broadly adapted as the AP Stylebook, which provides consistency in spelling and word choice. Deadlines set by editors and news schedules are formalizations of informal practices. Page layouts, website regulations and other news crafts differ in each news organization. At each organization there are many people involved in newswork, from sources to reporters and editors. They are overlapping workers who act together to produce a story from its inception to its publication (Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 39). Organizations deal with uncertainty by creating a routine—and journalists do similarly. In newswork, reliance on “routine” news leads to standardization of news practices (Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 38).

Levy also points out that competition produces objectivity, which is a quest of journalism (Levy, 1981; Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 42). When one is objective, one must go out of the way to find new perspectives. When there are limited sources available, journalists and news organizations may begin to compete for diverse sources. When journalists are forced to find new stories, and not just express their personal interests, they are forced to verify their own facts. Being objective means the journalist works hard to be unbiased, to the best of his or her ability. He or she does so by telling the most factual story possible and including perspectives on both sides of an issue. Agenda setting, a field of study this paper will explore later, also looks at how priorities in the media are determined by these norms and practices as well (Ettema & Whitney, 1987:}
Agendas reveal themselves more as media become more niche. Niche media are more concerned with reaching a particular audience with a certain perspective and for this reason are becoming less objective.

How journalists interact with each other also influences newswork. As Zelizer states, journalism, unlike other trades, often becomes an interpretive community in which different events gain meaning (Zelizer, 1993: 220). She suggests that the journalism community is characterized by its discourse. To review, this discourse includes the work journalists do, “informal contacts,” a certain “understanding of narrative and storytelling,” and other factors that helps to unite news people into this interpretive community of journalists (Zelizer, 1993). What journalism does is not always professional. Sometimes a reporter has to get very personal very quickly, and ask hard questions of their sources. What is socially acceptable is not always the path of the journalist. These ideas are built into journalistic practices. There is also a standard within the journalism community through which journalists set up normative reporting and editing practices:

The shared past through which journalists discursively set up and negotiate preferred standards of action hinges on the recycling of stories about certain key events. Journalists become involved in an ongoing process by which they create a repertoire of past events that issues as a standard for judging contemporary action (Zelizer, 1993: 406).

Past practices yield experiences, which come only to the seasoned editor or reporter. Experience is like money in the bank for a journalist. Those rich in experience can work more quickly and with confidence. Journalists work together to create ethics and norms,
and apply this to the process of gathering information (Klinenberg, 2005). In the field, journalists respect other journalists and attempt to do their craft in a spirit of friendly competition. To reiterate from Zelizer, as the journalist becomes an authority his or her account becomes more trustworthy. The account is also trusted because a journalism institution backs it up. Journalists become more dependent on common knowledge as they begin to cover a diverse amount of information. Shared information then provides a foundation for a journalist to interpret the story, and report on it. Journalists must take on new responsibilities as their ability to gather information increases. Meaning that through the interpretive community information becomes trustworthy as it is verified or rejected from the members of the community.

Journalists must become more knowledgeable of a broad spectrum of topics in ways which they have not been before. They have begun to use online sources by other journalists as news leads. In a sense they are using other journalists as sources to verify facts. There are also no time or space constraints. Print is no longer just print—but web, and video is no longer just video.

The time cycle of news making in the age of digital production is radically different: the regular news cycle has spun into an erratic and unending pattern that classifies as a news cyclone (Klinenberg, 2005: 54). This news cyclone played a major role in the coverage of the Haiti earthquake.

Often journalistic patterns are accepted as a gradual consensus about the change is reached (Zelizer, 1993: 225). This has been demonstrated in coverage of other crises, specifically the news coverage of war conditions. In Zelizer’s 1992 article concerning CNN’s coverage of the Gulf War and the ways in which journalists did their work, she
reflects on the roles of satellite technology and the role of it in “real-time” reporting (Zelizer, 1992). She states:

From newsgathering to news presentation, a journalist’s authority often derives from the fact that the public cannot verify what he or she has done. This situates the establishment of journalistic authority within the hands of journalists, and their authority is informed by their own decisions about how, why, and in what way they turn ordinary events into news stories (Zelizer, 1992: 66).

From the beginning of the Gulf War, news organizations as well as individual journalists discussed these issues. According to Time magazine, the dilemma of wartime reporting was “how to communicate events fairly and accurately, without revealing confidential military information” (Zelizer, 1992: 68). The Gulf War was, like the Haiti earthquake, a “critical incident” that will mold history, an incident worth documenting for posterity, and in many ways was moving into “unknown territory” (Zelizer, 1992: 68). Haiti’s earthquake became newsworthy as more people became concerned. In fact, 60 percent of Americans followed the Haiti earthquake news coverage in the first week a (Pew Center for People and the Press, 20 Jan. 2010).

In recent situations, the interpretive community of journalists has begun to depend more on the circulation of information through new media, as well as how the use of media creates a feedback loop process. “Once a topic gains a certain level of attention in the media, it attracts more attention, and, because it attracts more attention, it becomes more noteworthy” (Vasterman et al., 2005: 111). This is how a positive “feedback loop” can create fuel for crisis news coverage. Feedback loops are credited with creating media hype and re-enforcing particular frames (Vasterman et al., 2005). These frames identify
the heroes, villains and victims and also influence how the audience feels about the
storyteller or even the journalist (Miles & Morse, 2007: 366). This process is similar to
the pattern of innovation and adoption in diffusion expressed by Rogers (2003). Unlike
his theory, however, this new framework provides for a constant shuffling of information.
With increasing numbers online news outlets, different voices can now compete in either
the same publication or in different ones of competing ideologies—even if the source of
the news is similar. Journalism as practiced is an innately rooted “democratic” practice—
which is perhaps why it has been met with respect in non-democratic countries, and
therefore is a player in the political involvement of its public (Rosen, 1999; McNair,
1998). There have been conversations concerning the development and the education of
the journalist, showing that journalism courses were dedicated more to the training role,
than to developing a profession:

Indeed it is because it is hard to standardize entry into the practice of journalism,
hard to establish what counts as specialist knowledge, hard to set a premium on
journalistic labor (Nolan, 2008: 737).

This knowledge creates a specific set of journalistic ideals. Within the journalism
community these frames and practices become the expectation. Journalists begin to
integrate these ideas and practices into how they do their background research and
inevitably what they consider journalism.

Technology Changes Everything

Journalists were highly dependent on technology when gathering information
concerning the Haiti earthquake. Background reading indicated that most news
organizations relied heavily on social networking sites and text messages throughout the
process. In addition to traditional news coverage, 43 percent of news links were found on blogs and 2.3 million Tweets included the words “Haiti” or “Red Cross” (PEJ New Media Index: January 11-15, 2010). “The medium is the message,” meaning the medium influences how the message is perceived (McLuhan, 1964). As reporters become more avid users of online media, time and space constraints become less of an issue. This flexibility becomes more intense as “digital systems for reporting, writing, file sharing, and printing” become more accessible (Klinenberg, 2005: 50).

As information is transferred from one technology to another it “is shaped by many factors, most notably the characteristics of particular media forms as well as by journalistic and editorial practices” (Miles & Morse, 2007: 366). Technology has been defined in many ways including by those who use it, but for our research purposes it will include any type of electronic means of communication. Technology is beginning to change the ways both journalists and news-consumers think of news. With new technologies come new interpretations, the adoption of new ideas and the developments of new practices. Garrison looks at this process as a diffusive process:

Adoption of new ideas, technologies, and practices takes a period of time in any social system, even a small and highly focused professional system such as journalism (Garrison, 2000: 85).

In an expansion of newswork studies, Garrison studied newspaper newsrooms and the adoption of computer technology. He recognized that the mid-1990s the use of this technology had already reached a critical mass (Garrison, 2000: 100). Perhaps he wondered if the use of online tools by journalists were piggybacking on earlier technology adoption trends. Journalists applied the same standards to evaluate web
content at this time as they had used to evaluate print news documents in the past. Now the reverse is taking place as print media try to mimic the Internet. With their study of new television news technologies, done in 1980, Bantz, McCorkle and Baade were some of the first to examine how technology can reorganize newwork. In their study, job roles were split up among many different people in a “factory system” (Bantz, McCorkle and Baade, 1980: 61). Their system included five steps: ideation, task assignment, gathering materials, assembly and presentation of a product (Bantz, McCorkle and Baade, 1980: 52). As the news product was passed along to more people in the television newsroom, more people filter what the audience sees. This was the process of selection, or the shaping of ideas. As new technologies are adopted stylistic and narrative norms develop. While many of these information communications technologies (ITCs) are not entirely new to the news process, they are now being used with more agility—creating new operations as they are adopted (Plesner, 2009: 604-605).

The process of diffusion often describes patterns of adoption. Diffusion is also found in the concepts expressed by Rogers, who identifies the (1) existence of an innovation, (2) the communication channels used, (3) time, and (4) the social system in which this process occurs (Rogers, 1980). Few have looked at the diffusion process in relation to newsmaking. Maier studied the use of computers for gathering information when researching for news stories, and concluded that “diffusion theory” was useful for assessing computer based research practices (Maier, 1999: 12, 15; Garrison, 2000: 87). Originally, diffusion was mainly used to look at the adoption of technologies in rural areas, and is ideal to look at the adoption of technologies in developing countries like Haiti. This project did not look at the Hait as its own network, but rather how journalists
adapted their technology use within its environment. Garrison stated that some research has shown the ability to collect private information through public resources has also becoming more common (Garrison, 2000: 89). As journalists become more intentional and poignant with their use of online resources, newsgathering becomes more efficient, and the information becomes more widely used. The more information that is available online, the more of an art sifting through that information becomes. Verifying information on the web becomes difficult as more information becomes available and false information becomes more widely circulated. There is also concern that online information is only perpetuating information services—rather than providing more useful information (Koch, 1996: p. xiii). Garrison recognizes that journalists were slow to adopt a model of online tools that would enhance their work (2000: 101). Today, however, journalists are using all sorts of online tools to better equip their stories with information.

The Social Network of Collaboration

Another field of study that contributed to this research was network analysis. The theories that surround social network analysis, and some of the terminology were used to identify relationships between journalists and technology. Social network scholars look for significance in the relationships between individuals within a network. Journalists are part of a collaborative network; therefore, as their network shares information it can become more or less efficient. Social network analysis often tries to identify the existence of “invisible work,” “collaboration,” and work “across boundaries” (Cross & Parker, 2004: 13, 27 and 30). Effective, highly functioning networks rely on information flow, as well as multi-level structural relationships. Groups that need to be highly
responsive to customer (or in the case of journalism, consumer/audience) needs, benefit greatly from improving awareness and access to expertise (Cross & Parker, 2004: 47). Information that travels from outside the network cannot be held accountable by the network—unless those in the network form two-way relationships (Cross & Parker, 2004: 104). Information from within the network is considered trustworthy. For this study there are tensions in that statement, because while journalistic practice relies on an internal network, sources normally come from outside the network.

Plesner said that both people and technology are important in a journalism newsworker’s network (2004: 606). There is invisible work that goes on between people who practice journalism and the practices that complement this framework. Plesner drew from Bruno Latour’s idea of Actor Network Theory (ANT) when doing her research concerning the networks of newswork. To conduct her study she asked “very open questions of journalists concerning their interactions with ICTs” (Plesner, 2009: 608). Her study explained what practices have been brought to the field of journalism by ICTs. Her work followed in the footsteps of Trumbo (2001), Duke (2002) and Dumlao (2003), who recognized the influence of non-human actors in news networks (Plesner, 2009: 613). Social network theory also studies peer production. Peer production as expressed in Wikinomics, opened platforms for media and other collaborative industries (Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Journalistic collaboration, or peer production as many newspeople call it, is becoming more acceptable because of its practical and timesaving applications. As journalists began to write along-side citizens the practice of journalism became one of filtering out false information (Tapscott & Williams, 2006: 143, 145). Zelizer said these practices of developing norms and practices are those which weed out unreliable
sources and verify facts. As more information technologies have developed, journalists have had to adapt to openness, peering, sharing and acting globally—all things Tapscott and Williams say are part of collaboration (2006). In the case of Haiti’s earthquake, adaptation was important. Many journalists had to adapt to an unknown environment where many things were unsure while doing newswork.

**Hazards, Risks and other natural disasters**

Learning about the coverage of natural disasters can change how future disasters are covered. Disasters are often full of ambiguities (Kreps, 1989: 66). For that reason definitions are imperative in media research of natural disasters. An event at Georgetown University on April 14, 2010, “Covering Disaster: The Tragedy in Haiti,” featured interviews with three journalists who covered the Haiti Earthquake aftermath. One of the journalists, CBS News chief national correspondent and *60 Minutes* contributing correspondent Byron Pitts, said, “Covering disasters and tragedies such as the earthquake are the easiest kinds of reporting.” He said the process of writing a news story about a crisis was no different than any other story:


While coverage of crisis may be easy, as Pitts said, it is also a process that must approach humanity and death with care.

There were many challenges as journalists on the ground faced the same conditions as Haitians on the ground. Earthquakes pose a number of difficulties (Ferris, August 2010). There is a risk of aftershocks, and thus, further destruction; there is a
large amount of debris created as a result of the damage to infrastructure; many people suffer from injuries including those to the spinal cord and crushed limbs; and it is difficult to mobilize support to deal with future earthquakes—as earthquakes are less likely to happen than other disasters (Ferris, August 2010).

There are many things that must be understood in creating a foundation for this research on the news coverage of natural disasters. The word “coverage” is used to describe any type of media message communicated by news professionals through a media outlet (print, television, and online). Coverage also refers to the process in which information is gathered and then relayed to the public. The trends in the coverage of natural disasters stem from defining certain as disasters and others as hazards—earthquakes strangely do not fit in either category. According to Anderson, there are three categories of natural disasters: the first two are risks and hazards—which can be prevented and prepared for, and a third which for this research we will call “the event”—or something that can not be prepared for. In the past, coverage of natural disasters has focused more on preparing for them, and re-building after them—primarily in the context of risks and hazards coverage (Anderson, 1965). “The event” is a random occurrence. The United Nations defines a “natural disaster” as “the consequences of events triggered by natural hazards that overwhelm local response capacity and seriously affect the social and economic development of a region” (InterAgency Standing Committee, 2006). Natural disasters require response. The U.N. also considers the pre-existing challenges of a country when determining whether or not an act of nature is deemed a natural disaster. Haiti fits these qualifications.
Categorizing these catastrophic events as certain stock stories gives the journalist a tool kit for covering certain types of disasters. Damage and destruction are “dramatic events” and therefore are often covered intensely in the news (Anderson, 1965: 7). Anderson looked at the environmental concerns of disasters in the late 1950s and early 1960s and was concerned with how the media tried to explain these risks and hazards by making them highly political.

Coppola writes in *The Introduction to Disaster Management Handbook* how officials should see the media during a natural disaster:

“...No system has proved more effective than news media in alerting emergency management organizations and citizens alike about the onset of natural disasters (Coppola, 2006: 528).”

In the handbook, the media’s role in preparing for earthquakes is to educate the public about earthquakes. Since around 70 to 75 earthquakes occur on land (in areas with inhabitants) a year, a large number of people will witness an earthquake (Coppola, 2006: 243). Earthquakes often spawn other natural disasters including tsunamis, avalanches and landslides. There are sometimes indicators an earthquake will happen, because earthquakes occur on natural breaks in the earth’s mantel, or across fault lines. This means where one earthquake happens more earthquakes will follow (Coppola, 2006: 243). An earthquake is classified in disaster standards as a “large event.” Since the magnitude of the disaster dictates the response, the largest events will become more dependent on “a large global community of responders” (Coppola, 2006: 251). Large events will have a global response or reaction. Preparations for most natural disasters or hazards follow three basic phases: the pre-hazard phase, the hazard effects ongoing
phase, and hazard effects have ceased phase (Coppola, 2006: 252). Earthquakes, however, begin in the second phase with an elongated third phase (Coppola, 2006: 252). Media is a key player in the effectiveness of post disaster response in phases two and three. The response outlined in the handbook includes steps such as assessing the disaster, treating disaster effects, providing food and water, providing shelter, fatality management, sanitation, security and social services, evaluation of infrastructure and donation management (Coppola, 2006: 252). Coppola identifies the benefit and the threat of the news media covering the aftermath of a disaster:

It is well known that the news media capitalizes on the spectacular nature of crises and disasters… Disaster management officials enjoy a love/hate relationship with the media. (Coppola, 2006: 527).

A list of ways to interact with the news media includes the importance of sharing accurate information, and not rushing into solutions because the “media inject immediacy” to a certain problem (Coppola, 2006: 528, 529). In summary, the crisis manager must be slow and certain when he or she releases information to the media.

Technology has made managing information more difficult. With the demands of 24-hour news outlets, stories are now pieced together more quickly than ever. With Internet and satellite technologies, resources are more readily available in a shorter amount of time (Anderson, 1965: 11). The media play a significant role in educating and informing the public during any type of crisis:

Since crises elicit a high degree of public salience and cause social disruptions, they typically receive a great deal of attention from the mass media. During and
after crises, all kinds of media including TV, radios, and newspapers report the crisis on a massive scale (Xu & Eller, 2009: 5).

The media keep organizations in check. In the U.S. this role is normative as the news media is considered part of the political process, but abroad and in countries with developing political structures news has a less significant role. Media often sheds light on things, which will later have political implications. Crises fall into this category. Crises are inherently negative, and often reports on crises are negative as a result (Xu & Eller, 2009: 6). Emphasis on a crisis will often lead to inquiry or interest by the audience. It can also enhance the popularity of those dealing with the crisis be they media professionals or those whom media professionals are sourcing—a line that is often blurred by online media. Media coverage of natural disasters, among other events, can shape the ways in which the public understands the catastrophe as well as provide the public with facts (Miles & Morse, 2007). Media coverage often focuses on a set group of priorities when covering a natural disaster:

...These priorities shape how the public perceives the risks posed by natural hazards and that these perceptions will influence the set of strategies for the mitigation of future vulnerabilities that the public deems to be reasonable and worthy of expenditures (e.g. taxes, opportunity costs, lifestyle changes, etc.) (Miles & Morse, 2007).

The diversity of media outlets used to cover the earthquake ranged from cell phone technology, to newspapers to spot satellite broadcasts. As electronic media become a more dominant tool for the journalist, broadcasts must engage the audience on a different level (Thomas & Carpenter, 2001: 34). In the case of the Haiti earthquake, this
engagement led news organizations and private groups to take the initiative to assist the disaster torn nation. Americans responded by sending money and pledging money through texts and on the Internet. Pew’s Center for People and the Press found that as of January 20, 2010, 18 percent of Americans reported they or someone in their household had made a donation to those affected by the disaster and another 30 percent said they planned to donate (20 Jan. 2010).

Journalists were able to use technologies to connect their audiences to the devastation in Haiti and break down the barriers of space and place (Thomas & Carpenter, 2001: 56). Blogs, short videos, photos, and Twitter feeds brought the Haiti disaster in to the hands of Americans. During a disaster, there are multiple transitions taking place, adding adversity to the already changing media landscape. Even more so, reporters are stationed out of mobile offices equipped with laptops and satellite phones (Thomas & Carpenter, 2001: 57). This makes the transition from one environment to the next smoother as the same tools are used in a remote office as in the field. More online availability means the newspaper and newscast, and the news people working for it will take on more flexible roles and focus on less in-depth stories. Zelizer too acknowledges that as events happen there is a tendency for mainstream news media to “interpret them uni-dimensionally because they see them collectively moving the community in one way or another” (Zelizer, 1993: 225). This dependence on technology can create stories that look similar.

In addition, the very action of writing journalistically is interdisciplinary. Journalists must not only be aware of what is going on, but also acquire background knowledge that will back up the story through interviews, online sources or history. In
many fields, disciplinary boundaries block connections between politics, the environment and development, but journalism often has to look at all three to tell a story (Thomas & Carpenter, 2001: 4). The importance of overlapping knowledge of journalism and technology helps to identify the roles of and dependencies on technology in the practices of newswork.

In light of the research done in the areas of newswork studies, crisis communications models and newswork and technology, this project broadened the knowledge concerning how journalists do newswork in natural disaster situations. How did journalists use technology? How did they interact with each other and their sources in a post-disaster environment? This study brought to light the process and challenges of covering the Haiti earthquake. It provided an inside look at the connection of the journalist to the story, and the processes by which journalists used technologies to do their work.

The next sections look at Haiti’s history, and discuss the critiques of journalists and the previous news coverage of the Haiti earthquake. Following that section the methodologies this study employed to examine the interactions of journalists and technologies to do that newswork will be discussed.
Chapter 2: Haiti History, News Coverage and Setting the Scene

Haiti is a country that has faced years of challenges because of its geographic location, which is prone to tropical storms and hurricanes. Haiti’s political system also made it a country covered in the news for many years from the 1980s to the early 2000s. The most recent coverage of the Haiti earthquake of January 12, 2010 and its aftermath brought the attention of the international community once more to the small island nation, but with an unprecedented intensity.

Haiti is the second most populated country in the Caribbean Sea and Port-au-Prince, the nation’s capital, is the largest city in the Caribbean (Girard, 2010: 1). Before the earthquake a large percentage of Haiti was already made of cardboard and found material shantytowns, and few affluent neighborhoods with two-story concrete buildings (Girard, 2010: 1, 2). Then on January 12 at 4:53 p.m. the earthquake hit. Workdays were ending, and children were home from school. Thousands died in the earthquake. The official death toll from the Haitian government was around 300,000 people (Batty, 22 Nov. 2010). Many more were left injured or homeless.

This island nation is called Haiti because of the mountainous area in the middle of the country. Haiti means “land of the mountains” in Taino, the native language of Haiti’s indigenous population who lived in the Caribbean isles before colonization (Coupeau, 2008: 15). Haiti’s written history begins with Christopher Columbus. Haiti is part of the isle of Hispaniola, Columbus’s new world discovery. The northeast settlement of La Navidad was the first settlement of the new world (Girard, 2010). The Taino were a tribal people who lived in Hispaniola, the Bahamas, Santa Lucia and other islands before Spanish, British and French colonization (Coupeau, 2008: 15-20). Although the Spanish
attempted to develop Haiti, most of the original colonists died. By 1550 only natives were living on the island (Coupeau, 2008: 16). It was later colonized by French buccaneers, who named the island Saint-Domingue (which later became Santa Domingo) (Coupeau, 2008: 19). France formally claimed control of the western portion of the island of Hispaniola in 1697. The nation became populated with planters, who by 1791 had brought 790,000 African slaves to the island to work the land (Coupeau, 2008: 18). As the population of slaves increased, French planters began to have children with their slaves—creating a large population of gens de couleur or French for "people of color" and eventually the elite Affranchis population (Coupeau, 2008: 20). This population eventually led the revolutionary uprising against France in 1791, and established an independent state. When Napoleon took control of France he attempted to re-establish control in the Caribbean. A Haitian general, Jean-Jacques Dessalines defeated the French and declared independence in 1804, creating the world's oldest black republic and one of the oldest republics in the Western Hemisphere (Coupeau, 2008: 35-38).

Religion plays a significant role in Haitian culture. Haitian Voodoo is a syncretic religion that originated in the Caribbean country of Haiti. Syncretic means it is a religion that combines many beliefs from different religions. Voodoo is based upon a merging of the beliefs and practices of West African peoples, with Arawakan (which include Haiti's Taino) religious beliefs, and Roman Catholic Christianity (Girard, 2010: 29). In addition to Voodoo, the majority of Haitians practice Catholicism or another form of evangelical protestant Christianity (Girard, 2010: 30). Evangelicalism is growing quickly in Haiti, because many schools and hospitals are linked to evangelical churches in the U.S. and
because its ceremonies are charismatic (for example those of Pentecostals) and echo those of Voodoo ceremonies (Girard, 2010: 33).

Voodoo has a strong superstition concerning death. Unnamed and unidentified dead are often associated with negative Voodoo loas (or spirits), or even zombies (Girard, 2010: 32). For this reason following the Haiti earthquake, the large numbers of unidentified dead bodies caused the Haitian people spiritual unrest. Bodies were left in the middle of streets for days, because many Haitian's feared touching or being near unnamed dead.

After a long history of sugar cane and coffee growing the country began to suffer from deforestation in the 1900s (Coupeau, 2008: 141-143). In addition, the Haitian government developed a history of political corruption (Herz, 2010). The 1900s were rough for Haiti with a string of military coups. The U.S. also occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934 under President Woodrow Wilson, and again from 1994 to 2000 under President Bill Clinton (Girard, 2010: 12). During both these occupations, the U.S. said its goal was to hopefully prevent additional rebellions in the country, although many Haitians saw the American occupation as another form of colonialism (Girard, 2010: 13-16, 88-91). Two black-nationalist rulers, Papa Doc (Francois Duvalier) and Bebe Doc (Jean-Claude Duvalier) ruled Haiti with militaristic rule from 1957 to 1986 (Girard, 2010: 100, 105). Papa Doc ruled as dictator from 1957 until his death in 1971, and his son Bebe Doc from 1971 until his overthrow by a popular uprising in 1986 (Girard, 2010: 100, 105). Shortly after the second U.S. occupation 1995, Haiti’s leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide attempted to restore “democracy” (Girard, 2010: 166). Aristide was president three times before his 2004 ouster (Girard, 2010). In 2004, with the re-election of President Rene Preval, it
appeared Haiti might be changing as political ministries began to focus on gender rights, welfare for poorer families, education and economic development programs (“Is Haiti Building Back Better?” 29 Oct. 2010).

Despite some gains, Haiti’s history of unrest and struggle has left the country with an unstable economy, infrastructure and government (Adams, 2005). Haiti is one of the 25 poorest countries in the world, with a GDP (per capita) of $1,339 in Geary-Khamis dollars, according to the International Monetary Fund. Earthquakes are just one of the natural disasters which have plagued this poverty stricken Island nation (Appendix B). In September 2008, Haiti was crippled even more with four consecutive named tropical storms and hurricanes—Faye, Gustav, Hanna and Ike—beating down on the nation (Perito, 21 Jan. 2010). According to the United States National Weather Service, Haiti receives the most rain between the months of April through September. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted as many as seven major hurricanes would hit Haiti in the 2010 season (Miller, 2010). After living in South Florida for several years, I became quite familiar with the amount of devastation that Haiti faced during hurricane season. While hurricanes are constantly plaguing Haiti, this 2010 earthquake intensified many other threats including health, security, economic development and infrastructure. In many of these areas Haiti is starting back at square one.

**Introduction to Earthquake News Coverage**

The 2010 earthquake injured and killed hundreds of thousands and left a large portion of the population homeless (Pape, Johnson & Fitzgerald, 2010). At a public event in Washington, D.C., former Haitian Prime Minister Michèle Duvivier Pierre-
Louis said that following the earthquake the response from the international community was unprecedented (“Is Haiti Building Back Better?” 29 Oct. 2010). Among responders were hundreds of journalists and media professionals who blanketed Haiti. As they worked to tell the story of the Haitian people and educate their constituents on the death and devastation that enveloped the Haitians, they gathered information in multiple ways.

According to a report in The Wall Street Journal, “the earthquake in Haiti destroyed the link to the country’s one undersea fiber optic cable”—making communications difficult via landline in the weeks following the quake (Tombes, 2010). Close to 35 percent of Haiti’s population uses mobile phones, allowing communications in areas where landline communications have not yet been possible (Tombes, 2010). Many new media outlets even connected families separated after the quake, and informed others of whether their family members were living or dead (Palser, 2010). Haitians, NGOs and journalists relied on radio to communicate and share information. In addition, they were able to get information through technology. A crowd sourcing website Haiti.com was created to compile information from social networking websites in order to engage and mobilize assistance for Haiti (Haiti.com).

Some criticized news coverage of the Haiti earthquake because it received significant coverage in comparison to others; however, Pew found that the coverage of the earthquake (60 percent of the news coverage) was similar to the coverage of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (58 percent of the news coverage) (Pew Center for People and the Press, 20 Jan. 2010). Critics also said Haiti received more attention than another earthquake happened in Chile on February 27, 2010. The Haiti earthquake did happen first and killed more people than the disaster in Chile, but there were still critiques that
said Haiti got more coverage than Chile because Haiti happened first. The Haiti earthquake has also received more news coverage, in comparison to other natural disasters in Haiti (Miller, 2010). There are many U.S.-based permanently stationed nonprofit organizations with branches and workers in Haiti. Many of these Americans have reached out to those living in poverty, including a large number of orphans and the elderly, for decades.

During the earthquake coverage there were questions as to whether or not journalists were “violating certain journalistic principles” in their coverage of the quake, but also recognizing the journalism being done there was both “important” and “costly” (Broadcasting & Cable, 2010). Some thought the photos of death in many American newspapers were overwhelmingly graphic (Emmett, 2010). The disaster became the face of Haiti’s poverty. Others began comparing the 7.0 Richter-scale-earthquake to Hurricane Katrina, because of striking similarities to the images of destruction; however, in Haiti, poverty was seen as an incurable pre-existing condition (De Mause, 2010). This was consistent in online and television news coverage, which many reporters likened to the photos of Hurricane Katrina in 2005:

Such images couldn’t help but come to mind in the aftermath of the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, where crushing poverty greatly worsened the devastation wrought in Port-au-prince and surrounding towns. In TV news coverage, Haiti was described as ‘underdeveloped, overpopulated, and incredibly poor.’ (De Mause, 2010).

Photos drove people to contribute money to the Red Cross and other organizations. Celebrities organized concerts, and U.S.-based Haitians made public appearances at
 fundraisers. CNN’s 24-7 coverage was also compared to a “Save the Children ad, with the focus of international rescue teams pulling Haitians from the rubble” (De Mause, 2010). There were photos and videos all over Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, many with graphic scenes shown (“Elderly Quake Victims Forgotten and Starving in Haiti,” 17 Jan. 2010; “Images of Disaster: Aftermath in Haiti,” 14 Jan. 2010; Winton, 13 Jan. 2010; Newton-Small, 19 Nov. 2010). CNN reported that the use of social media ultimately helped raise $8 million by the end of the first week of news coverage (Jan. 12 through 17) (Pew PEJ New Media Index: January 11-17, 2010).

**Covering Haiti in the Past**

Preliminary information was spotty, as most national news organizations lacked Haiti correspondents. “Parachute journalists” were sent in to do “dramatic” coverage, and often into areas about which they had little knowledge (MacDonald, 2007). Parachute journalists have been used in Haiti and other developing foreign countries even more in the 2000s (as international news advertising costs for news organizations have increased) (MacDonald, 2007). Parachute journalists are journalists who cover a story by just dropping into it—with little or no idea of the complexities of the story. The idea of dropping in without knowledge of a culture can add even more challenges. Often parachute journalists are used to combat the “CNN effect,” which requires the journalist to frequently rely on officially released information and other external sources (MacDonald, 2007: 214). The “CNN effect,” is “the concern that media have expanded their ability to affect the conduct of U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy” (Livingston, 1997: 2). Therefore, the goal of a journalist operating under a 24-7 CNN like news coverage model is to release information that impacts the world in real-time. This topic
is the subject of debate in both media and politics, and although there have been numerous attempts to “unravel” the impact of the CNN effect on public policy (Livingston, 1997), his study argues that the CNN effect has changed the reporting model for journalists who cover politics.

In the past journalists have been able to know their “beat” and rely more on personal knowledge. MacDonald conducted a study that interviewed journalists who covered the 2003 to 2004 destabilization of the Haiti government and the ouster of Aristides’s government. MacDonald, a Canadian scholar and journalist, made several observations about the Haitian media landscape. Her study focused on the ways in which Canadian media produced international news concerning the ouster. These journalists relied mainly on Haitian sources and international news wires. Her study provides insight into how the international news media have covered Haiti in the past. Haiti’s population has more than eight million people, who access around 184 local news outlets—the majority of which are radio stations (MacDonald, 2008: 217). Haiti has few newspapers; Le Matin (a private daily), Le Novelliste (a private daily) and Haiti Progres (a weekly) are the three most dominant (BBC Haiti Country Profile, 2010). This means there are few independent news sources with significant market saturation. Radio stations require the least amount of infrastructure for distribution, and radio waves are more difficult for the government to regulate. All businesses must register in Haiti with the government. This often tedious process requires several signatures and pages of paperwork that must be filed in Port-au-Prince (“Is Haiti Building Back Better?,” 29 Oct. 2010).
For her study, MacDonald interviewed several journalists including Thomson Reuters’ correspondent Amy Bracken, who was stationed in Haiti in 2004. Bracken stated, “as foreign journalists it was very difficult to do in-depth journalism partly because of a totally opaque government” (MacDonald, 2008: 220). There are several other obstacles that international journalists in Haiti faced during the ouster:

- Most international journalists do not speak Creole.
- Journalists were highly dependent on local mainstream information as Haiti has few daily newspapers.
- Many became reliant on the local government and quickly formed acquaintances to get information, and many used facts provided by other organizations that were not easy to verify (MacDonald, 2008: 220, 224).

When covering anti-Aristide protests and demonstrations in Haiti, journalists stationed there only reported on the big events:

The self-perpetuating nature of big stories, which is largely a product of bottom-line pressures from news organizations, and which is particularly pronounced in the context of foreign news coverage in regions typically neglected in North American commercial press coverage, also played an important role in journalists’ reporting of Haiti (MacDonald, 2008: 225).

During this time of crisis, journalists gathering information were confined to a nice hotels in a wealthy area of Port-au-Prince, usually with other journalists. The lack of access to information meant many journalists used sources with similar experiences or from similar locations. MacDonald pointed to the crux of dependence on second-hand information, stating, “fewer correspondents and fewer foreign bureaus means more
reliance on Washington bureaus means more reliance on government and great opportunity for government to influence the news agenda and its content” (MacDonald, 2008). In this case, as in the case of the Haiti earthquake, journalists and editors definitely had the power to change what the public saw and heard.

**Critics of the Coverage**

The news coverage of the Haiti earthquake was different from other natural disasters. In addition to 24-7 news coverage by cable news networks, the use of social media made photos and information about Haiti available to people around the world. This information informed critics of the news coverage. Critics were concerned about graphic images, journalists acting as aid workers, and the possible dramatization of situations for news hype. The sudden increase in attention and the constant presence of journalists that followed the January 12 earthquake was “a clear indication of the disaster that had befallen the country” (Girard, 2010: 4). People who had never heard of Haiti or acknowledged its challenges in the past were now “fixed on their television sets, moved by the images of collapsed schools, amputated survivors, helpless orphans, and the half-collapsed presidential palace that came to symbolize Haiti’s hapless state” (Girard, 2010: 4).

During the recent coverage of Haiti, newsmakers and scholars alike disagreed with the approach taken by some journalists who became involved in recovery rather than journalism. There were many critiques as to whether it was the responsibility of reporters to help people or simply document the stories through their work. This was significantly more difficult for television reporters and videographers. *The New York Post*’s David Hinckley commented on this dilemma:
The aftermath of the Haitian earthquake is one of those stories that altered the guiding principle of journalism – that reporters are here to observe and document. Their job is not to be part of whatever is happening, but to be the eyes and ears for readers or viewers who want to know and can’t be there. (Hinckley, 19 Jan. 2010).

Some argued that Haiti was foreign and “other” and therefore publishing photos of “half-clothed bodies” was more acceptable than if those bodies had been the family and friends of Americans locals (Emmett, 2010: 32). News editors often decide what gets printed or aired, based on journalistic practices and norms. Today many photos and images published abroad still don’t make it onto American-based Internet news websites, nightly news or in local newspapers (Emmett, 2010: 33).

One highly publicized critique involved the examination of medical journalists who were treating injured people on the air. Sanjay Gupta and Nancy Snyderman were two cases of journalists who were critiqued for “interfering” (“Priorities, Please,” 25 Jan. 2010). Gupta and Snyderman are medical journalists on staff by CNN and NBC, respectively. Stinky Journalism writer Malika Ashford called their presentation of medical journalism the “danger of self-promotion and sensational journalism” (20 Jan. 2010). James Rainey from The Los Angeles Times praised CNN for their ability to focus on the actual disaster in Haiti, while “other networks like Fox News” used the disaster to field political commentary (Rainey, 15 Jan. 2010). Rainey writes,

“No matter how much CNN succeeded in delivering the story, it will never make me stomach the self-promotion that it and other outlets insist on weaving throughout their coverage. Can we please get through an hour without heaping
praise on our correspondents' valor (however real it may be)?” (Rainey, 15 Jan. 2010).

CNN did have more coverage than any other cable news network during the first week of the Haiti earthquake (PEJ News Coverage Index: January 11-17, 2010). Some media ethicists like Bob Steele, journalism values scholar at the Poynter Institute, said correspondents like Gupta and Snyderman should consider choosing to abandon their “journalistic roles if they're going to participate in the relief effort” (Gold, 19 Jan. 2010). What Steele emphasized is that reporters should choose to help if they have medical expertise but at the same time should do what they can to remain impartial and professional journalistically. For example, journalists who are also medical professionals should turn the camera away to give the Haitian people privacy if they are having medical procedures done, and not just openly film their suffering without permission. Steele says journalists have a responsibility to “step back from the medical work and practice independent journalistic truth-telling” (Gold, 19 Jan. 2010). There was also an article published by a fashion writer at The New York Times that critiqued the fashion of Gupta and Cooper, who were clad in tight "charcol" t-shirts with their hair slicked back while reporting on the ground in Haiti (Trebay, 21 Jan. 2010).

On January 22, Poynter urged journalists to avoid travel to Haiti because there were few “unique stories” and they might be “sucking up relief supplies” by going (Tompkins, 22 Jan. 2010). Poynter encouraged reporters to bring in their own resources, technological and basic needs (like food, shelter and water). Some aid organizations said workers, supplies and medical professionals need the space that journalists might fill-up. Newspapers including The New York Times and The Washington Post were more
“restrained” in their numbers, however, early on “CNN and CBS both had about 50 staffers in Haiti, and Fox had 25” (Tompkins, 22 Jan. 2010). AFP and AP had stringers already situated in Haiti, and many Miami bureaus of news organizations already had developed sources within the Haitian community for who they got information (Tenore, 13 Jan. 2010). Based on my background research, there were more than 300 journalists reporting from Haiti in the month following the earthquake, and that does not even include the crews and others who contributed to stories.

Other publications and critics examined the work of CNN reporter Anderson Cooper, and other television journalists, who presented tragic images of people trapped under buildings and heroic rescues:

Some 18 hours after a massive earthquake, Cooper and his CNN colleagues were the first Western broadcast journalists who delivered the most indelible images from the heart of the impact zone. (Rainey, 15 Jan. 2010).

Rainey commends CNN for their work, saying “cable television's pioneering outlet has risen to the occasion, making sure the world sees the painful realities” rather than moving on to something else that will support “prime-time headlines” (Rainey, 15 Jan. 2010). Cooper was later awarded an honor from the Haiti government for his news coverage (Deggans, 13 July 2010). These journalists took risks, by practicing their craft outside of acceptable journalistic practices; their journalism got the attention of their audience and the rest of the journalism community.

Despite all these critiques, covering a crisis is a risk on its own. However, knowing this information made it easier to formulate questions in the research survey and interviews for this project. The research goal of this project was to further discover how
these journalists interacted with each other and how technology was employed in the coverage of Haiti recovery efforts. The methodology for the project provided a structure through which those questions could be further examined through the distribution of a survey and interviews.

Knowing the dynamics of Haiti, and the fact that certain protocols were thrown to the wind in order to cover Haiti, speaking with journalists provided a better understanding of what they were facing. The following chapter will describe the methods used to formulate those questions and acquire this first-hand information from journalists.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF RESEARCH

While background research provided a basic framework to look at the work of journalists during the Haiti earthquake, a method was needed to conduct an examination of that work. This study asked a number of questions concerning the newswork of journalists covering the Haiti earthquake January 12, 2010 through February 12, 2010. The goal was to discover how these journalists interacted with each other and how technology was employed in the coverage of the Haiti recovery efforts.

Research methodologies require clearly expressed research questions that can be examined. For this study questions included: how did these U.S. journalists use technology? Did technology use change their approach to the coverage of the Haiti earthquake? How did journalists interact with each other and what did they do during the month following the earthquake? What challenges did they face dealing with the post-earthquake environment? These questions were used to inform all portions of the research methodology. Gaining the answers to these questions was the goal of this project.

The background for this research project came from studies in journalism, communications, technology, crisis communications models, development, knowledge of Haiti’s history, and understanding of the technology available in Haiti. This background research and a news coverage analysis led me to the journalists that took the survey and informed the survey questions I created. Survey responses were used to determine the journalists whom I conducted personal interviews with. This multi-method approach was used to gather information concerning the newswork of journalists. Each of the three parts provided a foundation for the part that followed.
News coverage of the Earthquake and Media Critiques

In January 2010, I became interested in the way in which journalists were covering the Haiti earthquake. I began watching CNN, and reading daily articles in The New York Times and The Washington Post. I also watched stories on Yahoo!News, Google News, and from other major publications and newswires. As a journalist, I’d had several conversations with other journalists that made me begin to wonder about the role of technology in the coverage and the way journalists do their work. Were journalistic practices changing as result of these technologies? How did technology change the way journalists covered the Haiti earthquake?

After developing these research questions, in May 2010, I retraced those stories from January and February 2010. I used this knowledge to determine search terms for a larger sample of news stories. Search terms including “Haiti,” “earthquake,” “technology,” and “journalists” were used to acquire background information from mainstream news publications, websites and news networks. I also read articles, blog posts, Twitter feeds, and other information concerning Haiti posted on publication websites and by news scholars. I read close to 150 articles online and watched several videos concerning the Haiti earthquake within a three-month period (from June through August 2010).

To further gather information, I contacted working journalists and asked them to help me find significant stories written by their news organizations concerning the Haiti earthquake. Later, many of these journalists also helped me contact journalists who worked in Haiti and wrote stories on Haiti. From this background research I created a more formal study structure, and decided to conduct a thematic analysis of the news
coverage. Themes are all-encompassing ideas that were recognized throughout the news coverage, and corresponded with larger narratives previously examined in the analysis of natural disaster news coverage.

To find these themes I read articles published by The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Cable News Network (CNN), Agence France-Presse (AFP) and the Associated Press. Using the search terms “Haiti,” and “earthquake,” a population of stories was selected, and then read. These stories were collected using online sources including NewYorkTimes.com, WashingtonPost.com, CNN.com, and databases including Lexis Nexis, News Bank’s Access World News, and Dow Jones Factiva. All stories were viewed in text form, although many of them included television transcripts or video news clips for CNN, AFP and AP. I also watched videos through CNN.com and YouTube to gain additional background information.

This knowledge of journalism and natural disasters determined a qualitative analysis would be the best way to approach this study. I conducted a qualitative analysis of the news coverage to determine the themes used throughout, and also noted how news organizations differed in their approach. I made note of different elements that were in each news story, if there were changes in those elements, and if those elements were used consistently. After reading a number of articles and transcripts, I discovered five themes in the news coverage: “Haiti as a poverty stricken country,” “Haiti’s lack of resources,” “the responses of the international community and the U.S. to Haiti,” (De Mause, 2010; Palser, 2010), as well as celebrities pleading for aid and support for Haiti, and the U.S. responsibility to help Haiti. In order to contextualize the coverage, the study had to understand the background of some of these organizations.
CNN, The Washington Post, The New York Times and AP are mainstream U.S. news organizations, and AFP’s English Language publications for North America are also based in the U.S. Although they all have a broad audience there were some things that made these organizations particularly interesting to me. CNN (the Cable News Network), which launched in 1980, became relevant in disaster coverage during the Gulf War (Zelizer, 1992). Although CNN is based in Atlanta, Georgia they have major bureaus in Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles. The Gulf War experience covered by CNN made the 24-hour news model as well known as the faces of CNN reporters. Coverage of the first Gulf War’s Battle of Mogadishu, led Pentagon officials to adapt the term "the CNN effect" to describe the perceived impact of real time, 24-hour news coverage on the decision-making processes of the American government (Livingston, 1997). CNN has expanded its reach to a number of cable and satellite television companies since 1980. The CNN enterprise now includes several websites, additional specialized networks, a radio network, and a newswire service that launched in 2010 (CNN.com, June 2010). According to CNN’s website, CNN.com, the company has 36 bureaus (10 domestic, 26 international), and is affiliated with more than 900 local stations, and several regional and foreign-language networks around the world (CNN.com, 2010). The website also introduced their citizen reporter infrastructure, iReport in 2008. iReport takes information from registered CNN.com contributors as leads for stories. People in the newsroom verify these leads and reporters then include the information in their stories (CNN iReport, 2010). As the welcome statement on the site states:
iReport is the way people like you report the news. The stories in this section are not edited, fact-checked or screened before they post. Only ones marked 'CNN iReport' have been vetted by CNN. (CNN iReport, 2010).

The five news sources examined all publish on the Internet in some capacity. AFP’s English Language edition is based in Washington, D.C., although it is a branch of the original French Language based AFP in Paris, France. Worldwide publications and websites subscribe to AFP’s product, as they would to any other wire service. AFP’s Washington, D.C. bureau managed the news coverage of the Haiti earthquake for all AFP bureaus (Sherry interview).

**Forming News Coverage Analysis**

The news coverage portion of this study employs theories and research on media framing and agenda setting. Media framing and agenda setting have been the basis for many media research studies—including those of natural disaster coverage (Anderson, 1965: 1; Singer and Endreny, 1993: 4). Framing theory was used by Goffman to explain themes in news coverage (Goffman, 1986; Worawongs, 2007). Identifying these frames helped to identify thematic elements throughout the coverage. Researchers have used framing to explain the intentions or goals of journalists. Many newswork studies look at why journalists adopted certain themes and abandoned others. This is similar to the idea of agenda setting. Agenda setting is a process by which particular narrative themes are portrayed to an audience (Cohen, 1963). As McCombs and Shaw state, “agenda setting” considers the media to be mediators of information to the public (1972: 185). Agenda setting research has looked mainly at political news coverage. Agenda setting is often present in disaster coverage because it can become political. Agenda setting also has a
long history across fields in communication, including health communications, sports and education. Miles and Morse argue that media coverage shapes the way the public perceives risks posed by natural hazards (2007). In the case of this study, news coverage themes can encompass the ideas of news framing and agenda setting. Themes represent a larger narrative that provides consistent elements. These themes shift throughout the news coverage depending upon the conditions of the crisis and the news climate surrounding a certain news story.

For the majority of Americans Haiti was seen through the eyes of journalists, and therefore the journalists’ choices impacted the information their audience received. This project looked at the earthquake coverage for particular media attitudes—or for any particular theme blanketing stories about the earthquake—these themes then helped to shape the questions developed for surveys and interviews later.

This process included an examination of whether the organizations wrote stories with similar topics or that used the same sources or journalists mentioned similar locations in the stories. These stories provided a reference point from which to ask questions of journalists about their work. My research was patterned after those of newswork and professional studies, which look at the environment/context in which the study participants work, and the work those participants do. It is important to understand the work if the researcher intends to understand the worker. For that reason, this information informed the survey data and the way in which interview questions were asked. I asked journalists questions about communication, technology use, challenges, physical and emotional effects of the post-earthquake environment. Rather than identify
frames—which are often measured quantitatively—this study analyzed the news coverage for the five news coverage themes—that could be measured qualitatively.

**How the News Coverage Informed Survey Questions**

The survey was designed by doing background research concerning other survey researchers’ methodologies, consulting academic professionals, and other similar studies that included a survey. The survey goal was to identify journalists’ experiences while they covered the Haiti earthquake.

Questions were informed by a study done by the Pew Forum Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), and Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Additional surveys done by this group can be found at www.journalism.org. One specific study done by PEJ involved interviews of journalists who worked in Iraq September 28 through November 7, 2007 (Princeton Survey Research, 2007). The PEJ survey involved 20 journalists from many different publications, some U.S.-based and some internationally based.

In this project the survey questions needed to ask journalists their impressions and motivations, as to uncover the passions and motivations of journalists. Further, questions needed to ask about the processes and environments journalists faced during their coverage. In order for the survey questions to work toward the research goals most of the themes discussed in the news coverage needed to be addressed during the survey, and all needed to be touched on in the interviews. By asking questions about relationships, technology, newswork, communications, and disasters, this study provided a context for the work of journalists in crisis situations. The survey included many elements. For example, survey participants were asked if the coverage of the earthquake was different
or similar to that of other disasters, and if this changed the way journalists shared the stories of those hurt by the disaster or if they wrote stories about what they had access to. Questions determined if the journalists chose to cover certain stories following the earthquake and avoided others. During the news coverage analysis I also identified similar patterns in news coverage across the publications and then used these themes to formulate a set of sample questions (Appendix F) that could be used to develop both the survey and the interview questions. The survey had two types of questions multiple choice and short answer.

To keep the flow of information open, it was important to design a survey where participants were given the opportunity to expand on their answers as well. The survey was based online at SurveyMonkey.com, which allows researchers to insert branching questions. This allowed respondents who were in Haiti and those who were in the U.S. to answer questions. The survey combined short answer and multiple-choice questions to get broad-based results and provide quantitative and qualitative data.

Following this process, I asked several academic experts to review and test my survey questions first on paper and then online. After the review process, I distributed the survey through email to the list of journalists that had already agreed to take the survey, those identified through the news coverage analysis, and additional journalists who became part of the sample population through snowball collection methods.

**Gathering Survey Respondents**

In the initial recruitment emails, journalists were asked if they would participate in the study (Appendix C). After journalists were contacted, names and addresses were added to a database and when the survey was prepared these journalists received an email
with the link to the survey. This basic email was distributed to 15 journalists with whom I was previously acquainted. They then shared the email with their personal and professional networks. The goal was to gather a variety of news professionals and, therefore, get a wide range of news expertise from the survey respondents. Either their contact or myself then sent them a link to the online survey.

The survey was open on SurveyMonkey.com from October 3 through November 10, 2010. The first portion of the survey consisted of an online informed consent document (Appendix E). This document informed the participant of the study’s expectations. Participants were told they had the option to keep their name and news organization confidential, as well as withdraw from the study at any time. The participant was asked to click to accept the agreement, and then answer the 27 multiple choice and short answer questions. The survey was designed to take seven minutes or less, unless the participant chose to expand on their answers in the additional space provided. Participants were also asked before they submitted the survey if they would be willing to participate in interviews in person or by phone in the weeks following the survey.

I preliminarily gathered 19 survey respondents to take the survey. The snowball gathering method was purposive, in that it only sought to connect with journalists who worked on stories about the Haiti earthquake. Therefore, the final sample only included journalists who worked on stories concerning Haiti after the earthquake in the first month (January 12 through February 12, 2010). The journalists who took the survey worked in a variety of jobs and at a variety of news organizations (Appendix D). The final survey sample of 14 journalists included writers, editors, producers and photographers. Two worked for television stations, three worked for news magazines, three worked for wire
services, and the remainder worked for newspapers. Only journalists who worked from the U.S. and in Haiti during the one-month time period (January 12 through February 12, 2010) were included in the survey sample. Of those surveyed, three were in the U.S. during the first month of coverage, and 11 were in Haiti for a portion or all of the first month of coverage. All of the participants were given the option to participate in the study without being identified. Some gave permission for their identities to be used and others did not. Not all the respondents answered every question.

Surveys are often done in the same format as a structured interview or standardized interview. In order to use this methodology, questions increased from simple to complex as the respondents moved through the survey. Some questions were scaled, where respondents could answer how much or little they agreed with particular ideas or issues. The survey data was interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively. Multiple-choice answers were quantitative; therefore, questions were configured the same way each time because each participant received the same set of questions in the same order. Many of the questions had similar answer choices, and created consistency in answers that were measurable statistically. From these answers, I could aggregate and compare one respondent’s answers to another. This meant multiple choice answers could be analyzed numerically after they were downloaded and converted into statistical analysis software (SPSS), and represented in graph form. I could also look at groups that took the survey and compare them to others. The short answers were qualitative and provided the same information that a structured interview might provide. The survey answers were then used to design the interview questions, and helped indicate which of the journalists to interview.
Interviews to Zero-In on and Expand Information

Interviewing methodology, unlike that of a survey, is a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research uses smaller and more focused sample sizes rather than larger samples. Interviews provide a way to get detailed answers to complex situations (Kumar, 2005: 131). This interview methodology aimed to gather in-depth understandings of human behaviors. The primary goal of this project was to show how journalists used diverse technologies in their newswork. The way that one interviews depends on what one wants to know (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). A researcher must determine through the interview how the participant feels and thinks about their world. Successful interviews resulted in an understanding of the major points of a journalist’s work, their use of technology, and how their actions compared to other crisis reporting situations.

For this reason, the follow-up interviews built upon the data collected from the survey. I conducted five interviews, both in person and on the phone with four U.S. journalists who worked in Haiti during the aftermath of the earthquake, and one who arranged the coverage from the U.S. Interviews took place from November 8 through November 22, 2010. I contacted these journalists only after they had completed the survey, but I offered them the opportunity in the survey to participate (Appendix E, p. 14). Following their agreement to participate, an interview was scheduled through email or phone call. All participants received and filled out an informed consent document (Appendix G). All the participants were asked to read the informed consent document before the interview session. All signed it and returned it shortly after the interview.
The purpose of these interviews was to extend answers to the survey questions. Throughout the entire process, the identities of these news people and their news organizations were not used without their consent and approval—as well as approval through the appropriate channels at their news organizations. Correspondence and interviews were not recorded without permission of the interviewee. All interviewees were given the option to not be named in the research project. In these cases, pseudonyms or an abbreviation of their names were coupled with descriptions of the individual’s work field in the final project if they chose to remain unnamed. In the case of this study, all interview participants gave permission to have their names and information used in the study.

Through the interviews and survey results this project brought together knowledge concerning the coverage of natural disasters as well as technology use within the journalistic community. Interviews provided insight into whether or not journalists used stock frames to cover a natural disaster, and if technology limited or broadened the type of information they shared with the public. From these questions the research identified the changes in the role of the traditional journalist as a result of the technologies used to cover a story.

This methodology was complex, but aimed to provide research to fill in the research gap that exists in the study of journalists working during the coverage of a crisis, and their relationships to technology. The next section will look at news coverage from five national media sources to determine what types of stories journalists produced during their time in Haiti. It will also provide a window into how the news coverage developed in the first month and the news foci of journalists during those times.
CHAPTER 4: NEWS COVERAGE OF THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE

On January 12, 2010 an earthquake crumbled the already fragile country of Haiti. Instantly, messages were sent from Haitian cell phones to friends and relatives in the U.S. Not long after, the first reports were sent to newswires, posted on online newspapers and news blogs, and launched onto CNN. This was only the beginning of the reports that continued to dominate the news for the next year. Journalists were key players in what happened in Haiti and their stories molded the international response. This research study examined the news coverage in the month following the Haiti earthquake on January 12, 2010. This paper shows how technology became imperative in the coverage of the recovery efforts by examining journalistic practices. As journalists increased coverage and gained sources by using technology, more people were made aware of the circumstances of those in Haiti.

In order to uncover the role of journalists in Haiti, it is important to understand the stories that journalists wrote and produced. Stories from CNN, in The New York Times and The Washington Post, and on Agence-France Presse’s (AFP) English language edition and the Associated Press (AP) newswires were included in the news coverage sample. From this sample a thematic textual analysis was conducted to look at the press coverage of the Haiti earthquake in the month following the earthquake. Of all the stories about the Haiti earthquake, around 20 percent of them were published in the first five days following the earthquake. In just the first full day of coverage, January 12 through 13, 2010, there were 277 articles published concerning the Haiti earthquake for Agency France Presse and 45 published by the Associated Press. An inventory of news stories was conducted to look for these themes concerning the Haiti earthquake through online
sources including NewYorkTimes.com, WashingtonPost.com and CNN.com, and databases including Lexis Nexis, News Bank’s Access World News, and Dow Jones Factiva. All stories were viewed in text form, although many of the television and video news clips for CNN, AFP and AP were watched through CNN.com and YouTube to gain additional background information.

**Examining the News Coverage**

In the thematic textual analysis, I used several search terms were used to determine the news articles and show transcripts to read. Transcripts from CNN, texts from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and news stories from Agence-France Presse’s (AFP) English language edition and the Associated Press (AP) newswires were included in the sample. News Bank provided the widest availability of content from these five news outlets, so the most extensive search was done through News Bank’s Access World News database. The basic search term language was “Haiti Earthquake” and the search dates were January 11 through February 13, 2010. News Bank’s Access World News database revealed 1593 stories from *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, CNN transcripts, and the AP newswire. Of these stories, there were 587 articles from AP archive, 534 from CNN, 267 from *The New York Times*, and 205 articles in *The Washington Post*. An additional search on News Bank’s Access World News database for AFP articles revealed 1,857 reports, though many of these were found to be updates of the same story (around 1/3). In total, 2434 articles were from newswires, 534 were CNN transcripts, and 472 were from newspaper articles. Because the searches returned so many results, only the first day’s coverage and then the first story published by a publication per day were analyzed in their entirety. CNN used similar information
throughout the day on most of its newscasts. Therefore the sample population was reduced to include the smaller sample, which yielded closer to 300 articles. AP and AFP had multiple versions of the same story published each day and some stories with the same quotes and/or duplicate information.

In order to understand common consistent themes in these stories, a word map was created with the text from the first story published by each news organization on the Haiti earthquake. The word map was created through Wordle.com (Appendix A). The word map measures the number of times a word is used; the more times it is used the larger the word is on the map. The word map showed that in the first few hours Anderson Cooper’s coverage of the earthquake was dominant compared to the print publications and newswires. Bylines were eliminated and only story text and transcript text was used. The largest words in the word map other than “Haiti,” “Port-au-Prince” and “earthquake”, were “people” “know” “right” “now” “going” “just”, with “damage” “buildings” and “quake” just slightly smaller. These words are both consistent with the themes I found in the news coverage as well as background research I did to understand the post-earthquake environment in Haiti.

Looking for Themes

Background research conducted by other scholars regarding the news coverage of the Haiti earthquake revealed common themes, or common narratives in the news coverage. These included:

(1) Haiti as a poverty-stricken country,

(2) Haiti’s lack of resources, and
(3) The responses of the international community to Haiti (De Mause, 2010; Palser, 2010).

I found these to be consistent with the themes present in the five major news sources I examined. I also found two additional themes:

(4) Celebrities raising support and awareness,

(5) and the responsibility of the U.S. to help Haiti after the disaster

News themes encompassed the experiences of journalists. These themes corresponded with broader narratives that shift throughout the news coverage. When journalists arrived in Haiti they saw poverty, experienced a lack of resources, and saw the impact the international community had on the devastation in Haiti. They used those themes in the stories they wrote, and the longer they were there the more they expanded their stories to include the U.S. aid work in Haiti—concerning the donations of celebrities and U.S. citizens. While many other themes were present throughout the news coverage, these five were the dominant themes in the first month of news coverage. In addition to looking for themes, each story was found to have five basic factual components in the Haiti earthquake news coverage:

1. Interviews of local people in Haiti
2. Quotes from the reporter’s experiences
3. Quotes from government officials or local authorities in Haiti or the U.S.
4. An angle to connect the story back to the U.S.
5. Explanations of the infrastructure, physical environment, including buildings, and technology, etc.
These elements are present in most of the news stories concerning the Haiti earthquake, although not all are present in every story. All components related back to the broader news themes.

**Examples of and Shifts in the Key Themes**

The key elements of a Haiti Earthquake news story were identified in most of the stories. By reading the first story published by each publication on each day of the first month of coverage. The themes were also present in most of the sample stories. Some of the stories in the research sample that contained one or more of the themes, however, some contained only a tagline reference to the Haiti earthquake and therefore did not include all of the key factual elements. For example one article published by AP, “White House credits stimulus with up to 2M jobs,” has this reference:

> Obama had planned to highlight the report during a visit to a Lanham, Md., training center for union electricians, but he canceled the stop as the White House scrambled to respond to Tuesday's devastating earthquake in Haiti (Smith, 13 Jan. 2010).

Most of the news coverage contains at least a brief mention of the Haiti earthquake regardless of whether the story directly concerns Haiti. In the case of CNN, statements like this were used to transition back and forth from news about the Haiti earthquake to other stories. One example is the story concerning Former President Bill Clinton’s hospitalization in New York during the last week of January (Penhaul and Gupta, 11 Jan. 2010). That transition follows:

> Former President Bill Clinton, the U.N. special envoy to Haiti and longtime friend of this country and 42nd president of the United States, is in the hospital with new
heart troubles. You have probably heard that. But we have the latest on his condition, what doctors did today, what he's been through already with his heart and what anyone with heart disease can take away from his experiences.

(Penhaul and Gupta, 11 Jan. 2010)

Another key story during this time was the state of the U.S. economy. For months the economy and unemployment were the headline stories during the Obama Presidency, but as Obama shifted to “respond” to the earthquake, it appears the media did so as well. The first example connects this “crisis” to the crisis in Haiti where as Clinton’s hospitalization is made more important because of Haiti.

Most of the news coverage follows a consistent pattern. AP wrote the first article in the research sample published concerning the Haiti earthquake that was only 14 words in length:

A strong earthquake has hit the impoverished country of Haiti where a hospital has collapsed (CB-AP News Alert, 12 Jan. 2010).

This article already reveals several of the key elements and themes used throughout. “A strong earthquake”—makes a connection to the geographical frame; “the impoverished country of Haiti” and “a hospital has collapsed”—connects to the situation of the people in Haiti (AP, 12/01/2010). These two elements were reinforced throughout the news coverage. For the first several days, AP continued to report using these themes. AP also focused on the physical limitations of the earthquake aftermath of the disaster:

Communications were widely disrupted, making it impossible to get a clear picture of damage as powerful aftershocks shook a desperately poor country
where many buildings are flimsy. Electricity was out in some places (Smith, 13 Jan. 2010).

Later that day and throughout the month Tony Winton and other AP reporters stationed in Haiti published their stories to YouTube (Winton, 13 Jan. 2010; “Images of Disaster…”, AP on YouTube, 14 Jan. 2010; “Elderly Earthquake Victims…”, AP on YouTube 17 Jan. 2010). AFP videos were also posted along with stories on Yahoo!News and MSN.com. Many of these early videos were graphic and unedited, depicting bodies lying in the street covered with white sheets and pieces of cardboard. Videos showed Haitians clearing rubble away from buildings and collapsed buildings everywhere. Many of these stories were linked to on the AP Twitter feed as well. In addition to photos and videos, AP and AFP both relied on charts and graphics that explained the location of the earthquake and the history of natural disasters in Haiti (Appendix B). Since wire services like these have separate services for text and photos, charts and graphs were often attached to stories for which a photo was not available. Wire services provided information, which was then converted into use for other publications. As a result, many of the statements made by AP and AFP are found in articles from other publications.

Another one of the first stories concerning the Haiti Earthquake aired on CNN’s Anderson Cooper 360°. It set the stage for how CNN would continue to emphasize certain aspects of the natural disaster, as well as which people would become the primary information sources for their stories:

But, first up, here's what we know right now. It is night in Haiti. Cries can be heard echoing through the streets, cries for help, cries of pain. A magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck southern Haiti just before 5:00 p.m. Eastern, the capital, Port-
au-Prince, taking a powerful hit, the full extent of the damage not yet known. (Myers and Cooper, 12 Jan. 2010).

There are two themes presented in this first statement. First, “cries for help, cries of pain,” which falls into the theme concerning the situation of Haitians on the ground in Haiti; and second, “extent of the damage not yet known,” which points to the possible environmental concerns following the earthquake (Myers and Cooper, 12 Jan. 2010). The remaining part of the story presents other consistent themes which CNN used to cover the earthquake in the first month, including the lack of communications available in Haiti, celebrity voice and U.S. responsibilities to help. Throughout this story Anderson Cooper mentions using Twitter and Skype to contact people in Haiti and receiving contact from people in Haiti this way as well. In fact they give Facebook credit for having the first photos of the disaster:

As I say, social media playing a big role here. Facebook was the first place we got pictures (Myers and Cooper, 12 Jan. 2010).

CNN commits to using technology from very early on in their coverage, and musician Wyclef Jean was interviewed in the its first Haiti earthquake related broadcast. The story of Jean’s friends and family in Haiti became one that continually dominated news coverage. In the first broadcast, Jean said that he was on the phone with a female friend in Haiti when the earthquake hit. In the same broadcast, a U.N. Official and nonprofit worker are interviewed about the conditions in Haiti, and a statement by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is played. The show ends with Anderson Cooper telling viewers that he is “on his way to catch a plane to Haiti” (Myers and Cooper, 12 Jan. 2010). He states that tomorrow he’ll hopefully be “reporting live from Haiti” (Myers and Cooper, 12 Jan.
2010). Viewers assume at this point that Cooper is leaving the set to catch a plane to Haiti—this was confirmed when Cooper broadcasts live from Haiti on January 13. All of CNN’s stories were posted on their webpage under the CNN Latin America page, which linked to CNN’s Twitter and Facebook pages (CNN Latin America Page, 2010). This allowed viewers to see some of the sources CNN was following first-hand.

The first articles published in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* on January 13 also dealt with the themes of Haiti’s poverty and the conditions of those on the ground in Haiti are present. Although earlier versions of these stories were posted to the newspapers’ respective websites, the themes of Haiti as a poverty stricken country and the environment on the ground in Haiti were emphasized. The leads of these stories also included those themes that are used throughout the coverage. Here is an excerpt from *The New York Times* article:

> A fierce earthquake struck Haiti late Tuesday afternoon, causing a crowded hospital to collapse, leveling countless shantytown dwellings and bringing even more suffering to a nation that was already the hemisphere's poorest and most disaster-prone” (Romero and Lacey, 13 Jan. 2010).

Here Haiti is “the poorest and most disaster prone” of countries with “shanty town dwellings” already crumbling, the two themes repeated here are “poverty” and “the crippled Port-au-Prince environment.” Similarly, in an example from the themes of “poverty” and condition are also present in this *Washington Post* article:

> The most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Haiti devastated parts of the impoverished island nation Tuesday, leveling a hospital in the capital, severely
damaging the U.N. headquarters and other buildings, and sending panicked residents into the streets (Branigin and Shear, 13 Jan. 2010).

This story cites the collapsed hospital mentioned in the AP article and talks about residents “in the streets” similar to the vivid picture painted by CNN in its first broadcast news story. Both these articles make similar points and provide vivid descriptions of the conditions in Haiti.

In the days following, news coverage focuses on the long-term care of the Haitian people, specifically medical aid and temporary housing. The article below from AFP talks about breakouts of disease in Port-au-Prince where multiple people are living in close confines without access to showers and other hygienic tools. Surgeons are also needed to help with the injuries of those who were trapped under debris. In this excerpt from an article a spokesman for the World Health Organization is discussing the need for surgeons:

He highlighted a ‘critical’ need for surgeons in south Haiti with an estimated 30 to 100 amputations being carried out every day in some hospitals, while supplies of anesthetics and antibiotics were also needed (“Diarrhea, measles reported among Haiti quake survivors: WHO,” 29 Jan. 2010, AFP).

This expert citation provides context, although it is not clear from the article where the expert is located. The dateline for the article is Geneva, so the reader is led to believe the reporter is speaking to a spokesperson from the WHO headquarters in Switzerland.

In the first week the news coverage focused little on long-term complications in Haiti. They deal, for the most part, with search and recovery missions and collecting aid money in the U.S. In the few days following the earthquake, U.S. coverage focuses on
how people in the U.S. can help Haiti. On January 13, the first three U.S. rescue teams leave for Haiti (“The First three US Rescue ….” 13 Jan. 2010). At this point, there are a few quotes from people in Haiti, and the majority of the information in stories is from organizations outside of Haiti. Following the earthquake the majority of communications technologies were wiped out, so only radio signals, cell phones and satellite phones could transfer messages outside of Haiti. At first, news organizations focused on interviewing many NGOs. At the beginning, relief efforts and aid operations for Haiti were used as sources concerning what was going on in Haiti. U.S.-based organizations including World Vision, Save the Children and UNICEF were discussed in several stories. These organizations provided context and history for natural disasters and poverty in Haiti. They were easier to contact at first since communicating with people in Haiti was difficult directly following the earthquake.

In the second week, beginning around January 16 through 20, the news focus changed from the physical challenges of the “earthquake’s environment” and “search and rescue efforts,” to “caring for the wounded.” It was still interlaced with stories concerning rescue missions and aid coming into Haiti, and because less people were found alive there was less being said about those who died. CNN continued to show photos of bodies, and of the surprise when someone was found alive, if they could. There was still a domestic focus on the role of the U.S. in Haiti’s recovery, but at this point many reporters were actually reporting from Haiti. In addition, many volunteers, U.S. military personnel and staff from NGOs had arrived in Haiti. These people gave reporters U.S. voices to put into their stories. The stories were more colorful and brought in more visual observations in addition to the photos and videos they might have attached to
them. Photos of death and destruction were intense during this time period in both The Washington Post and The New York Times.

Although CNN had it from early on, the “celebrity” component became increasingly present during this time period (January 16 through 20). Stories mention numerous celebrities donating money, supplies, organizing drives and encouraging Americans to donate to Haiti en masse. Britney Spears even donated a dress to a fundraiser for the cause:

Britney Spears is lending a hand, or rather a dress, to help out Haiti. A court commissioner on Friday approved a request allowing the singer to donate the dress she wore to the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards so it can be auctioned, with the proceeds going to help Haitian earthquake victims (McCartney, 23 Jan. 2010).

She was followed up by “jetloads” of donations from John Travolta, (“Travolta flies jetload of relief supplies to Haiti,” AP, 26 Jan. 2010), George Clooney and SAG President Ken Howard who organized a “telethon to raise money for earthquake-devastated Haiti” (Elber, 25 Jan. 2010) and many others who contributed in other ways.

Another shift occurs in the third week of coverage, the time period around January 29 through February 6. During this period, volunteers, some NGOs, the U.S. military, and journalists begin to pull out of Haiti and return to the U.S. This development results in several articles concerning “U.S. aid to Haiti,” “policies on U.S. foreign aid” and the “long-term needs of Haiti.” Stories concerning a U.S. aircraft carrier leaving the Port-au-Prince Harbor are published (“US carrier leaving Haitian waters,” AP, 1 Feb. 2010). At one point the U.S. stops airlifts of the injured because of a lack of resources
(Kay, 31 Jan. 10), and there is an article examining Congress’s halting of FEMA trailers to Haiti (Everson, 29 Jan. 2010). Stories concerning orphans and misuse of donated money begin to surface at the end of January as well.

Another shift occurred in the fourth week, around February 6, as the news coverage took the form of feature stories. These stories had an examined focus and emphasis on the challenges of the people of Haiti, volunteers in the field, and the stories of those who returned to the U.S. from Haiti. These stories are in-depth and pertain to a particular aspect of the earthquake recovery—like health, rebuilding, housing, poverty, orphans, security, or a particular age group—and the long-term response of the U.S. and the international community. There was also a focus on counterfeiters and the misuse of aid money. An example of this feature story approach is seen in this article from The New York Times, which depicted the unique ways New Yorkers were collecting money to send to Haiti:

As acts of philanthropy go, none of the above would rate particularly high on any measure of effectiveness. They do get points for creativity, however, which, to Courtney Martin, the 30-year-old minor-league benefactor who spawned them, is an undervalued aspect of charitable giving (Dominus, 9 Feb. 2010).

The feature stories culminate with stories on the release of U.S. Missionaries who went to Haiti and were accused by Haiti’s government of trafficking children. Haitian authorities released the group on February 11, but only after several days of news coverage. All five of the news outlets surveyed for this project covered the story, although CNN provided the most detailed coverage of the issue.
During this time many stories had a Haiti angle. CNN wrapped Former President Bill Clinton’s visit to the hospital in with the story concerning the 10 missionaries that took Haitian children to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic. Clinton’s juxtaposition with Haiti appeals to the U.S. viewer, as does the story about the 10 jailed missionaries from Kentucky. These smaller stories were examined through stories concerning broader issues. Broader issues were also examined on an individual level with specific examples of Haitians surviving the disaster and those working on the ground to rebuild the country. For example, CNN and other news organizations examined the broader issue of orphans and adoptions from Haiti, a problem that existed before the earthquake. During this time period, CNN began to interview missionaries and NGOs who work with orphans. This story provides a positive perspective on orphanages in Haiti from a career missionary working in Haiti:

So, we wanted to go look at an orphanage that is doing it right. And we found an orphanage on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, where some American missionaries are working in conjunction with the Haitian government, with the approval of the Haitian government, and with their Haitian counterparts at this orphanage (Penhaul and Gupta, 11 Feb. 2010).

These broader issues became multi-part stories for CNN, while the print publications rarely interviewed the same people on the ground in Haiti. CNN had the same experts on TV several times in one day, and several days in a row to talk about the same issue or similar issues. Although in reality there was no connection between Bill Clinton and these jailed missionaries, CNN made it clear the connections from any news story to another must be Haiti.
Summary of News Coverage and Themes

This chapter provided a thematic textual analysis of trends in coverage following the Haiti earthquake. Although this study looked at the first month of coverage, these themes and five key elements were present throughout the greater news coverage. The themes throughout the coverage included (1) Haiti as a poverty stricken country, (2) Haiti’s lack of resources, and (3) “The responses of the international community to Haiti, (4) celebrities raising support and awareness, and (5) the responsibility of the U.S. to help Haiti after the disaster. Five key elements were also found in the news coverage: interviews of local people in Haiti, quotes from the reporter’s experiences, quotes from government officials or local authorities in Haiti or the U.S., an angle to connect the story back to the U.S., and finally the explanations of the infrastructure, physical environment, including buildings, and technology, etc. There were also several shifts that were identified in the news coverage that complemented these themes. These shifts provided insight for the survey questions that were distributed to journalists and editors who worked on Haiti news stories in the first month. The news coverage shifted from concern for search and rescue operations, to a focus on the physical challenges of the earthquake and caring for the wounded. Only toward the end of the month did the coverage shift to a focus on long-term care, U.S concerns for Haiti. There was also a spillover into feature stories that drew attention to individual circumstances at the end of the first month of coverage.

With the news coverage themes and shifts in mind, a study involving a survey of journalists who covered Haiti was designed. Many of the journalists who wrote articles read for this chapter were recruited to participate in the survey research. The 27 questions
asked in the news coverage survey included questions pertaining to the five news coverage themes. Five of the journalists who took the survey were subsequently interviewed. An examination of the answers to those survey and interview questions will follow in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW FINDINGS FROM JOURNALISTS WHO COVERED HAITI

After reading the first month of news coverage following the Haiti earthquake, I made a list of journalists who were involved in this news coverage. Journalists were then emailed with a request to participate in a survey and possible follow-up interviews (Appendix C). I also contacted journalists through Facebook, Twitter and several organizational list-serves, which I subscribe to. In addition, I contacted journalists through my own professional network.

Through these methods I found ways to contact 55 journalists who were involved in the coverage of the Haiti earthquake. Of those journalists, 14 took the survey, and five were subsequently interviewed. The survey results were compared and analyzed with the themes from the news coverage in mind. The survey consisted of 27 multiple choice and short answer questions (Appendix E). Answers to the survey questions were used to formulate questions for the follow-up interviews. The online survey launched on October 3 and closed on November 10, 2010. Interviews took place between November 8 and 22, 2010.

Of the journalists surveyed, two worked for television stations, three worked for news magazines, three worked for wire services, and the remainder worked for newspapers. The survey sample included journalists who worked remotely, from the U.S. and in Haiti during the one-month time period (January 12 through February 12, 2010). Of those surveyed, three were in the U.S. during the first month of coverage, and 11 were in Haiti for a portion or all of the first month of coverage. All of the participants were given the option to participate in the study without being identified; some gave permission for their identities to be used and others did not. Not all the respondents
answered every question. Writers, editors, producers and photographers were included in the sample.

The survey responses were quite striking as they were from journalists from a variety of backgrounds. The survey responses were looked at in multiple ways. First, a qualitative analysis was done of the responses for each of the 14 respondents. Then the answers for each question were compared based on the medium of the respondents’ newswork (print, television, wire, photo, editing). They also opened windows into the technology journalists used. I compared answers based on the journalists’ locations (in Haiti and in the U.S.), and their technologies used during their work on Haiti’s earthquake aftermath. Open-ended questions were also considered in relationship to the multiple-choice questions as well as separately for each respondent. Multiple-choice question responses were tabulated and combined into statistical graphs to draw conclusions. This chapter will discuss the trends in those answers, as well as provide examples from participants’ answers.

The interviews sought to further contextualize the survey data. All the interview respondents agreed to have their names and identities used, or with a slight alteration of their identity for the research presentation. These journalists provided clarity to survey results as well as color and an understanding of the environment of Haiti during the earthquake aftermath. The five journalists interviewed were asked to think about their experiences in relationship to how they did their work, how they used technology, the challenges they faced and how they got information for stories/found photo opportunities. Of the five journalists interviewed, four were in Haiti during the one-month period. The journalists came from a variety of backgrounds: one was a multimedia producer for the
international wire service, Agence-France Presse (AFP); one was a reporter for Thompson Reuters wire service; one was a photographer for AFP; one was a reporter for Time magazine; and one was a television producer and reporter for the Public Broadcasting Station’s Religion and Ethics Newsweekly news magazine. To prepare for these interviews, I read the journalists’ weblogs, stories, Twitter feeds (which are all public record), and examined the photo, video and other visual elements that went along with those publications.

The purpose of these interviews was to discover how journalists interacted with each other, their sources, technologies and their environments. Before beginning the interviews, based off of the survey data, I expected journalists would be heavily reliant on their professional journalism networks to get work done, and very reliant on their ability to communicate with Haiti-based sources. I gathered that technology was difficult to use, and spotty in most places—but that journalists still tried to use as much technology as they could. I also gathered from the survey data that journalists used instinctual responses and worked with what they had to publish their stories—although some had more sources in Haiti and background knowledge concerning Haiti than others did to begin with. The following will show the themes present in the interviews.

This chapter also drew on information from a public event held by Georgetown University’s School of Continuing Education, “The Tragedy of Haiti,” on April 14, 2010, where three journalists discussed their experiences working in Haiti. The reporters at the April 2010 event included a reporter for National Public Radio, a producer for CNN, and a contributing reporter for CBS’s 60 Minutes. The juxtaposition of media in this panel
provided insight into the news coverage themes, and the interactions of journalists in the field with each other, technology and sources.

**Overall Survey Responses**

For a population of more than 300 journalists who went to Haiti in the first month, I was able to contact 55 journalists directly and indirectly. Of those 55, I had 19 initial respondents and 14 final respondents, yielding a response rate of 25 percent. Of the journalists surveyed (Appendix D), 36 percent of respondents (5 of 14) said they felt their news coverage/stories made a significant impact in drawing attention to the people of Haiti among people in the U.S and 43 percent (6 of 14) said it had a slight impact. This shows that journalists felt the news they published was important. When respondents stationed in Haiti were asked how difficult it was to cover the earthquake considering the challenges they faced eight of the 10 who answered said it was difficult to very difficult. Of those journalists who worked on Haiti news coverage, 10 of the 12 said they formed relationships with other journalists as a result of coverage of the crisis. In fact, several journalists passed along the survey to colleagues that also covered the Haiti earthquake aftermath.
The journalists surveyed who were stationed in Haiti (11 of the 14) were there for an average of 14 days. All were in Port-au-Prince for at least part of their visit, and most were also in areas near Port-au-Prince. Therefore, few stories were published concerning areas outside of Port-au-Prince. Because most journalists were stationed in Port-au-Prince or areas near it, so most stories were based on the challenges in the urban Haitian environment rather than the rural Haitian environment. Journalists were inadvertently limiting the access of their audience to what was going in rural areas—some of which were harder hit than Port-au-Prince. Port-au-Prince was easy to access because of the airport so many journalists landed there and did not make it outside the city.

**Challenges Brought on by the Post-Earthquake Environment**

Although many of the journalists said they “were prepared to see the worst,” for some, Haiti’s earthquake was just one of the many stories of destruction and death they have seen in their journalistic career. Journalists faced the potential occurrence of earthquake aftershocks and unstable infrastructure throughout Haiti. In newswork, reliance on “routine” news leads to the standardization of news practices (Ettema &
Whitney, 1987: 38). These standards were important, according to the journalists interviewed. Jackie Frank, a reporter for Thompson Reuter’s wire service said, “The conditions for the journalists were better than I expected, the conditions of the country were much worse that I expected.”

The challenges journalists faced in Haiti were similar to those of anyone in Haiti after the earthquake. The exception was that most journalists were not in Haiti at the time of the earthquake, but rather arrived 24 hours after the earthquake. Nicholas Kamm, a photographer for AFP, said there were two stringers in Haiti working for AFP. When AFP received news that these men were not hurt and that their families were okay, the stringers began taking photos and relaying information to the AFP Washington, D.C. Bureau. “It was difficult for them to send information until they found technology,” said Kamm. Kamm said he and two other AFP reporters joined them within two days of the earthquake.

Many reporters heard from contacts in Haiti concerning what they should expect. Frank said she was told to “Be prepared for very limited access to communications,” and to prepare “for a camping out situation.” Jay Newton-Small, a reporter for *Time* magazine, said she began her time in Haiti without contact with her newsroom except through intermittent Blackberry service. Newton-Small and Frank said they had basic crisis reporting training before going to Haiti. Frank said she participated in a survival workshop where the instructors were former British intelligence officers. While in Haiti, Frank said many of the things she learned in the workshop—such as to drink a lot of water and be aware of her surroundings—were helpful in the post-earthquake environment.
Transportation in Haiti was limited. Journalists described how crumbled buildings had smashed taxis and cars, and roads were strewn with debris. Newton-Small also described Port-au-Prince as a city of death where “Any building over four stories had pancaked.” She said people were crying everywhere, and dead bodies were everywhere. “Everybody in Haiti said and felt it was the worst thing they had ever seen in their life,” Newton-Small said, “So much death concentrated in so little space.”

Interviewees recognized the role of religion in Haitian culture as Haiti dealt with the overwhelming amount of death. Death rituals are very important in both Haitian Voodoo and Catholicism. Voodoo has a strong superstition concerning death. Unnamed and unidentified dead are often associated with negative Voodoo loas (or spirits), or even zombies (Girard, 2010: 32). For this reason following the Haiti earthquake, bodies were left in the middle of streets for days, because many Haitian's feared touching or being near unnamed dead. All the journalists interviewed found the way people interacted with the dead bodies to be somewhat disturbing, coming from an American background.

Kim Lawton, a producer and reporter for PBS’s Religion and Ethics Newsweekly news magazine, said she understood why certain areas were not covered in the news—because of the logistics of traversing the streets, through the rubble, and the limited transportation into the country. “Certain communities were ignored because of logistics,” Lawton said. She also described the challenges of getting gasoline, finding housing, buying food and getting access to electricity to contact people back to the U.S. Lawton said, “the technology made a difference in the news coverage.” During her travel into Port-au-Prince from Santa Domingo, she noticed the challenges in the rural areas where people were coming from Port-au-Prince to get food, aid and shelter. These smaller rural
communities were having a difficult time supporting the sudden increase in people as well. But few stories were reported in the news concerning these areas. Lawton said that “the roads were bad in areas outside of Port-au-Prince” from the earthquake. The earthquake’s epicenter was actually in the more rural town of Leogane, which is 16 miles outside of Port-au-Prince, but few resources were sent directly there according to Lawton. Most storied did not mention Leogane.

**Interactions Between Journalists**

The basic relationships between journalists are also important in crisis reporting. Frank arrived in Haiti a week after the earthquake. She said that although journalists shared information there was a competitive spirit among them: “I talked to other journalists, there was sharing of information, but we were still pretty competitive.” Newswork theorists note that a competitive journalism environment produces objectivity (Levy, 1981; Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 42). As journalists went out of their ways to find unique stories, the news coverage became more diversified and journalists could provide different perspectives concerning the Haiti earthquake to their audiences.

All five of the interviewed journalists interacted with other journalists during their time in Haiti. It seems, however, that their interaction changed as the focus of the news coverage changed. For example, at the beginning journalists worked hard to help each other when the news coverage was mainly about search and recovery and getting resources to the people of Haiti. Both Frank and Newton-Small recalled their interactions mainly with print journalists from other publications. Several journalists talked about the trip from the U.S. to Haiti and the different journalists that were in their travel groups flying from Miami to Santa Domingo.
Frank talked about her Reuters team and Newton-Small about other journalists from Time/Life publications. Newton-Small got to Haiti 24 hours after the earthquake. She traveled with a group of journalists from several different news organizations. She said the journalists helped each other deal with technological challenges and transportation issues. In one instance she said they exchanged resources: “we gave them transportation and they would let us use their satellite phone.” Newton-Small regularly interacted with reporters from CBS and The New York Times when she first arrived. At times, “journalists ended up pooling a lot of their resources,” she added. Many journalists worked with a team from their publication or with a couple of other publications. But several print reporters went out alone. Frank said that she “went out individually” and from time to time with “different members of the team, but they each covered different things.” Newton-Small said there were only a couple of instances where a video camera or photographer accompanied her and their news coverage complemented each other’s.

As the focus of the news changed to more “featurey” stories, and there were more journalists on the ground, this atmosphere changed. A couple print reporters said they would stay away from areas where large television news crews were, because TV crews drew crowds. Often these crowds irritated the Haitian people, specifically in areas where people had been days without food, and had not received medical care. TV news crews went to these communities looking for visual stories—but journalists noted that sometimes their attention stirred-up riots that were not there in the first place.

Newton-Small said she was very careful to listen to other reporters as well as what the local radio transmissions in Haiti said to determine what areas were safe and unsafe. Some journalists used walkie-talkies to communicate with each other while in
Haiti. She said that journalists also shared information with each other concerning the whereabouts of aid groups, government officials and medical facilities with each other, but since everything was outside, sources were easy to find. Regardless of how prepared journalists were, Frank said until they arrived in Haiti, most journalists did not understand what that post-earthquake situation would look like:

“Before we got there, we did not have an idea of what exactly we would encounter. At that point we really did not know what would happen. We did not know if there would be riots over food or water.”

While Frank and others rarely saw riots in the streets, Frank did witness protests. Newton-Small said she saw police beat a man they said was an escaped convict, and she also saw a man accused of stealing something get attacked by a mob in the street on the day she left Haiti. These journalists adapted the best they could to their environment, forming a small community of journalists. Many of them took the resources they had and did what they could with them to share as many stories as they could about the plight of the people in Haiti.

**Interacting with Sources and Gaining Information**

The process of gathering information was a little more difficult in Haiti because there were not many official numbers or statements published. This was different from previous stories produced pertaining to Haiti—such as Aristide’s ouster and the seasonal coverage of tropical storms and hurricanes. During the period 2006 to 2009 Haiti’s international news coverage had been subdued—with the exception of the news coverage of hurricanes and tropical storms (Girard, 2010).
During the earthquake, many story sources were those easiest to access. For that reason, most of the journalists were near Port-au-Prince and writing about people in Port-au-Prince during the first few weeks of coverage. As roads became more navigable, there was more access to smaller communities outside of Port-au-Prince. Stories also became more focused on long-term challenges and solutions in Haiti. This shift in news coverage was more “reconstruction” focused. Lawton was in Haiti at the end of the first month and said she tried to talk about how the religious community—based in Haiti and in the U.S.—was picking up where it had left off with programs stalled by the earthquake. Many of these religious organizations were now helping a larger percentage of the population and so they were more noticeable and vocal.

Many reporters, like Frank, were able to find government officials very easily. Frank said:

“I met people from the government in camps in an area near the national palace. A variety of people, and until you spoke with them you didn’t realize their stories.”

She said the earthquake made all people eager to tell their story, regardless of their financial status, including “doctors, lawyers and others who were poor before and had worked their ways up, and now they were poor again. People who were all the same; the earthquake was a levelizer.”

When she was looking for stories, Frank said she would try to find places where food and aid were being handed out and talk to people at those locations. Journalists said approaching people who were already receiving aid was more respectful because it did
not exploit the vulnerabilities of suffering Haitians. Frank said these situations provided them the opportunities to speak with people in a somewhat ordered environment.

Getting sources for stories was easy in Haiti because there were so many people who had lost someone close to them and they wanted to share, several survey respondents emphasized. Of those journalists surveyed, 11 (out of the 13 who responded) said they used U.S.-based sources, and 11 (out of the 14 who responded) said they used sources in Haiti. More journalists used journalists based in Haiti than journalists in the U.S. as sources of information. Seven (out of the 12 who responded to this item) communicated with journalists in Haiti, and five (out of the 10 that responded) communicated with U.S.-based journalists when gathering information for stories.

Several survey and interview respondents said they tried to write stories about areas that needed aid and had not received any yet, so that attention would be drawn to these areas. Frank said she would go to press conferences the Haitian government and NGOs gave concerning needs in certain parts of Port-au-Prince as well. Frank explained that “the Haiti Health Minister had press conferences to talk about what help was needed.
Mostly everything took place outdoors.” Newton-Small said she could see President Preval and his family camping out in front of the Presidential Palace, which had collapsed.

There was also a language barrier. Of those interviewed, four of the five spoke French, and none spoke Creole. Two of those interviewed had friends or previous connections to Haiti. Of those interviewed only one of the four had been to Haiti before the earthquake. Lawton had relationships with an orphanage near Port-au-Prince and had been to Haiti multiple times. She also made connections to Haitians through U.S.-based Haiti Diaspora and Haitian religious leaders. Others had connections that they had made in the U.S. that helped them navigate once they arrived in Haiti. Newton-Small’s roommate from college moved back home to Haiti after school. While Newton-Small was in Haiti, her friend shared contact information and helped her find drivers who knew their way around Port-au-Prince. Frank and Kamm had reporters and photographers based in Haiti that were stringers for Reuters’ and AFP (respectively). These contacts gave them an advantage that they might not have had otherwise.

Many critics accused news organizations of sending “parachute journalists” into Haiti (McDonald, 2007). It is difficult to imply these journalists went to Haiti as “parachute journalists,” with little to no knowledge because of the contacts they were able to make through Facebook and other social networking sites. These connections helped journalists to orient themselves in Haiti. Two other respondents said they got story ideas and made contacts based off what either they or people they knew posted on Facebook.
Several of those interviewed said the U.S. Military and the United Nations were a source for stories. Newton-Small said that in the second week she went to press briefings “when she could get to them,” but for the most part in the first week “everything was disorganized.” Some journalists said they heard Haiti’s Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive speak at Haiti’s Toussaint Louverture International Airport shortly after they arrived in Haiti. Danielle Dellorto, a survey respondent from CNN and senior producer for Dr. Sanjay Gupta, said her team used the Red Cross website and the websites of other NGOs like Save the Children and Doctors Without Borders, to get information on conditions in Port-au-Prince. Dellorto was in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding areas for 40 days.

**Comparing Haiti to Previous Experiences and Challenges**

Of the journalists surveyed, all but two had previous experiences covering either a natural disaster or crisis area. Respondents said they had covered a number of disasters including Florida Hurricanes, Hurricane Katrina, the 2007 Sri Lanka tsunami, 2006 Indonesia tsunami, 2005 Southeast Asia tsunami, the Gulf War, the Iraq War, U.S. wildfires, and U.S. mine collapses. While many of these situations had similarities to the Haiti earthquake aftermath, most respondents did not make comparisons between the earthquake and other natural disasters. Several indicated that the Haiti earthquake required similar coverage to these natural disasters. Interviewees said that they could not compare Haiti to other natural disasters because of the many differences and the tragic uniqueness of Haiti’s poverty and Haiti’s proximity to the U.S. Haiti is closer than Indonesia and not a domestic location like New Orleans. While a large number of
Haitians do live in the U.S., they make up a small minority of the U.S. immigrant population.

The survey also asked the question “What challenges did you face when trying to get information or research your story?” One respondent (out of the 13 who answered the question) said they had “difficulty finding unique stories,” four said they were limited by the “sources they could talk to,” 11 said they faced “technological challenges,” four said they had difficulty “coming to grips with the humanity of the disaster,” and eight said they faced “physical challenges” while covering the earthquake aftermath. Several respondents also expanded on their answers and said they had no difficulty finding “unique stories” because there were people who had lost loved ones, their homes and were in need of “someone to tell their story.” In addition, two (of the 13 respondents) wrote that additional challenges included mobility and access. They stated that drivers had difficulty navigating traffic in Port-au-Prince because of the rubble. For this reason, most journalists traveled on foot or by motorcycle throughout Port-au-Prince. Frank said even on motorcycles, “It took a very long time in traffic to get from place to place.” In order to get around Port-au-Prince, Newton-Small also said she hired a motorcycle driver to transport her “because the traffic was so bad.”

There were conflicts involving technology as well. Another respondent from a major U.S. print publication said, “There were arguments in some cases about people's cords being pulled from plugs without notice. Power became a very important commodity very quickly” (Respondent 14 Survey data, 8 Nov. 2010). The limited sources created challenges for most journalists.
At the end of the survey, respondents also shared the “sources” and events that stood out in their memory. Frank responded that what stood out to her was:

“The general patience of people in an unbelievably difficult situation, their humor and goodwill in face of difficulty. Their willingness to tell their stories - and at the same time the desperation when food was delivered - I never felt in danger, only that the desperation to get at food packets might overwhelm the crowds, me included” (Frank survey data, 26 Oct. 2010).

Frank said her ability to speak French helped her to get around, but some journalists indicated that their inability to speak Creole was a barrier to getting information at times. The majority of the Haitian population is uneducated and therefore does not speak French. Most of the journalists who were in Haiti during this time period, 10 of the 12, described their experiences as frustrating in at least one of these contexts.

In response to a question about the news production process, a reporter from The Palm Beach Post, a newspaper based in South Florida, explained the process of gathering information for a story. The reporter was in Haiti in the first week following the earthquake because her newspaper is based in South Florida and the trip was quick. She visited Port au Prince, Leogane, and Carrefour during her time in Haiti. The reporter said she went out early in the morning, and she and her fellow reporters hired drivers to get them to each location throughout the day. She said because of the limited “availability of resources,” they “drove to find sources instead of calling” (Respondent 10 survey data, 19 Oct. 2010). She stayed at Villa Creole, “a hotel where most journalists were staying, and used their Internet connection to write and email” her stories back to her newspaper office. Several other respondents mentioned using Internet technology at their hotel or
borrowing or even trading services from other news organizations (such as BGANs and satellite phones). Many respondents said they were able to use the data plans on their smart phones, specifically Blackberrys, to send stories and photos via email. This made transferring data difficult, as many areas had few working cell phone services, or the service was inconsistent. For that reason they often shared devices with each other when they found pockets where technology worked.

**Technology Use and Dependence**

One of the open-ended questions with the most interesting responses was “If you were reporting from Haiti or producing a story from a reporter based in Haiti, describe briefly the process you went about when piecing together/creating a story.” Most of the answers to this question included the use of technology. Most journalists said that technology was sparse at first, but most still used web-based technologies and cell phones to transfer information back to the U.S. Almost all the survey participants published their stories to the Internet in some form.

Lawton also said that she and her crew did some advance setup with email with Haiti-based sources before they arrived in Haiti. She said they connected with those sources “via Skype and email” once they arrived. Lawton expanded saying, “We were able to use cell phones and some email/Skype once we arrived, but had huge problems with a lack of electricity,” and cell phone coverage was “spotty.”

When asked what technologies they used to communicate with journalists while they were in Haiti, 10 of the respondents used a cell phone, 12 used satellite phones or BGANs (Broadband Global Area Networks); seven journalists used email, three used Skype (video/text conferencing program), and five used other forms of communication.
The “other” answers included SMS texting, and a news organization’s internal content management system that was accessed through the Internet.

Kamm described the process of filing photos with a satellite phone as difficult at times. Kamm said sending photos took a few minutes per photo, and that it was nice to have a laptop-sized satellite phone to work with rather than the suitcase-sized one he used covering the Gulf War in the 1980s. Sometimes technology was slow, or he did not have Internet access.

Concerning the main technology source journalists used to gather information, four (of the 12 who responded) said they used Facebook, four (of the 11 who responded) used blogs, five (of the 11 who responded) used Twitter, 12 (of the 12 who responded)
used other news organizations’ websites. Twitter and news websites overlapped in respondents’ answers. Some respondents listed the other technology sources they used, including Flickr, list-serves, and the websites of organizations working in Haiti like the International Red Cross, as well as church or missions organizations.

Lawton said that her job in Haiti was different without free use of technology. “Here in the U.S., I rely on online resources most of the time,” Lawton said, “in Haiti I was very limited by the technological infrastructure.” Although Lawton was not feeding stories to live television, she said she had to get used to just going somewhere and hoping she could talk to someone—rather than setting up the appointment—because there was no way to contact people in Haiti in advance.

Sharing Haiti, Sharing News

When journalists shared news, they used technology as a major tool. The survey found that six (out of 14 respondents) used a satellite phone, five sent emails, eight used a cell phones and four texted their newsrooms in the U.S. with information. M.G. Sherry, a multimedia producer for Agence France-Presse, was in the U.S. posting stories and photos to the web that were then distributed to subscriber websites including Yahoo!News and Google News. In her survey answer, Sherry put the process of translating what reporters and photographers were sending her into context:

“For people on the production side in the states - it was hard to get a sense of the challenges our reporters were facing. We did our best to use as much of the content that they provided as we could, but sometimes a feature story would come in and there were no matching images, or the images would come two days later” (Sherry survey data, 12 Oct. 2010).
As those in the field faced challenges, their colleagues in the U.S. attempted to translate what they were sending back. For some, their efforts were more successful than others. Several respondents said the longer they were in Haiti, the more technology became available, but at the same time, resources were still scarce.

By the second week, there were twice as many news crews and reporters in Haiti trying to use the available resources. Kamm worked with Sherry, but was in Port-au-Prince sending photos back to the U.S. He said he mainly used a satellite phone, and some emails to send information back (Kamm survey data, 13 Oct. 2010). Sherry said she understood the challenges these groups were facing and did the best to produce a product for the web with what she had:

“It seemed unjustified to complain to the people working in-country about the lack of coordination, but this hampered our ability to put together the best possible multimedia packages” (Sherry survey data, 12 Oct. 2010).

She said there was sometimes a 16-hour delay between when photos were sent and when she received them.
Newton-Small said in addition to reporting, she was constantly “tweeting” over her Blackberry. She said not until halfway through her time in Haiti did she realize that her Twitter account was linked to her Facebook account. She said people were concerned about some of the things she posted on Facebook—and they commented. For example, in one entry she said she had never seen that many dead bodies, or mass graves before. Her technology use connected her personal network to her experiences in Haiti. In this case her personal life overlapped with her professional life. Other journalists expressed how friends and family helped them to connect with sources in Haiti via Facebook.

**Personal Stories: The U.S. Haiti Connection**

Journalists’ personal lives were crossing into their professional lives online and on the ground in Haiti. Often the human element of the earthquake overtook the journalists. Some gave first person accounts in their stories and others tried their best to maintain a safe distance. When asked how invested they were in the news coverage of the Haiti earthquake, only five said they were “invested” to “very invested” in the coverage. Although many journalists who participated in the study indicated that they were invested, all those interviewed conveyed that they felt covering the Haiti earthquake was within the bounds of their journalism career, and for that reason they had a responsibility to do the best they could to share the things they saw with their audiences.

Several of the journalists shared stories of connections they made with people in Haiti. Many expressed the sadness they faced as they met people who had lost loved ones, the overwhelming sense of hopelessness, and the smells that lingered with them for moths after the earthquake was over. Newton-Small said she could not eat fish for several
months after she returned to the U.S. from Haiti. She said this is because the dead bodies in Haiti smelled like fish.

Frank met one woman who had taken in 20 children left orphaned. The woman had lost her two own children in the earthquake:

“One woman who lost her child. She was a neighborhood organizer and took in 20 children who had lost their families. They were all living under a tarp. “

Frank said she quickly formed a relationship with this woman and her newly formed family. She said the driver she had while in Haiti helps her keep in touch with the woman. Frank texts him and he relays the messages to the woman. Frank also sends her money every now and then. She thinks this is a unique relationship—and it has helped her to remain connected to the experiences she faced in Haiti.

Newton-Small said there were some days she and her photographer would fill up their pockets with energy bars to hand out to people who they interviewed or who gave them information:

“We had to be very careful when we were handing them something—because in Haiti if one person gets something, everyone thinks they should get it too. We would discreetly slip the bar into his hand, and we had an understanding that he would then slip it into his pocket and not show anyone else.”

Newton-Small said she learned this after handing out her business cards to people in a crowded Port-au-Prince street. When she ran out of cards, people became hostile to her and to those who had received business cards—everyone wanted one. It didn’t matter that the business cards were just pieces of paper. These experiences shaped the way that she interacted with sources and other journalists in her time there as well.
Covering Haiti Since the Earthquake

Many of these journalists have returned to Haiti to cover the recent cholera epidemic and the November 2010 elections. As Haiti continues to rebuild, can it be expected that news organizations will continue to cover Haiti in this frame? Will Haiti remain newsworthy? Journalists said they are not sure—it depends on what happens in Haiti. CNN still maintains its coverage on its Haiti Country Page (CNN Haiti Country Page, 2010). Frank and Newton-Small said their news organizations are doing routine updates concerning developments and reconstruction in Haiti. Sherry said reporters from AFP are still making monthly trips to Haiti, and other journalists (six out of the 14 surveyed) said they had been back to Haiti since the first month they were there.

Since January, news organizations have continued to cover the plight of Haiti, but not to the extent that they did in the month directly following the disaster, according to Sherry:

“Since the earthquake, we’ve been having a lot of coverage in preparation for the Haitian election. We followed all of the major weather systems and impact in Haiti, we touch on the reconstruction situation once a month, and when the cholera outbreak began we sent support staff into Haiti. There have been two rotations of teams that have gone to Haiti in the last month.”

All the journalists interviewed said they hope things get better for the people of Haiti, and that their news coverage continues to make people more aware of the country’s long-term needs. They also said technology use has been much easier since the first month.

These surveys and interviews collected and contextualized the way journalists worked in Haiti in the first month following the January 12 earthquake. From this data we
can determine that in the wake of the natural disaster, journalists used previous experiences covering crisis situations to frame their practices. They interacted with each other in a way that was competitive but also supportive of each other. Journalists were mindful of their sources but also used what was available to them and made the best of it. They also used the best technologies they could under the circumstances, and worked within the constraints of the post-earthquake environment.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH THEMES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Haiti earthquake of January 12, 2010 killed approximately 300,000 people and left thousands injured and homeless. Adversity has plagued Haiti since its early history with opposing military coups ruling for decades, and even more recently with an influx of named hurricanes and tropical storms. All of these elements contributed to the challenges journalists faced as well as the themes that were used to cover the aftermath of the earthquake.

Haiti provided a difficult context for journalists to work in, even before the earthquake, and the earthquake further limited the access to technology and the ability of journalists to interact with sources. There were pre-existing conditions before the earthquake that made Haiti a difficult country to cover in the news. The culture, the unique Creole language and the lack of technology on the island were three that journalists mentioned repeatedly in both surveys and interviews. Most of the journalists surveyed and interviewed said they went to Haiti expecting to experience a conflation of these previous circumstances in addition to crisis conditions, and their expectations were confirmed.

The goal of this study was to understand if the newswork of journalists was dependent on technology, and if journalists were more or less likely to cover certain stories as a result. This study examined how journalists interacted with their sources and other journalism professionals, and the challenges of a post-earthquake environment. The data gathering for this project consisted of three parts. First, I conducted an inventory, or thematic textual analysis of news stories through online sources and databases to look for five themes concerning the Haiti earthquake. This qualitative textual analysis provided a
guide for the surveys and interviews then conducted with journalists. I surveyed a total of 14 journalists who were either stationed in Haiti or worked with journalists in Haiti in the month following the earthquake. I subsequently interviewed five of the survey respondents. Each portion of the study informed the next.

From the surveys and interviews, I found that journalists lived the themes which came across in the news coverage. When journalists arrived in Haiti they saw poverty, experienced a lack of resources, and saw the positive impact the international community had in Haiti. They used those themes in the stories they wrote, and the longer they were there the more they expanded their stories to include the U.S. aid work in Haiti—the donations of celebrities and U.S. citizens.

Through this research process, I found that the challenges associated with newsgathering and technology could not be separated. I also found that journalists went into survival mode, meaning they often used whatever resources they could to write a story, maneuver through Port-au-Prince, and communicate with their people from their news organizations both in Haiti and the U.S. For that reason this discussion of the research findings will focus on four key themes in the news coverage of Haiti: technology use, journalistic interactions with each other, interactions with sources, and the challenges presented after the earthquake.

**Technology Use or Dependency**

Technology presented obstacles for journalists, but that did not stop them from using it. Survey respondents and interviewees all used technology during their quest for stories either before they arrived in Haiti, or during their time there. Technology made sharing stories and gathering information easier. Most journalists surveyed said that
technology was sparsely available at first, but most still used web-based technologies and cell phones to transfer information back to the U.S. In many instances, the availability of technology increased as they received more resources from their news organizations.

The average journalist surveyed was in Haiti for 14 days. Most who arrived within the first three to five days said they had little to no technology available. Under normal circumstances, as reporters become more avid users of online media, time and space constraints become less of an issue. However, that idea did not entirely apply in this crisis-reporting situation. Technology in Haiti was already limited by its infrastructure. While there was flexibility to use many “digital systems for reporting, writing, file sharing, and printing” these multiple platforms were all dependent upon the availability of technologies (Klinenberg, 2005: 50). Most reporters could only depend on the technology they brought with them to Haiti. Journalists described using mainly web-based technologies to send information back to U.S.-based publications, including email, blogs, and web-based content management systems. Journalists described using Skype, satellite phones, smart phones and email to communicate while in Haiti with both sources in Haiti and contacts in the U.S. Although many of these technologies can provide detailed communication, like Skype video chat, journalists were more likely to rely on the most basic technologies for communication while in Haiti.

Although journalists were able to tell many stories and bring attention to the needs of the Haitian people, there is no way to measure the direct impact of those stories. There is also no way to determine the specific impact of Internet publications. Journalists used Twitter and other social networking websites while they were in Haiti—when they could. Many journalists said they received comments and story ideas from people
through these social media websites. Most journalists had intermittent access to Internet at hotels they were staying at or through Broadband Global Area Networks (BGANs) or satellite phones. Few made use of Facebook a priority once they got to Haiti because it required Internet access. Some journalists were able to use their Blackberrys to send messages to Twitter and Facebook. These journalists described having to make connections without the convenience of Internet communication as difficult, but others said it did not change the way they did their jobs much at all.

One interviewee who has been a journalist for more than 30 years said he sometimes missed being able to send his photo film back to the U.S. with someone or mailing it to his news organization. Before satellite phones could transfer high-resolution digital files, film was the best way to transport photos. He had difficulty sending his digital files back quickly. He said sometimes the technology was slow, or he was in a place without Internet access. This nostalgia for not having to depend on the Internet or satellite phones was not shared by others. Although many journalists were frustrated by the limits of technology, most felt it provided them with the ability to share their stories and communicate with their newsrooms more fluidly than they could have without it.

Do these remarks by journalists imply technological dependence? Are technologies taking the place of journalistic skills? It seems rather that technology is a crutch at times, but most of the time it appears to provide additional lines for journalistic communications practices that were already in place before. In crisis coverage, journalists’ survival instincts kicked in regardless of whether or not the technology was working. Many times journalists relied on each other to acquire the technology they needed, using the networks of sources and journalists that were available to them.
Journalism Networks and Newwork

Journalists interacted with each other out of necessity and habit. Historically, newwork studies have looked at how journalists interact with each other and do their work (Ettema & Whitney, 1987: 31-50). Following the Haiti earthquake, as journalists needed less from each other they became less dependent on each other. Most of the relationships interviewees formed were professional. Journalists come to know what is considered good practice through informal processes of interpretive communities (Zelizer, 1993) and structural relationships within networks (Cross & Parker, 2004). In Haiti, journalists noticed when other journalists pushed these norms or did things that could be considered unjournalistic or even unethical. For this reason, some journalists were critical of those journalists who practiced their craft outside the parameters of shared journalistic practice.

Journalists interacted with each other as part of a network while in Haiti. They provided each other with camaraderie in a foreign country as well as resources—since resources were limited. Journalists who worked at the same news organization sought help from each other, and journalists who traveled to Haiti together also depended on each other. Journalists also made note of when other journalists contributed to civil unrest. In some instances, journalists thought their fellow journalists spurred on the unrest, while others thought it brought much needed attention to the unrest.

In the first chapter of this project I suggested, as Zelizer (1993) has, that journalism “is becoming more collaborative.” That collaboration took certain forms in the context of the Haiti earthquake as journalists from multiple news organizations and agencies worked in the field to provide insider information to the public. Journalists
worked together, but also worked as individuals to get directions, information and share resources. Sometimes this meant they wrote or produced similarly themed stories, but overall journalists said there was a healthy spirit of competition. From the survey and interview data I determined that media contributed not only to the news network of journalists, but also to the network of sources they used.

**Story Formation and Sourcing**

Media is a key player in the effectiveness of post-disaster response (Coppola, 2006). Journalists agreed that although they did not always see a result from their coverage, the amount of money raised and the prolonged coverage of Haiti through the remaining year suggests that the people of Haiti are now a major concern to the international community. These journalists contributed to the information which was conveyed through stories. When sources were exhausted or thought to be too similar to other sources, journalists looked for new ideas and the stories became more “featurey.” As journalists came to Haiti, each one had a different background and a different interest. Journalists from different news organizations had different formats and therefore their sources were different.

Journalists gained sources while they were in Haiti that were then used in future stories concerning Haiti. As relationships began to form between journalists and their sources, the trust between them deepened. As these relationships deepened so did the content and details of their news stories.

**Constraints and Physical Limitations in a Post-Earthquake Environment**

Those who had been to Haiti before were not at an advantage in the crisis situation, as the earthquake disaster area was not recognizable even to most native
Haitians. Some journalists said working in Haiti was similar to other work they had done, while others had never experienced the gravity of the situation in Haiti. Journalists who took the survey did not claim to be entirely familiar with Haiti’s history, but many were unfamiliar with its culture, religion and pre-earthquake conditions. Most of the journalists had no prior experience in Haiti, but most had enough background knowledge to understand particular elements of the culture before their trip. Two of the five people interviewed received some sort of disaster training; one took an intensive crisis preparation course and the other CPR and first aid courses. Three of the four journalists who were in Haiti spoke French, but none spoke Creole. Only one of the four had been to Haiti before the earthquake. Could these journalists be considered “parachute journalists” (MacDonald, 2007), sent in to do “dramatic” coverage, and into areas they had little knowledge of?

Most journalists interviewed said they were able to gather a lot of information before they went to Haiti. They acknowledged that there were other journalists in Haiti who were not familiar with the culture and caused problems as a result. Journalists said they went to Haiti knowing of the extreme poverty and fragile infrastructure that existed here even before the earthquake. Many said they could see some of the improvements Haiti was making, for example “trash pick-up” programs that were being used for body removal and disposal. Although many stories talked about the ability of the Haitian government to ask for help, few talked about the Haitian government’s work to alleviate problems in Haiti following the earthquake.

There was a lack of resources. Journalists had to bring their own food, technology and water to Haiti. So during the news coverage, unlike a large number of Haitians,
journalists had food, aid, shelter and transportation. Journalists also had money to purchase gasoline, water, food and shelter. These were all things that the majority of Haitians were not able to get very easily. With a large percentage of people unemployed and homeless before the earthquake, the situation was only made worse. Many journalists did not share their resources with Haitians, for fear of starting a riot. Many bartered with their sources for information, some were discreet and others were not.Regardless of how relationships were formed with sources, sometimes those relationships influenced the ability of journalists to get information, or create information—as in the case of some television news crews. Some journalists acknowledged that these bargaining tactics could be considered unusual practices in journalism in the U.S., but are quite common in war zones and areas of mass devastation.

Journalists talked about the international people they encountered in Haiti. Several people mentioned international U.N. workers, Dutch medical professionals and French aid workers being present. M.G. Sherry, an AFP multimedia producer talked about how stories about Haiti were updated from all over the world. For example, AFP received stories updated with information from the World Health Organization, and Red Cross/Crescent Society headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Jackie Frank from Thompson Reuters said she worked with other journalists employed by Reuters from several different countries who had also come to Haiti to cover the aftermath.

Based on the survey and interview responses it is clear that journalists had contacts in Haiti. Many went down in teams that included journalists who had been to Haiti before. Some had friends and contacts in Haiti and others had contacts in the U.S. that connected them to Haitians. In addition, the NGOs and religious organizations in
Haiti provided information to journalists. These contacts gave some journalists an advantage they might not have had otherwise. One journalist said people posted comments on her Facebook page when she posted that she was in Haiti. She contacted some of these people and used them as story ideas and sources. The earthquake’s epicenter was actually in the more rural town of Leogane, which is 16 miles outside of Port-au-Prince. Only two survey respondents visited there. Only one said she made it to the rural areas of Haiti for a long period of time (in this case for more than two days).

Why did few journalists make it to the rural areas outside of Haiti? Most were stationed in Port-au-Prince or areas near it. This shows that journalists were inadvertently limiting the access of their audience to what was going in rural areas—some of which were harder hit than Port-au-Prince. Port-au-Prince was accessible because of its airport so many journalists landed there and never left the urban areas of the city.

**News Coverage Themes and Journalists**

Although survey and interview respondents were not asked whether or not they intentionally framed their stories with particular themes, several themes were present in their Haiti news coverage. These are the five news themes I discovered in the news coverage: (1) Haiti as a poverty stricken country, (2) Haiti’s lack of resources, (3) the responses of the international community to Haiti (De Mause, 2010; Palser, 2010), (4) “celebrities” urging or sending support for Haiti, (5) and the responsibility of the U.S. to help Haiti. These themes present in the stories journalists produced reflected journalists’ lived experiences on the ground in Haiti in the post-earthquake environment.

Although I noticed the celebrity perspective as something key in the news coverage, none of the journalists mentioned contact with celebrities or contacting
celebrity sources while they were in Haiti. One of the journalists, based in the U.S. during the month after the earthquake, said she saw more stories written by journalists in the U.S. concerning celebrity motivations and the U.S. response. None of the journalists based in Haiti mentioned meeting up with U.S. celebrities. Many U.S.-based journalists looked for ways to capitalize on the earthquake circumstances, by finding local stories that connected to Haiti.

In their survey answers, journalists said that they felt invested in the news coverage, and that they felt a journalistic responsibility to cover the earthquake to the best of their ability. I don’t think this responsibility and investment directly translates into the theme of responsibility that was found in the news coverage themes. It does show a direct connection to including information to interest a U.S. audience. Many journalists looked for ways to connect stories to the U.S. audience, by interviewing American aid workers and bringing attention to the actions of the U.S. Military. A U.S. connection could direct Americans to watch or read news stories about Haiti. Those stories could lead to Americans sending money or aid to Haiti. This is an indirect connection that shows Americans gaining concern for Haitians. And it also shows the journalists’ goal to appeal to a U.S.-based audience. All these journalists knew their audience and so they looked for stories that would appeal to that audience.

**Limitations and Future Research**

While this study accomplished its goals, it revealed many more questions for future study. This study provided a limited view into the professional practices of those journalists who covered the Haiti earthquake aftermath. In my research I found more than 300 journalists who wrote about, videoed, blogged about or otherwise documented Haiti.
This does not include those who “Tweeted” or posted on Facebook. This study represents only 14 of the 300 plus journalists involved in the coverage. The survey and interview data provided a broad spectrum of these professional experiences, but it only skimmed the surface.

For future research, I would like to expand on this project and look at a broader sample of the population of journalists who covered the Haiti earthquake. That could require the backing of a research institution that journalists are familiar with such as Poynter or Pew. It would also be beneficial to conduct focus groups with these journalists, a contextual analysis of publications by those journalists, and then follow-up with those journalists a second time concerning what the stories they wrote about and produced.

There were also unforeseen challenges while conducting this research. The sample of participants was small in relationship to the possible sample population. I was only able to obtain contact information for 55 journalists. I initially contacted 30 journalists, and several of those journalists contacted other journalists. There is no way to know how many people actually were invited to participate in the survey, however, 15 initially completed the survey. Four other journalists started the survey but never completed it. Of the 15 completed survey responses, one respondent was asked by his news organization to withdraw from the survey. The four who did not finish the survey were journalists who gave similar reasons for not completing the survey. This meant there were then only 14 final survey respondents.

I believe this resulted directly from controversies in the news media involving statements made by Rick Sanchez, formerly of CNN, and NPR’s Juan Williams in Fall
2010. Both journalists were let go after they made statements that were considered politically incorrect while speaking to other news organizations. The survey respondent who withdrew worked for a cable news organization, which changed its policy on making comments to outside organizations in early October shortly after these events. As a producer who traveled to Haiti within 24 hours of the earthquake, he had been helpful providing background information about Haiti as early as June 2010. His withdrawal limited my sample as well. Before his organization’s policy changed, he said he would gladly pass along the survey to his coworkers and answer any follow-up questions. He said that the new policy at this company required that any outside researcher contact the company’s public relations department for prior approval before exchanging communication with individual reporters, videographers or producers. The PR department required a separate and lengthy review process, which did not correspond with the time constraints of this study. With this in mind, for future research, I would like to get that approval to meet with the people from this news organization so that these journalists could participate in the study. This would increase the number of survey respondents who worked for television stations.

It would also be interesting to visit Haiti and get a feel for the news sources in the country. This investigation of sources could look at two components: the news organizations in operation in Haiti (U.S.-based, Haiti-based and international publications), and it could trace the relationships between reporters and their newsrooms in the U.S. In addition, to expand on the study it would be interesting to visit some of the sources that journalists used in Haiti and learn about their connections to the U.S.
I would also like to further explore how journalists used social media by looking at how social media practices created additional bridges between their personal and professional lives. The blurring of the personal and professional appears to be one place where the roles of journalists were blurred during the coverage of the Haiti earthquake.

It would also be interesting to compare the coverage of the earthquake aftermath to the coverage of other natural disasters with similar connections to the U.S.; perhaps in Latin American countries. I would like to look at the ways in which the coverage of the Haiti earthquake changed over the year, since events like the cholera epidemic and elections in November caused the news coverage to fluctuate.

Lastly, I’d like to further explore the celebrity aspect of the Haiti news coverage—both in relationship to journalists acting like celebrities and the coverage of celebrities joining together to raise money for Haiti. Two ways to examine this could be to see how often journalists were mentioned and create a social network web graph of the coverage. All of these ideas could build on the body of newswork studies and models of crisis communications.

**Conclusions**

This study determined that the work of journalists is not entirely dependent on technology use, but sometimes technology limits journalists' abilities to communicate in crisis situations. I determined that journalists were more or less likely to cover certain stories as a result of technology use or availability, and it affected their ability to connect with initial sources and their newsrooms in the U.S. This study showed how journalists interacted with their sources, other journalism professionals, and the challenges they faced in the post-earthquake environment. The news coverage helped to determine the
types of questions to ask of the journalists and those questions yielded a comprehensive look at the context in which journalists worked.

Many lessons can be learned from this study. First, it is vital that news organizations provide their journalists with the skills they need in a crisis-reporting situation. Journalists need these skills so they do not entirely depend on advanced technologies to maintain communication lines between themselves and their newsrooms. A natural disaster creates an uncertain environment, and things can change constantly in a crisis situation. Mobile technologies, like satellite phones, must provide the journalist a way to work regardless of these changes. In addition, journalists must understand the local culture and how it uses technology. They must have an idea of how using cameras will affect the people they are interviewing. They must also understand if the infrastructure will support particular technologies. Any training journalists have that will teach them how to deal with crisis situations will be to their advantage as well.

In education and training of journalists and crisis communicators, it is useful for people to understand the possible challenges and limitations they will face. While this study explains some of the limitations in the case of the Haiti earthquake, journalists should be able to prepare better for future natural disaster situations by reflecting on and understanding the challenges of the Haiti earthquake. While technology can provide resources in these challenges, it can also create additional challenges for journalists. Journalists are only as successful if they use all the resources they have to gather information to the best of their ability. They must take risks, but also understand the limitations they have in a post-disaster environment. In concluding this research study, the hope is that journalists will apply the experiences of the journalists included in this
study to their personal knowledge and thus gain a deeper understanding of crisis reporting.

This study reaffirmed the idea that journalists must think on their feet and go outside of their comfort zone to tell the story. Technology cannot replace journalistic drive. With that in mind, the study recommends that journalists from the beginner to the advanced level of experience be trained from early in their career as to how to cover a post-disaster environment. First, they should receive extensive training with technology. This training should be done with the most primitive technology they would have available, as well as the most advanced. Journalists could be given simulations where they will have limited resources, and then given the opportunity to think about how to handle those in advance. Secondly, journalists should know what they might need in a post-disaster environment and have those supplies and resources ready. While many journalists keep a kit that they take with them on reporting assignments, that kit should be built with the post-disaster environment in mind. If a reporter has a beat, he or she should keep contact numbers and addresses typed up on paper in case technology fails or there is not electricity available. Thirdly, journalists should think of sources that they can reach without technology first, and use technology to find sources and verify information second. Too often, the Internet and online databases are relied on to verify a number of facts. Journalists also rely on other news organizations' publications online to verify information. These are great secondary sources, but journalists should find other ways to verify information if they cannot use the Internet. Some of the best and most genuine reporting can be done when journalists do not rely heavily on web-based sources to get information.
This study provided a substantial look into the use of technology by journalists to do newswork, including the use of social networking websites. It provided an examination of the gap in crisis communications literature concerning the role of media professionals in the coverage of international natural disasters. This research project found that journalists used the sources they had access to in order to tell the best stories they could. Covering a natural disaster is not easy. Journalists faced challenges, alongside the people of Haiti in the earthquake aftermath. Their work did not depend solely on technology, but rather their ability to improvise, work together, and do their craft to the best of their ability under the circumstances they found themselves in.
APPENDIX A: FIRST DAY OF HAITI EARTHQUAKE NEWS COVERAGE WORDLE

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE OF HAITI'S NATURAL DISASTERS

Associated Press Archive - Wednesday, January 13, 2010
Author/Byline: The Associated Press
Some of the worst natural disasters to batter Haiti:

-- 1770: Strong earthquake devastates Port-au-Prince in then French colony.

-- 1842: Earthquake destroys Cap-Haitien and other cities in northern Haiti and Dominican Republic.

-- 1935: Unnamed storm kills more than 2,000 in Haiti before moving on to Florida as hurricane, where 400 die.

-- 1946: Magnitude-8.1 quake strikes Dominican Republic and Haiti, causing tsunami that kills 1,790 people.

-- 1954: Hurricane Hazel kills hundreds in Haiti.

-- 1963: Hurricane Flora leaves more than 6,000 dead in Haiti and Cuba.


-- 1998: Hurricane Georges destroys 80 percent of Haiti’s crops while killing more than 400.

-- May 2004: Three days of heavy rains cause floods that kill more than 2,600.

-- September 2004: Tropical Storm Jeanne causes flooding and landslides that kill 1,900 and leave 200,000 homeless in Gonaives, Haiti’s third-largest city.

-- October 2007: Tropical Storm Noel triggers mudslides and floods, killing at least 57 Haitians.

-- August and September 2008: Three hurricanes and tropical storm kill some 800 in Haiti, devastate crops and cause $1 billion in damage.

-- Jan. 12, 2010: Magnitude-7.0 quake levels buildings in Port-Au-Prince, raising fears of tens of thousands of deaths.

This is the initial recruitment email that I sent to 30 journalists. Many of those journalists then forwarded the email along to their coworkers and friends. Shortened versions of this were posted with the survey link to Twitter and Facebook.

Dear (insert name here),

I am working on my master's thesis project at Georgetown University. I am conducting a study on how journalists used technology to communicate and do newswork during the January 2010 Haiti earthquake. I am looking for journalists, including editors, reporters, producers, photographers and others who put together stories in the first month of the crisis. Participation requires completion of a short, seven-minute survey and a possible follow-up interview. If you know of other journalists who worked on stories about Haiti during this time feel free to share this study with them. I will be sending out the survey in early October, and would love it if you could pass it along at that time as well. I am trying to get around 15 to 30 participants. Thank you so much in advance for participating.

Sincerely,

Mimi Wiggins Perreault
Mfw29@georgetown.edu
561-670-1008
**APPENDIX D: JOURNALISTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS**

Initials were used and aliases were used for those who did not wish to be identified in the study. The shaded rows indicated the journalists who also participated in a follow up interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Location of Coverage</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Position in organization:</th>
<th>Work they did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Print-newspaper</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>*National Newspaper</td>
<td>Based in Miami</td>
<td>print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Frank</td>
<td>Print-wire</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>Thomson Reuters</td>
<td>Correspondent/Editor</td>
<td>print, video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Ghosh</td>
<td>Print-magazine</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>Deputy International Editor</td>
<td>print, web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay Newton-Small</td>
<td>Print-magazine</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>TIME Magazine</td>
<td>correspondent</td>
<td>print, blogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Print-newspaper</td>
<td>Carrefour, Port-au-Prince, haiti</td>
<td>The Washington Post U.S. Coast Guard Reservist Magazine</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac D. Pacheco</td>
<td>Multimedia-online and magazine</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>The Washington Post Magazine</td>
<td>Editor-in-Chief</td>
<td>editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Print-newspaper</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>The Washington Post</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>print, video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne</td>
<td>Print-newspaper</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>The Palm Beach Post</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>print, print, blogging, photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Lantigua</td>
<td>Print-newspaper</td>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Kamm</td>
<td>Photography-wire</td>
<td>Petion Ville</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
<td>Photo Editor/Photographer</td>
<td>photography</td>
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<tr>
<td>MG Sherry</td>
<td>Multimedia-wire</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
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<td>editing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim Lawton</td>
<td>Television-Public</td>
<td>Leogane, Port-au-Prince, US</td>
<td>&quot;Religion &amp; Ethics NewsWeekly&quot;</td>
<td>Managing Editor/Correspondent</td>
<td>video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Dellorto</td>
<td>Television-Cable</td>
<td>Des Pinos, Port-au-Prince, US</td>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Senior Producer for Dr. Sanjay Gupta</td>
<td>video, blogging, editing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a person who did not wish to have their news organization identified.
APPENDIX E: ONLINE SURVEY

The next 15 pages include the survey launched on SurveyMonkey.com for this research project on October 3, 2010. The survey was open through November 10, 2010.

Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

Informed Consent Document

1. Georgetown University: Consent to Participate in Research
   For Survey

   Study Title: “Covering the Haiti Earthquake of 2010: how journalists used technology to capture the conditions of Haiti in the aftermath”

   Investigator: Mildred Frances Perreault (Mimi Perreault) Phone: 561-670-1008
   Advisor: Dr. Kimberly Melitzer

   You are invited to consider participating in a research study to investigate how journalists went about covering the Haiti earthquake, which occurred on January 10, 2010. This page will describe the purpose and nature of the research, the possible risks and benefits associated with it and your rights as a participant. If you decide to participate, please enter your name where indicated at the end of this form.

   This research will look at the actions of journalists during the crisis. You are being asked to participate because you are a journalist who played some part in the coverage of the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake. You are one of approximately 40 journalists being surveyed for this research project. The information on this page pertains only to the online survey portion of the research. Participants may be asked to participate in interviews as a follow-up to the survey. A separate consent form will be filled out by the participant at that time.

   After this consent form is completed, a survey with a set of pre-determined questions will follow. All answers will be kept in a password protected file or in the safe along with any other documents containing the participants’ answers and personal information. This survey will concern the journalist’s involvement with the coverage of the Haiti earthquake. The survey will be conducted online through a secure survey. I will be the only person with access to the password for the survey results. Following completion of the survey, I may follow up with particular participants and ask more detailed questions about the survey results. The survey will be conducted through Survey Monkey or another online site. You should complete the survey in a manner and form that fits with your schedule.
**Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake**

If you choose to make comments critical of the company you work for, or any other organization, be aware you could be taking a risk that may affect your future career. You could possibly face anger from those in Haiti or even the journalism community. There may be other risks, which I cannot predict. If you agree to participate in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you—however, information gathered in this study could benefit the field of communications studies. Your name and news organization will not be used without your permission. You must state whether or not you wish to have your name or news organization used when surveyed. Even if you do not wish your name to be used, I cannot entirely guarantee confidentiality. All information will be secured and password protected on a pen drive, and placed in a safe and the results of all online survey’s will be password protected on the survey website. I will be the only person with access to the safe. If asked to be removed from this study, any information you have supplied will be immediately removed from my data, and destroyed.

Call Mimi Perreault at (561) 670-1008 or E-mail her at mfp29@georgetown.edu during regular business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST) if you have questions or concerns regarding the study.

For more information on your rights as a research subject contact the Georgetown University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (202) 687-1506 during regular business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST).

**CONSENT OF PARTICIPANT**
I have read the information provided in this Informed Consent Document. I understand that by typing my name below and clicking submit, I am agreeing to participate in this study. I have contacted the researcher with all my questions, and all my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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Upon submitting this document the subject will receive an E-mail copy of this form for his/her records, and the original will become part of the subject’s research record. All information will be locked in a secure file drawer. Please contact mfp29@georgetown.edu with any further questions.
Covered of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

2. Please indicate whether you agree to have your full name and/or your organization’s name used alongside your comments in the final research document that results from this study.

- YES (If you change your mind about this at any point, please let the researcher know)
- NO
- ALTERATION
## Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

### Informed Consent Document continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Name or pseudonym to be used?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. first name only, initials</td>
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<tr>
<td>only, random pseudonym,</td>
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<tr>
<td>only work position/title, only</td>
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<td>institutional affiliation etc.)</td>
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Page 4
## Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

### Participant Information

Please answer survey questions considering the month directly following the Haiti earthquake January 12-February 12, 2010) and your role in its coverage.

1. **Please state your name, position and news organization**
   - a. Name: 
   - b. News organization: 
   - c. Position in organization: 
   - d. Email address and phone number for follow-up:

2. **What type of news coverage of the Haiti Earthquake were you involved with? Check all that apply.**
   - a. Print
   - b. Video
   - c. Blogging
   - d. Editing/production
   - e. Other (please specify) 

3. **Were you in Haiti during this time?**
   - a. Yes
   - b. No
Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

1. If you were in the US, please describe how you interacted with reports from Haiti? Check all that apply.

   a. Edited someone else's work
   b. Produced stories based on information from Haiti
   c. Helped journalists plan logistics
   d. Relayed messages from Haitians based in the US to those in the Caribbean
   e. Other (please specify): 


## Location of Journalists

1. If you were in Haiti, approximately when did you arrive in Haiti?

   - Date arrived: DD / MM / YYYY

2. How long did you stay?

   - Number of days: 

3. Where were you stationed? (Region, city, country, etc.)
Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

How did you communicate?

1. What technologies did you use to communicate with journalists while you/they were in Haiti? Check all that apply.
   a. Cell phone
   b. Satellite phone
   c. Email
   d. Skype
   e. Other computer-based medium or technology

2. If you were reporting from Haiti or producing a story from a reporter based in Haiti, describe briefly the process you went about when piecing together/creating a story:
## Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

### From which sources did you get information?

Questions here will ask you how you got your information when writing, or producing your stories.

**1. How often did you use the following human information sources? Check all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mainly used</th>
<th>Sometimes used</th>
<th>Rarely used</th>
<th>Did not use</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based in the US</td>
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<td>Based in Haiti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other International Sources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Journalists based in Haiti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journalists based in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other International Journalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you indicated other International Journalists feel free to elaborate here:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**2. How often did you use the following technology sources to get information? Check all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mainly used</th>
<th>Sometimes used</th>
<th>Rarely used</th>
<th>Did not use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
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<td>Twitter</td>
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<td>Other news organization websites/publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other social networking site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other not listed</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you indicated other please elaborate here:</td>
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</table>

122
## Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

### The Haiti earthquake compared to other natural disasters

These questions will pertain to your experiences covering the Haiti earthquake, as compared to other natural disasters.

1. **Compared to other stories you have covered how difficult was covering Haiti’s earthquake?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>difficulty</th>
<th>Very difficult</th>
<th>Somewhat difficult</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Somewhat easy</th>
<th>Easy</th>
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2. **Which natural disaster have you covered in the past that the Haiti earthquake coverage was similar to? Please give a short answer:**


3. **How invested were you in the news coverage of the Haiti earthquake?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>investment</th>
<th>not invested</th>
<th>somewhat invested</th>
<th>invested</th>
<th>very invested</th>
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Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

Relationships with other Journalists

This page contains questions about your relationships with other journalists covering the Haiti earthquake.

1. Did you form relationships with other journalists who were covering the earthquake?
   - [ ] yes
   - [ ] no
   - [ ] does not apply

2. What challenges did you face when trying to get information or research your story?
   Check all that apply:
   - [ ] a. Difficulty finding unique stories
   - [ ] b. There were only certain sources I could talk to
   - [ ] c. Technological challenges: Communicating with others in Haiti and the US was difficult because of limited availability of Internet, phone reception.
   - [ ] d. Coming to grips with the humanity of the disaster: at times the devastation overtook me (loss of life, home and lack of medical care).
   - [ ] e. Physical challenges: It was difficult to maneuver around Haiti
   - [ ] f. Please use this space to specify other challenges or expand on your answers if needed:

3. When covering the earthquake aftermath, was there one particular source or event that stands out in your memory? If so describe that story or provide a link to your work here.

-
This page will ask questions about how you published your stories about the Haiti earthquake.

1. How did you share information with US based publications (your newsroom) while covering the earthquake? Check all that apply:

   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Blogs
   d. Texting
   e. Cell phones
   f. Satellite Phones
   g. Websites
   h. Other (please specify here):

2. How did you share information with US based sources while covering the earthquake? Check all that apply:

   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Blogs
   d. Texting
   e. Cell phones
   f. Satellite Phones
   g. Websites
   h. Other (please specify below):
Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

3. How did you share information with Haiti based sources while covering the earthquake? Check all that apply:

- [ ] a. Facebook
- [ ] b. Twitter
- [ ] c. Blogs
- [ ] d. Texting
- [ ] e. Cell phones
- [ ] f. Satellite Phones
- [ ] g. Websites
- [ ] h. Other (please specify below):

[ ]
Coverage of the January 2010 Haiti Earthquake

Story Impact and Conclusion

This page will ask a few final questions and wrap-up questions.

1. How much of a difference do you feel your story made in drawing attention to the people of Haiti among people in the US?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>A significant impact</th>
<th>slight impact</th>
<th>no impact at all</th>
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<tr>
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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</table>

2. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as a journalist working to cover the Haiti earthquake? If so, please describe here:

3. Would you be willing to answer questions in a follow-up interview?

  □ yes
  □ no

  contact me at:
1. Upon submitting this document the subject will receive an E-mail copy of this form for his/her records, and the original will become part of the subject’s research record. All information will be locked in a secure file drawer. Please contact mfp29@georgetown.edu with any further questions.

Submit my survey
APPENDIX F: SAMPLE SURVEY AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Survey for Research Study
“Covering the Haiti Earthquake of 2010: how journalists used technology to capture the conditions of Haiti in the aftermath”
Investigator: Mildred Frances Perreault (Mimi Perreault)

This document contains a list of suggested questions for the initial research study survey and follow-up interview questions. The survey was administered through Survey Monkey, and several of the questions will have multiple-choice answers. This survey will be distributed at large to journalists recruited for research. This survey pertains to the month directly following the earthquake, interview (January 12-February 12, 2010) questions will be asked to clarify information from during that time.

Sample Survey and Interview Questions
Please state your name, position and news organization
1. What type of news coverage of the Haiti Earthquake were you involved with?
2. Were you in Haiti during this time?
3. If you were in the US, please describe how you interacted with reports from Haiti (with what technologies, how did you communicate)?
4. Describe the process you went about when piecing together a story:
5. How did you gain information for interviews?
6. How was covering Haiti’s earthquake different than other stories you have covered? How did it compare to covering other natural disasters?
7. Did you feel personally invested in the news coverage? Why or why not?
8. Did you form relationships with other journalists who were covering the earthquake?
9. Did you share information with other news professionals when you were covering the story?
10. What challenges did you face when trying to get information/research your story?
11. What technologies did you use to communicate while in Haiti, or with people in Haiti covering the story?
12. When covering the earthquake aftermath, was there one particular source or event that stands out in your memory more than any other?
13. How did you use Twitter, blogs, Facebook or other Internet based mediums?
14. How did you use cell phone based technologies?
15. Do you feel like your story made a difference in the type of support the people of Haiti received from the US?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as a journalist working to cover the Haiti earthquake? If so, please describe here:
Appendix G: Informed Consent Document for Interviews

Below is the Informed Consent Document approved by The Georgetown University Internal Review Board. It is two pages total.

Title: Covering the Haiti Earthquake of 2010: how journalists used technology to capture the conditions of Haiti in the aftermath

Georgetown University: Consent to Participate in Research

For Interview

Study Title: "Covering the Haiti Earthquake of 2010: how journalists used technology to capture the conditions of Haiti in the aftermath"

Investigator: Mildred Frances Perreault (Mimi Perreault)  Phone: 561-670-1008
Advisor: Dr. Kimberly Meltzer

You are invited to consider participating in a research study to investigate how journalists went about covering the Haiti earthquake, which occurred on January 10, 2010. This form will describe the purpose and nature of the research, the possible risks and benefits associated with it and your rights as a participant. If you decide to participate, please be sure to sign and date the final page of this form.

This research will look at the actions of journalists during the crisis. You are being asked to participate because you are a journalist who played some part in the coverage of the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake. You are one of approximately 30 journalists being interviewed for this research. Interviews will be conducted after preliminary questions are asked through an online survey. This informed consent document pertains to the interview portion of the research.

Interviews will be conducted in a manner and form that fits with your schedule. Interviews will be conducted over Skype, in person or over the phone. Some follow-up questions will be asked over email. Recording devices will only be used in the interview with the participant’s permission. If the interview is recorded, the recorded information will be secured in a safe along with any other documents containing the participant’s answers and personal information. During the interview if you do not wish to answer a question, simply state “no comment.” Participants can and will be removed from the study if at any time the Investigator feels that your participation might not be in your best interest (e.g. your job is in danger). If this situation presents itself the participant can be removed without his/her knowledge. Your participation concludes at the end of the interview, and you can stop participating at anytime during the interview. You are not obligated to participate in the interview if you already participated in the survey. If you wish to decline participation, please state so when the interview is arranged. Please indicate if you no longer wish to participate in the study during the interview. If additional answers are needed, follow-up questions may be asked via email.

If you chose to make comments critical of the company you work for, or any other organization, be aware that you could be taking a risk that may affect your future career. You could possibly face anger from those in Haiti or even the journalism community. There may be other risks, which I cannot predict. If you agree to participate in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you—however, information gathered in this study could benefit the field of communications studies. Your name and news organization will not be used without your permission. You must state whether or not you wish to have your name or news organization used. Even if you do not wish your name to be used, I cannot entirely guarantee confidentiality. All information will be locked in a secure file drawer, which only I will have access to.

If at any time you decide to leave the study, change your mind about identifying/not identifying yourself at any time during the research process please let the researcher know. If you asked to be removed from the study any information you have supplied will be immediately removed from my data, and destroyed.

Call Mimi Perreault at (561) 670-1008 during regular business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST) or E-mail her at mfp20@georgetown.edu if you have questions or concerns regarding the study.

For more information on your rights as a research subject contact the Georgetown University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (202) 687-1506 during regular business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST).

Georgetown University Institutional Review Board

Approved: OCT 1 2010

Expiry: AUG 04 2011
Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
I have fully explained this study to the subject. I have discussed the study’s purpose, its procedures, and possible risks and benefits associated with it. The participant understands that this study is voluntary, and knows he/she can at anytime ask questions pertaining to the study. I have answered any questions the participant has asked.

Signature of the Person Obtaining Informed Consent (Investigator)  Date

CONSENT OF PARTICIPANT
I understand all of the information in this Informed Consent Form. I have gotten complete answers for all of my questions. I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

☐ YES (If you change your mind about this at any point, please let the researcher know)
☐ NO

Participant Signature  Date

Printed Name of Participant
Once you sign this form, you will receive a copy of it to keep, and the researcher will keep another copy in your research record.

Please indicate whether you agree to have your full name and/or your organization’s name used alongside your comments in the final research document that results from this study.
☐ YES (If you change your mind about this at any point, please let the researcher know)
☐ NO
☐ ALTERATION:
  Name or pseudonym to be used:
  (e.g. first name only, initials only, random pseudonym, only work position/title, only institutional affiliation etc.)

If you agree to participate after reading this entire form, please scan and return this document to the researcher as a PDF document attached to an E-mail at mfp29@georgetown.edu or fax it Attention: Mimi Perreault, (202) 687-1720.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVED  OCT  1 2010
EXPIRATION  AUG  4 2011
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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De Mause, Neil. “In the quake coverage, nation’s poverty is ‘bad luck,’ It’s tough to be Haitian, Isn’t it?” Extra!, April 2010: 9-10.


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