

# “That’s Not Leaking, It’s Pure Editorial”: Wikileaks, Scientific Journalism, and Journalistic Expertise

Lisa Lynch, Concordia University

## Abstract

*This article explores the concept of ‘scientific journalism’ as developed by Julian Assange in his statements about Wikileaks during 2010-2011. According to Assange, ‘scientific journalism’ is a new form of journalism which displaces journalistic authority onto the primary source documents used by reporters to construct their arguments, and which therefore frees the reporter to take a position on the material that might be unacceptable in Anglo-American “objective” journalism. Placing Assange’s formulation of ‘scientific journalism’ in the context of others’ use of the term — while also exploring similar attempts at reshaping journalistic authority — can help us understand how Wikileaks’ activities may or may not anticipate other journalistic developments in a ‘post-objective’ media landscape.*

**Keywords:** Assange, Wikileaks, ‘Scientific Journalism,’ Objectivity, New Media, Expertise

## Introduction

In April 2010, Julian Assange, the founder of the document-leaking site Wikileaks, made a guest appearance on Comedy Central’s *The Colbert Report*. Assange and Wikileaks had recently made headlines due to Wikileaks’ release of a dramatic US military video the group had obtained: in the video, US soldiers in an Apache helicopter fired rounds first at seemingly unarmed men walking down a Baghdad street, and then at a van that approached to rescue the wounded.

Assange's appearance on *The Colbert Report* — a satiric show in which host Stephen Colbert parodies a conservative talk show host to mock conservative pieties — was part of Wikileaks' campaign to further promote the controversial video through engagement with mainstream media.

The *Colbert Report* segment began with Stephen Colbert's usual mixture of feigned outrage and slapstick humor, but the tone shifted as Assange explained his organization's efforts to get the clip into wide distribution. Previously, he explained, leaks had been posted to the Wikileaks website with only brief descriptions attached, but with the Iraq video Wikileaks had changed its strategy. Collaborating with American and Icelandic journalists, they created a dedicated web page — [collateralmurder.com](http://collateralmurder.com) — that featured the clip as well as context and analysis. After the video was unveiled at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., news coverage brought a flood of traffic that overwhelmed Wikileaks' servers.

When Assange turned to the subject of the "Collateral Murder" web page, Colbert's mock outrage became uncharacteristically genuine. Noting that Wikileaks featured an edited version of the video more prominently on the page than the unedited clip, he charged that Assange was manipulating the public: "you have edited this tape, and you have given it the title of Collateral Murder. That's not leaking, that's pure editorial." Assange defended Wikileaks' strategy, arguing that the presence of the unedited tape on the website gave Wikileaks license to present an edited version to emphasize their point. "Our promise to the public is to provide the full source material," he said. "If people disagree with us, they have access to the original source." Though the conversation ended on a civil note, the tension between the two remained clearly unresolved.<sup>1</sup>

Judging from comments on the *Colbert Report* website,<sup>2</sup> the show's viewers were surprised by the tense exchange between Colbert and Assange, as Wikileaks was popular among Colbert's young, liberal audience. But Colbert's response to the video was not predominantly political: rather, it stemmed from Assange's characterization of

“Collateral Murder” as a work of investigative journalism. Drawing a clear distinction between reporting and advocacy, Colbert suggested that Wikileaks stepped outside the boundaries of journalistic practice in attempting to shape the viewer’s understanding of the leaked video. Assange’s response, in turn, proposed a dramatically different view of journalism — one that dismisses the notion of journalistic objectivity and suggests that editorializing is acceptable if primary source documents are made available to the reader.

In the months following the Colbert Report appearance, Wikileaks released a series of spectacular leaks relating to US military and diplomatic activity, including classified SIGACT reports from Afghanistan and Iraq, diplomatic cables from the US State Department, and intelligence assessments of Guantanamo detainees. As the organization struggled with the logistics of managing what the British newspaper *The Guardian* has described as “the biggest leak in the history of the world,” it turned away from providing their own analyses of documents and instead established publishing relationships with media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, *El Pais*, and over fifty additional print and broadcast outlets in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. Claiming that these media outlets were “partners” in a shared journalistic enterprise, Assange continued to insist not only that Wikileaks was a journalistic organization, but that Wikileaks’ goal was a new form of journalism, particular to the online environment, that supported its claims through links to source material (Assange 2010a). Labeling this practice ‘scientific journalism,’ Assange deflected continued challenges to Wikileaks’ journalistic function by suggesting Wikileaks represented an innovation in journalistic practice.

Assange’s claim to the term ‘scientific journalism’ has been repeated by Wikileaks supporters, and dismissed by detractors. But no one yet has provided a genealogy of the term, which, though new to Assange, is not new to anyone familiar with Anglo-American journalism history and pedagogy. This article will establish the history and context of the notion of ‘scientific journalism,’ focusing less on Wikileaks’ actual practices over the course of 2010-2011 than on the claims Assange made on the organization’s behalf — claims that

represented an idealization of Wikileaks' accomplishments but are nonetheless worth considering in terms of the intervention that Assange supposedly hoped to make in journalism practice. I argue that Assange's embrace of the term of scientific journalism can be seen as both a continuation of, and departure from, past efforts to make journalism more scientific. Linking journalistic truth-telling to the scientific method is hardly new. What is new, though not unique to scientific journalism, is Assange's intent to challenge the idea of journalistic expertise and to shift the locus of authority from "objective" journalist to verifiable source material. Placing Assange's formulation of scientific journalism in the context of others' use of the term — and then setting Wikileaks alongside similar attempts to reshape journalistic authority in a 'post-objectivity' media landscape — can help us understand how Wikileaks' potential impact on the field of journalism beyond its dramatic disclosures.

#### **'A source relationship:' boundary negotiations over Wikileaks as journalism**

Wikileaks' activities have understandably met with mixed responses, even among those who support greater access to information online. Though some see the group's activities as one manifestation of a global movement towards greater government and corporate transparency, Wikileaks' promotion of the involuntary disclosure of documents — or radical transparency (Graham 2002; Holzer 2006) — has been seen by others as politically destabilizing and a threat to the increasing drive to make government information available online. In the United States, the anti-war bent of the latest disclosures<sup>3</sup> has garnered Wikileaks praise from figures on the political left (including Daniel Ellsberg, leaker of the Pentagon Papers) and opprobrium from the U.S. government itself, which has maintained that Wikileaks stole sensitive materials that threaten U.S. political and military interests around the world. Indeed, Assange himself is now in the crosshairs of the U.S. Justice Department: subpoenas have been issued in connection with a Grand Jury investigation of the site's activities, which could possibly lead to Assange's prosecution under the little-used Espionage Act.<sup>4</sup>

The question of Assange's potential prosecution has, in turn, prompted debate over whether Assange and the organization he founded deserve the legal protections accorded professional journalists. In the United States, this debate has been politically overdetermined, as evidenced by Congressional efforts to have Wikileaks specifically excluded from a potential federal journalists' shield law.<sup>5</sup> But as articulated by the mainstream press, it is also very much a professional debate, connected to the phenomenon of Wikileaks as a new kind of media outlet attempting to secure legitimacy. As Benkler (2011) and Beckett (2011) have documented, the resistance to Wikileaks' claims of journalistic status can be seen as an attempt by legacy media outlets to counter the challenges posed by "networked journalism" (Beckett) or "the networked fourth estate" (Benkler) to conventional journalism practice and to the professional expertise claimed by journalists.

In their overview of the emergence of journalistic professionalization and the ideology of journalistic objectivity, Schudson and Anderson (2008) have noted that as "boundary lines between 'insider and outsider,' 'professional and non-professional,' 'journalist and blogger' ...grow ever more fuzzy," a "border zone" has emerged in which hybrid forms of journalism challenge the professional-self definitions of legacy media producers. The policing of this border zone by legacy outlets can be seen as a form of what Schudson and Anderson, following Gieryn (1983), describe as "boundary work," in which the profession is defined through claims of jurisdiction over certain kinds of work activity.<sup>6</sup> The ascent of digital journalism has precipitated a wave of such "boundary work" (Singer 2007; Thurman 2008; Fenton 2010), commonly framed around claims that online media forms encourage content borrowing, the proliferation of amateur or citizen content producers who attempt to poach the professional status of journalists, and, above all, superficial and biased writing.<sup>7</sup>

Media organizations have generally held Wikileaks' at arm's length since its inception (Lynch 2010), but widespread 'boundary work' around Wikileaks began during the summer of 2010, when Wikileaks was negotiating embargo agreements with media outlets. Though Wikileaks described these outlets as 'media partners,' the

newspapers themselves largely contested this notion of a partnership, insisting instead that Wikileaks was simply the provider of raw materials that were been shaped and contextualized by their own organizations. <sup>8</sup> Interviewed for the Columbia Journalism Review following the publication of the Iraq SIGACTS by the New York Times, Times reporter Eric Schmitt used the phrase “source relationship” to directly counter Assange’s description of the collaborative effort involved in getting the War Logs published in the Times:

I’ve seen Julian Assange in the last couple of days kind of flouncing around talking about this collaboration like the four of us were working all this together...But we were not in any kind of partnership or collaboration with him. This was a source relationship. He’s making it sound like this was some sort of journalistic enterprise between WikiLeaks, The New York Times, The Guardian, and Der Spiegel, and that’s not what it was (Hendler 2010).

Schmitt’s derisive remark that Assange was “kind of flouncing around” — suggesting the Wikileaks founder was an outsider trying to insist on his insider credentials — reflected the increasing tension between Assange and the Times. But over the next several months, reporters and editors at the other publications Wikileaks had designated as ‘partners’ would also describe Assange as simply a source. Nick Davies of the Guardian explained his long negotiations with Assange by portraying him as computer hacker that had to be carefully cultivated by Davies before he would surrender materials (Leigh and Harding, 2010). Conversely, Javier Moreno, editor of El Pais, noted that his organization’s contact with Assange and Wikileaks had been strictly limited, in order to preserve the dynamic of the journalist-source relationship (Moreno 2010).

Insisting that Assange functioned as a source in a traditional journalistic relationship, these statements shift journalistic authority away from Wikileaks and place it firmly in the hands of the legacy media. This distancing continued throughout the publication of Wikileaks disclosures, becoming more pronounced as the

relationship between Wikileaks and its original ‘media partners’ became increasingly strained — and as Wikileaks’ disclosures became more politically polarizing.<sup>9</sup> When a tangled series of events led to the mass publication of the entire cache of diplomatic cables after months of careful vetting, screening and embargo access, Wikileaks’ initial ‘partners’ published a letter condemning Wikileaks’ publication of the cables while defending their own prior publishing decisions.<sup>10</sup>

The critique of Wikileaks did not emanate solely from the organization’s disaffected media partners. Though Wikileaks did have supporters in the media (in particular outside of Europe and the US) Anglo-American journalists and media pundits quite frequently expressed a skeptical, if not derisive attitude towards the organization. Journalist Robert Fisk described Assange as an upstart with pretensions to the profession, calling him “a computer hacker with a sense of his own importance” (Taylor 2010). Critics frequently confused Wikileaks with Wikipedia, or at least insisted that Wikileaks’ “wiki” platform allowed anyone to place documents online without verification.<sup>11</sup> And in the wake of the publication of the Iraq and Afghanistan reports, much was made of the wisdom of Wikileaks decision to allow professional journalists to sift through and interpret the leaks rather than relying on their own staff: Assange, it was claimed, had learned from the errors made during the “Collateral Murder” release.<sup>12</sup>

During the fall of 2010 and spring and summer of 2011, Assange responded to such criticism of Wikileaks by refusing any characterization of his organization as a “source” or of himself as something other than a journalist. He insisted that, far from deferring to the authority of professional journalists, Wikileaks had advanced the practice of journalism through its emphasis on the inclusion of primary source documents, making ‘scientific journalism’ possible for the first time. His claim that Wikileaks was an innovator on the journalism landscape challenged the “unscientific” practices of legacy news outlets — namely, the assertion of journalistic authority in lieu of the inclusion of source material — while asserting Wikileaks’ value as a news organization.

## **Proving the news: Scientific Journalism 2.0**

Assange's decision to draw on the language of science to invest authority in Wikileaks' publication activities resonates with the group's general reliance on technoscientific language to bolster the reputation of their leaking platform. Early descriptions of Wikileaks relied heavily on technical descriptions of software and Internet infrastructure to convince potential leakers (and the interested public) that Wikileaks provided an absolutely secure means to upload and disseminate leaked documents. This rhetoric allowed Wikileaks to assert its ability to provide maximum source protection. The tech-heavy framing of the organization also helped Assange and others to recruit volunteers at hacking festivals such as the Chaos Communication Congress, where the project was promoted as a collective hack requiring the expert services of computer programmers.

Despite such strategic utility, references to Wikileaks' technical infrastructure subsided after April 2010, when Wikileaks shifted from the active solicitation of leaks to the mass distribution of the U.S. military and diplomatic materials alleged to be supplied by a single U.S. soldier, Bradley Manning.<sup>13</sup> Assange's public statements contained fewer references to infrastructure and software, and discussion of Wikileaks' as a collection platform shifted to discussion of Wikileaks as a publishing platform capable of 'scientific journalism.'

Though he had mentioned the term occasionally beforehand,<sup>14</sup> Assange first began to advance the idea of 'scientific journalism' in April 2010, in a series of interviews and public appearances following the "Collateral Murder" release. A week after his Colbert Report appearance, he appeared on a panel on investigative journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, where he discussed the verifiability of Wikileaks releases. "Everything we do is like science," Assange explained. "It is independently checkable because the information that has informed our conclusions is there, just as scientific papers based on experimental data make that experimental



data available to other scientists and the public” (Assange, 2010b) Several months later, a profile of Assange written by Raffi Khatchadouran for *The New Yorker* provided a further elaboration of the analogy:

Assange told me, “I want to set up a new standard: ‘scientific journalism.’ If you publish a paper on DNA, you are required, by all the good biological journals, to submit the data that has informed your research—the idea being that people will replicate it, check it, verify it. So this is something that needs to be done for journalism as well. There is an immediate power imbalance, in that readers are unable to verify what they are being told, and that leads to abuse.” Because Assange publishes his source material, he believes that Wikileaks is free to offer its analysis, no matter how speculative (Khatchadouran 2010).

Here, Assange argues that scientific journalism corrects a “power imbalance” in traditional journalism; namely that readers are unable to verify the facts stated in an article. Beyond this, he emphasizes — as he did in his exchange with Colbert — that linking to original source material allows a journalist to offer their own speculative analysis of the material. In December of 2010, Assange gave a similar description of scientific journalism in an editorial published in *The Australian*. Explaining that Wikileaks was designed to “use internet technologies in new ways to report the truth,” Assange claimed Wikileaks “work(ed) with other media outlets to bring people the news, but also to prove it is true. Scientific journalism allows you to read a news story, then to click online to see the original document it is based on. That way you can judge for yourself” (Assange 2000a).

In one sense, Assange’s notion of ‘scientific journalism’ was an extension of a principle inherent in Wikileaks from the outset: the belief that readers would interact directly with source documents to establish what is true in the journalistic text. On an FAQ page dating from the site’s 2007 launch, Wikileaks claimed that providing original documents would empower readers to author their own analyses: “Instead of a couple of academic specialists, Wikileaks will provide a

forum for the entire global community to examine any document relentlessly for credibility, plausibility, veracity and falsifiability” (Wikileaks, “About”).

The hope that technological affordances might allow the “global community” to replace “a couple of academic specialists” was not unique to Wikileaks. At the moment of Wikileaks’ launch, the phenomenon of community-generated knowledge, or “crowdsourcing,” was an increasingly common practice not only in online communities such as Wikipedia, but in journalism as well (Howe, 2008). But Assange’s initial confidence in the public’s ability to analyze complex documents outside of their realm of experience set Wikileaks apart from other crowdsourcing ventures. This confidence was reflected in the “writer’s kit” for such potential analysts included on the original Wikileaks website, which provided a checklist of ways for volunteers to authenticate the material:

Question its veracity. How likely is the document to be genuine, and how likely to be fake? Does it sound like a lie? How could you prove it is genuine? Can you corroborate it? How could you prove it is false? Does it contradict other facts or statements? Do the purported creators deny authorship? The question is not only whether the document is genuine or fake, but also whether it is verifiable or falsifiable. Treat the matter forensically, as best you can (Wikileaks, “Writers Kit”)

Instead of particular expertise, volunteers verifying documents are urged to rely on rigorous method to draw their conclusions, examining documents “forensically” like evidence in a crime scene in order to authenticate them. Notably, the proof criteria used here are drawn from the version of the scientific method most notably articulated by Karl Popper; producing empirical and measurable evidence that is falsifiable, or amenable to testing that will disprove or prove its veracity through repetition of the experimental procedures (Popper 1963).

By the time of the “Collateral Murder” release, Assange’s early hopes that citizen analysts would provide the bulk of the reportage based

on Wikileaks documents had faded; as he noted wryly in April 2010, his plan of citizen collaboration had revealed itself as “bullshit,” as readers had shown that they would not engage with source documents unless someone else had done the preliminary analysis (Assange 2008b). Scientific journalism represents Assange’s reconsideration of reader participation: journalists serve as intermediaries presenting analyses to the public, but they must also provide the public with the means to recreate their analyses. This shift to the reader as the final arbiter of meaning sets Assange’s ‘scientific journalism’ apart from earlier claims about the use of the scientific method to reinforce journalistic authority and establish (or re-establish) an objective standard for journalism.

### **Science in the service of objectivity: Scientific Journalism 1.0**

The suggestion that the scientific method should be applied to the practice of journalism can be traced to the writings of journalist and public intellectual Walter Lippmann.<sup>15</sup> Beginning with his 1922 book *Public Opinion*— written in a moment when applying scientific methods to social inquiry was becoming increasingly popular in the academy — Lippman argued that the application of such methods could help bolster journalism against the challenges posed by the emerging field of public relations (St. John, 2010). Fearing the public was losing faith in the media, and fearing as well that the public might be increasingly swayed by propaganda, Lippmann urged journalists to turn towards the sciences as a model for reporting methods. Consistent practices, Lippman felt, would in turn would lead to consistent observation, and thus to an objective approach to the material: what he described as “the unity of disciplined experiment” (Lippmann 1920, 67). Educated in this way, journalists would be transformed from “untrained accidental witnesses” (Lippman 1931, 170) into a caste of professionals that could distill the essential information for the proper functioning of democracy, instructing and guiding a news audience that had neither the time nor the desire to do information-gathering on their own (Streckenfuss 1990).

Today, Lippmann is remembered primarily for his ideas about the respective roles of journalists and citizens in a democracy, ideas

which have been labeled elitist in their seeming intent to “downgrade citizens to the role of spectator” (Rosen 1994, 367). Indeed, the “Lippmann-Dewey debate,” in which Lippmann’s media philosophy is compared unfavorably to the ideas of his contemporary John Dewey, became a commonplace in media and communications studies beginning in the 1980s, with Lippmann —unfairly — identified as the patron saint of an ‘establishment’ press disabled by an inflexible commitment to a neutral point of view (Schudson 2008; Jansen 2009). But even as Lippmann’s philosophy of journalism fell out of favor, his ideas about journalism pedagogy gained traction through the work of Philip Meyer, a pioneer in the development of computer-assisted reporting. In a preface to the 1991 edition of his 1973 book *Precision Journalism* — a hallmark text of journalism education that focused on teaching journalism students quantitative skills and computer techniques — Meyer argued that in the years since its initial publication, he had witnessed journalists moving towards a more “scientific stance.” The rise of the information sciences, as well as the advances of computing, had made the scientific method even more germane to the contemporary journalist:

The new precision journalism is scientific journalism. ... It means treating journalism as if it were a science, adopting scientific method, scientific objectivity, and scientific ideals to the entire process of mass communication. (Meyer 1991/2001, 5)

Meyer’s formulation here bears a strong debt to Lippmann, one that Meyer acknowledges. But Meyer also claims that scientific journalism had been rendered necessary by the challenges to the objectivity ideal which Lippmann himself helped foster, a model “designed for a simpler world” (5). According to Meyer, “frustration over the unmet ideals of objectivity” in contemporary journalism had resulted in journalistic forms such as ‘New Journalism’ and sometimes even in journalists “making up their facts” (5). Scientific journalism renewed journalistic objectivity by anchoring it in scientific objectivity, making it “a disciplined search for a verifiable truth” (5) rather than a default professional position.

Meyer's insistence on the centrality of the scientific method to precision journalism was in part a defensive maneuver. By 1991, he was all too aware that the practice of computer assisted reporting had been marginalized by many journalists, seen as a technical facility outside of 'real' journalistic practice (Powers 2011).<sup>16</sup> The critique of computer-assisted reporting in the years following its emergence is yet another example of 'boundary work' separating emergent from older forms of journalism, akin to the dismissal of Wikileaks' journalistic status by its media partners. Though Meyer and Assange have vastly different positions vis a vis the journalistic field, Meyer's use of 'scientific journalism' to bolster the prestige of 'precision journalism' foreshadows Assange's own use of the term. Noting that precision journalism had been embraced more enthusiastically in the academy than the workplace, Meyer insisted that his original book was not only about "polls and computers," but rather intended "to encourage my colleagues in journalism to apply the scientific method" (Meyer 1991/2001, 3).

An even more striking congruence between Meyer and Assange — and one which sets Meyer apart from Lippman — is Meyer's suggestion that readers might engage actively with the original source material that undergirds the journalistic text. In the conclusion to the fourth edition of *Precision Journalism*, Meyer remarks on the controversy over media polling, noting that some citizens feel polling is an intervention into the political process. He concludes that this perception might be ameliorated by making the process as transparent as possible; here, by releasing full polling data to readers. The data would serve as proof that media outlets are not using polling to promote candidates, but rather to reflect the intentions of the voting public:

If precision journalism can wholeheartedly embrace the openness of scientific method, its potential dangers and abuses will be self-correcting. A journalism based on scientific method leaves a trail where error can be detected and truth verified. Nowhere is that as true as in the case of election polls. The comparison of polls with election results is a

wonderful way to judge, and journalists should not create barriers to inhibit or cloud that judgment (Meyer 2001, 245).

At first glance, Meyer's suggestion that the public should be invited to judge the media's accuracy by looking at source documents suggests a strong affinity between his vision of 'scientific journalism' and that proposed by Assange. But the crucial difference is that while Meyer argues that looking at data is intended to confirm that 'scientific method' has resulted journalism free of interpretive error, Assange argues that the inclusion of source documents freed the journalist to provide an interpretive slant on the material. For Assange, journalists should not be expected to produce a consistent accounting of the truth: rather, the truth is to be determined by the individual reader through the consultation of source documents. If Meyer believed that scientific journalism would guide journalism towards a renewed objectivity, Assange claims scientific journalism is a system in which verified documents serve as a counterweight to inherently subjective analysis.

This is not to say that Meyer believed that objective journalism should espouse what Jay Rosen (2003) has described as the "view from nowhere," a neutral position that prohibits journalists from taking a stance on matters of civic concern. In a 1995 presentation titled "Public Journalism and the Problem of Objectivity," Meyer defended investigative reporting with that took a position on an issue, arguing that a journalism of social responsibility could be carried out with the aid of the scientific method. If journalists practiced "objectivity of method" their work, even if argumentative, would be empirically correct; it thus required "no departure at all from the Enlightenment philosophy that gave us prickly individualism."

Here again, distinctions may seem to blur, with Meyer's enthusiasm for a public journalism of "prickly individualism" seeming to veer into the territory mapped by Assange. But Meyer continues by affirming that uniformity of method will prevent journalists from traveling "down the same roads being explored by in academe by philosophers of the post-modern persuasion. They, too, are tired of objectivity.

Truth, they argue, is socially constructed.” For Meyer, objectivity fatigue remains the wolf at journalism’s door. Assange, despite the positivism in his approach in the verification of documents, embraces a form of journalistic practice premised on the understanding that objectivity’s moment has passed.

### **Scientific journalism and other post-objective media forms**

Assange’s conception of scientific journalism is thus suited for what David Mindich (2000) has described as a “post-objective” mediascape, one in which hopes for a renewed objectivity have given way to increasing acknowledgement of the dissonance engendered by proliferating media forms and the clash of media systems in a globalised world. But Wikileaks is not the only attempt to redefine journalistic truth-telling in the wake of such hopes. A broader movement exists among new media journalists to shift authority away from the journalist through a focus on primary source inclusion. Its mandate is best encapsulated by the widely-circulated phrase “transparency is the new objectivity,” first coined by Internet scholar Dave Weinberger. Explaining what he meant by the phrase in a 2009 blog post, Weinberger argued:

Outside of the realm of science, objectivity is discredited these days as anything but an aspiration, and even that aspiration is looking pretty sketchy. The problem with objectivity is that it tries to show what the world looks like from no particular point of view, which is like wondering what something looks like in the dark. Nevertheless, objectivity — even as an unattainable goal — served an important role in how we came to trust information, and in the economics of newspapers in the modern age...(Now, however) Objectivity without transparency increasingly will look like arrogance. And then foolishness. Why should we trust what one person — with the best of intentions — insists is true when we instead could have a web of evidence, ideas, and argument? (2009)

Weinberger suggests an evolutionary process has occurred; objectivity has played an important role in the history of journalism,

but is no longer a desirable goal. Like Assange, he claims a new role for journalism in the online environment, in which the “web of evidence” surrounding any journalistic text is the final arbiter of authority, not the journalist herself.

In the final section of this essay, I turn to two further efforts — data journalism and science blogging — that take on Weinberger’s challenge of resituating journalistic authority by embracing (or partly embracing) transparency over objectivity. Placed alongside these two relatively new, but more established, media practices, Assange’s ideas seem less of a radical departure from existing journalism practice than they do an engagement with a developing conversation about the changing relationship between news producers and news audiences brought about by relocating journalism online. Thinking of Wikileaks in terms of its role in this conversation foregrounds its own contributions to redefining journalism in the online space, and suggests as well how Wikileaks might refine their own strategies as information activists and media producers alike.

Data journalism can be seen as a subset of the emerging practice of “computational journalism,” itself heir to the practice of computer-assisted reporting which formed the core of Meyer’s precision journalism. But while computational journalism encompasses a variety of computer-assisted practices, data journalism is distinguished by a focus on data sets as a means of explaining and informing on civic matters — as Jonathan Stray explains, it is the process of “obtaining, reporting on, curating and publishing data in the public interest” (Stray 2011). This civic emphasis reflects data journalism’s ties to the open data movement, an international effort by nonprofit groups with “strong emotional connections to transparency and civic control of government” to obtain and publish government information (Kronenberg, 2011). As well, data journalism has gotten a fair amount of logistical and rhetorical support from socially aware computer science researchers who hope the practice might be “a savior of journalism’s watchdog tradition” as well as a means of reviving trust in journalism by giving readers a sense that they are interacting directly with source materials (Cohen et al. 2011).



Given these factors, data journalism has quickly become a pervasive force in the newsroom; its progress is reflected by a groundswell of new hirings, industry conferences, funding opportunities, and informal professional networks (Lorenz 2010). In particular, data journalism accompanied by information visualization is rapidly becoming one of the few growth areas at print and online media outlets (Segal and Heer 2010; Daniel and Flew 2010). The past year of Wikileaks' disclosures has brought even more prominence to data journalism and data visualization: throughout 2010, Wikileaks' 'media partners' featured elaborate visualizations of Wikileaks-sourced data, including maps of Afghan and Iraqi casualties and maps of the primary regions mentioned in leaked U.S. diplomatic cables. As well, journalists and programmers set up database navigational systems to allow reporters interested readers to better sift through and navigate the diplomatic cables. One such navigation system, Hank Van Ess's Cablesearch.org, produced in conjunction with the European Centre of Computer Assisted Research, became a primary means for the media to find stories buried in the vast cache of documents.

Data journalism based on the explanatory visualization of data sets lends itself easily to the sort of source verification characteristic of Assange's scientific journalism: just as Wikileaks provides documents to support analysis, the original data set can simply be provided along with the visualization. Some media outlets, most notably *The Guardian*, have been proactive in providing such datasets. The Guardian has launched a "Data Store" where readers can download data in order to see the evidence used in Guardian visualizations. Reader-created data visualizations using Guardian data are also featured on the site, allowing for alternate interpretations of datasets. The Guardian has also taken the lead from the groundswell of interest in the open data movement, cooperating with open data organizations to create crowdsourced data projects. For example, the [Guardian COINS data explorer](#), a navigable interface for spending data released by the British government, is a collaborative project between *The Guardian* and the Open Knowledge Foundation. *The Guardian* designed the COINS explorer not only to make data more

accessible, but also to encourage public analysis of where UK taxpayer money is spent.

The ability for media outlets to engage readers who are interested in working with data has been touted as one of the most promising aspects of data journalism (Flew et al. 2011). Experiments such as the COINS data explorer, advocates argue, represent a broader transition from style of journalism in which the interpretation and presentation of information is left only to trained professionals, to a collaborative, participatory approach towards meaning-making. But despite connections between data journalism and transparency and the potential of data-intensive reporting to redistribute journalistic authority, there remains debate about the extent to which data journalism, and especially data visualization, allows journalism to become more open and interpretive. Theorists of visualization often point out that information graphics carry the valence of objectivity even when they are manipulative or inaccurate (Manovich 2011). Arguably, media audiences are less schooled in visual than in textual literacy, and are less likely to challenge the biases of an information graphic than they might with a written article.

As well data journalism's power derives in part from the suggestion that the data it sorts or visualizes is 'raw' data bearing an indexical relation to real events. In fact, like other elements that journalists use in story-building, data is processed and filtered by journalists to make it manageable using decision making processes that are fundamentally interpretive in nature (Wilburn 2011). Interpretation aside, there is also the issue of whether the data obtained by journalists is reliable: in the case of the Wikileaks Iraq and Afghanistan data, for example, military analysts pointed out that SIGACT reports contain a margin of error not acknowledged in media accounts of the leak (Thiel 2011). Even officially sanctioned data is often error-ridden: the U.S.-based Sunlight Foundation has pointed out errors and omissions in some of the data released to the public by the U.S. government, even dedicating a website, [Clearspending.org](http://Clearspending.org), to the problem of inaccurate government data.

Finally, the open approach of The Guardian is at one end of a spectrum. Many data journalism projects still feature a more closed approach towards data, in which source data is included selectively or not at all. In the case of the Wikileaks Iraq and Afghan military reports, for example, The New York Times did not link to the Wikileaks data, arguing that the Wikileaks website contained the unredacted names of informants whose lives were subsequently placed in danger. But they also did not release the “cleaned” datasets they used in their own reporting, but rather published only a small selection of the leaked materials. And in an example unrelated to Wikileaks, between July and December of 2010 the Washington Post published a major investigative series about the U.S. intelligence community anchored by a vast collection of data gathered over a period of several years: though the series was accompanied by elaborate data visualizations, the *Post* kept the original datasets to themselves, and also withheld key information from the datasets at the request of the U.S. government. Both the Times and the Post were criticized by readers for failing to disclose data,<sup>17</sup> suggesting that there may be a gap between reader’s expectations of data transparency and current practices at media outlets.

Whether or not data journalism evolves to be consistently open remains to be seen. At present, the hesitance of media outlets to provide datasets — or to invite audiences to provide their own visual or textual analyses — seems characteristic of a larger pattern of skepticism and indifference among legacy media towards greater audience participation (Singer et al. 2011). Given this, the best examples of media practices that shift traditional dynamics of authority are to be found around the edges of journalism, in precisely the areas where ‘boundary work’ marks the clash between old and new media forms. One promising area is the field of science blogging, a form of science writing unique to the online space that combines strong argumentative writing with transparency of process.

Just as data journalism has been posed as a possible solution to the crisis in investigative reporting, science blogging has emerged as an intervention in the crisis in science journalism, a pursuit equally threatened by the economic troubles plaguing the print media

industry. Layoffs have left few science specialists working at media outlets, thinning ranks to the point where industry press releases shape the direction of news coverage (Brumfiel 2009). But while data journalism has emerged as a practice within legacy media, science blogging takes place both inside and outside of legacy media spaces. Science bloggers are a diverse group whose ranks include professional science writers but also scientists, science professors, and graduate students in science. They write on topics ranging from physics and astronomy to climate change and evolution, either glossing directly on scientific discoveries or critiquing media or political interpretations of science. Some science blogs are sharply focused and read largely by those in the scientific community, but many aim to reach a general audiences (Goldman 2011 ; Wilcox 2011), and some — including scientist-authored blogs — have page views in the hundreds of thousands per week (Brumfiel 2009).

The challenges that science blogging poses to “transmissionist” modes of science journalism, in which science writers instruct a passive audience about scientific concepts (Shanahan 2011), makes the form a good fit with recent scholarship in the social studies of science that suggests that science communicators must engage the public and facilitate debate about such concepts. (Kouper 2010). Many posts on science blogs begin by taking a strong position on a recent scientific hypothesis or discovery, and spirited responses can be found both on the comments sections of the post in question and in linked posts on other blogs. Instead of “the media” inviting “the public” to participate in the knowledge-making process, such debates blur the lines between media and public, generating conversation between scientists, students of science, science writers, and interested bystanders (Shanahan).

In provoking such conversations, science blogging also eschews the neutral tone of much mainstream science writing, especially when dealing with politically charged subject matter such as evolution. Instead, science bloggers pursue truth through transparency, embracing the notion that “unlike law and sausages, the public should see science during its manufacture” (Wilkins 2008). Thus, if science bloggers make knowledge claims, they link to the scientific research

on which they base their claims, departing from conventional blogging practice of linking within the blogosphere or linking to mainstream media. Within the science blogging community, it is an accepted standard of practice that argumentative reportage be supported by such linking (Walejko and Ksiazek 2010).

Science blogging thus combines an argumentative approach with an equally strong commitment to falsifiability through the inclusion of primary source material. Though science blogging began as an outlier to institutional journalism, the practice has emerged as a force of its own right, using its own claims of expertise to render reporting (science reporting, at least), more accountable and transparent. Several leading science bloggers, including Ben Goldacre and Bora Zivkovic, have directly engaged with the mainstream press to push for more linking to source material; Goldacre, in particular, has campaigned for the BBC to link directly to scientific articles in their reporting instead of merely linking to the journals in which the articles appeared (Zivkovic 2010).

At its best, science blogging is thus driven equally by the pre-existing competencies of its practitioners and their willingness to disclose the source of their observations. And, considering its broad inclusiveness and the ever-increasing number of producers as well as consumers within its audience community, it serves as a model for a media form searching to build the right kind of community around the knowledge it produces; one that does not use expertise as a process of exclusion, but seeks to strike a balance between advocacy and accountability, between timid reporting and pure editorial.

But if science blogging has demonstrated the potential of embracing transparency as the new objectivity, it does so by covering a topic especially amenable to reporting accompanied by an evidentiary trail. Though the process of scientific discovery is characterized by robust debate, it is debate which rests on a set of empirical principles. If research is made transparent, then these principles guide debate. In the case of political reporting, it is far more difficult to make 'evidence' serve the same purpose, as political debate is characterized by disagreement about the 'reality' in which such evidence is

situated. Perhaps the best example of this is the Collateral Murder video, which sparked intense debate not only about whether the video had been altered to reflect a different reality, but about whether the reality it reflected was the unjustifiable murder of civilians, the fog of war, or the inevitability of collateral damage during armed conflict.

Obviously, there are fundamental differences between Wikileaks' mandate and the practices described above. Though data journalists have created databases and visualizations based on Wikileaks' disclosures, it is more customary for data journalists to work with sanctioned data: Wikileaks may have helped to push data journalism into the limelight over the past year, but leaked materials will remain the exception and not the rule. And while science blogging often enters the political fray, it does so by debating the merits of empirical research, not the philosophical abstractions of politics. Still, a brief discussion of these practices should demonstrate that Assange's claims about 'scientific journalism' are neither new nor particularly radical, but rather resonate with other efforts at journalism's boundaries to find a means of truth-telling in a world increasingly polarized along political and economic lines. As I have suggested here, however, reliance on an evidentiary trail is not a wholesale solution for the crisis in journalism, but rather a partial and particular kind of intervention. The future of journalism lies not in universal solutions — nor in one-size-fits-all 'objective' journalism — but in the co-existence of a range of journalisms with different approaches to what constitutes proof, what constitutes argument, and what constitutes authority.

## References

Assange, Julian. "Don't cite messenger for revealing uncomfortable truths." *The Australian*, December 8, 2010; accessed August 18, 2011. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/wikileaks/dont-shoot-messenger-for-revealing-uncomfortable-truths/story-fn775xjq-1225967241332>

Assange, Julian. Remarks at the Logan Symposium on Investigative Journalism, The University of California at Berkeley, April 18, 2010.

Assange, Julian, "Julian Assange on the Afghanistan War Logs: They show the true nature of the war." *Guardian Video*, July 26, 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-E5nrTRHSck>

Anderson, Christopher. "Journalism: Expertise, Authority and Power in Democratic Life." In *The Media and Social Theory*, edited by David Hemondhalgh and Jason Toynebee, 248-264. London, Routledge, 2008.

Anderson, Chris and Michael Schudson. "Objectivity, Professionalism and Truth Seeking in Journalism." In *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, edited by K. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch (2008): 88-101.

Benkler, Yochai. "A free and irresponsible press: Wikileaks and the battle over the soul of the networked fourth estate." *Harvard Civil Liberties Law Review* 46 (2010): 311-397.

Brumfiel, Geoff. "Science Journalism: Supplanting the old media?" *Nature* 458 (2009): 274-277.

Brunton, Finn. "Keyspace: Wikileaks and the Assange Papers." *Radical Philosophy* 166, (2010): 8-20.

Cohen, Sarah, Chengkai Lee, Jun Yang and Cong Yu. "Computational Journalism: A Call To Arms for Data Researchers." Proceedings of the Fifth Biennial Conference on Innovative Data Systems Research, Asilomar, CA, January 9-12, 2011.

Daniel, Anna & Terry Flew. "The Guardian Reportage of the UK MP Expenses Scandal: A Case Study of Computational Journalism, *Record of the Communications Policy and Research Forum 2010, Network Insight Pty. Ltd., Sydney* (2010): 186-194.

Domingo, David and Chris Paterson. *Making Online News, Volume 2*. New York: Peter Lang, 2011.

Domingo, David and Chris Paterson. *Making Online News*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

Fenton, Natalie. "Drowning or waving? New media, journalism and democracy." In *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*, edited by Natalie Fenton. London: Sage, 2010.

Flew, Terry, Christine Spurgeon, Anna Daniel, and Adam Swift. "The Promise of Computational Journalism." *Journalism Practice* 6, no. 2 (2012): 1-15.

Gieryn, T. F. "Boundary-Work and the demarcation of science from non-science: Strains and interests in professional ideologies of scientists." *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 6 (1983): 781-795.

Goldman, Jason. "Science Blogging 101: The Audience." *Scienceblogs.com*, February 14, 2011. [http://scienceblogs.com/thoughtfulanimal/2011/02/n00b\\_science\\_blogging\\_101\\_part\\_1.php](http://scienceblogs.com/thoughtfulanimal/2011/02/n00b_science_blogging_101_part_1.php).

Graham, Mary. *Democracy by Disclosure: The Rise of Technopopulism*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 2002.

Hendler, Clint. "The Story Behind The Publication of Wikileaks Afghan Logs." *Columbia Journalism Review*, (2010).

Hermida, Alfred. "From TV to Twitter: How Ambient News Became Ambient Journalism." *Media Culture Journal* 13, no. 2 (2010).

Hermida, Alfred. "The Blogging BBC: Journalism Blogs at 'The World's Most Trusted News Organisation.'" *Journalism Practice* 3, no. 3 (2009): 268-284.

Holzer, Leslie and Burkart Holzer. *Transparency in Global Change: The Vanguard of the Open Society*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

Howe, Jeff. "The Wisdom of the Crowd Resides in How the Crowd is Used." *Nieman Reports* 4, no. 62 (2008): 47-50.



Jansen, Sue Curry. "Phantom Conflict: Lippmann, Dewey and the Fate of the Public in Modern Society." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 3 (2009): 221-245.

Khatchadourian, Raffi. "No Secrets: Julian Assange's mission for total transparency." *The New Yorker*, August 18, 2010. [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/06/07/100607fa\\_fact\\_khatchadourian#ixzz1VOqkmmMI](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/06/07/100607fa_fact_khatchadourian#ixzz1VOqkmmMI)

Kouper, Inna. "Science blogs and public engagement with science: practices, challenges and opportunities." *Journal of Science Communication* 9, no. 1 (2010): 1-10.

Kronenberg, Tom. "Data Journalism Fueling PSI Reuse." European Public Sector Information Platform Topic Report No. 2011/2, October 2011.

Lee, Douglas. "Trying to Exclude Wikileaks From Shield Law Stinks," *First Amendment Center* (blog), August 25, 2010. <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/trying-to-exclude-wikileaks-from-shield-law-stinks>

Leigh, David, and Luke Harding. *Wikileaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy*. London: Guardian Books, 2011.

Lippmann, W. "The press and public opinion." *Political Science Quarterly* 46, (1931): 170.

Lippman, W. *Liberty and The News*. 1920. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Lorenz, Mirko. "Future Perspectives for Data-Driven Journalism," in European Journalism Centre, ed, *Data Driven Journalism: What Is There To Learn?* Amsterdam European Journalism Centre, 2010.

Lowrey, Wilson. "Mapping the journalism-blogging relationship." *Journalism* 7, no. 4 (2006): 477-500.

Lynch, Lisa. 'We're Going To Crack The World Open: Wikileaks and the Future of Investigative Reporting, Journalism Practice (2010).

McChesney, Robert. "So much for the magic of technology and the free market." In *The World Wide Web and Contemporary Cultural Theory*, edited by Thomas Swiss. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Meyer, Philip. *The New Precision Journalism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Meyer, Phillip. "Public Journalism and the Problem of Objectivity." Presentation at the Investigative Reporters and Writers Conference, Iowa, 1995.

Mindich, D.T. Z. *Just The Facts: How Objectivity Came To Define American Journalism*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Mitchelstein, Eugenia and Pablo J. Boczkowski. "Between tradition and change: A review of recent research on online news production." *Journalism* 10, (2009): 562.

Moreno, Javier. "Why El Pais chose to publish the leaks." *ElPais.com*, December 23, 2010. [http://www.elpais.com/articulo/english/Why/PAIS/chose/to/publish/the/leaks/elpepueng/20101223elpeng\\_3/Ten](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/english/Why/PAIS/chose/to/publish/the/leaks/elpepueng/20101223elpeng_3/Ten)

Popper, Karl. "Conjectures and Refutations." In *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, edited by Theodore Schick, 9-13. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000.

Powers, Matthew. "In Forms That Are Familiar and Yet-to-Be Invented:" American Journalism and the Discourse of Technologically Specific Work. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 6, no. 9(2011).

Rosen, Jay. "Making Things More Public: On The Political Responsibility of the Public Intellectual." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, (1994).

Rosen, Jay, "The View From Nowhere." *Pressthink*, September 18, 2003. <http://archive.pressthink.org/2003/09/18/jennings.html>

Segal E. and J. Heer. "Narrative Visualization: Telling Stories With Data." *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 16(6), (2010): 1139 – 1148.

Schudson, Michael. "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism." *Journalism* 2, (2011): 149-70.

Schudson, Michael. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. New York: Basic Books, 1978.

Scola, Nancy. "Data has its limits: Searching for Stories in "Top Secret America."" *Techpresident.com*, July 30, 2010. <http://techpresident.com/blog-entry/data-has-its-limits-searching-stories-top-secret-america-wikileaks>

Shanahan, Marie-Claire. "Science Blogs as Boundary Layers: Creating and understanding new writer and reader interactions through science blogging." *Journalism* 12, no. 7 (2011): 903-919.

Singer, Jane, Alfred Hermida, David Domingo, David Heinomen, Steve Paulussen, Thorsten Quandt, Zvi Reich, and Marnia Vujnovic. *Participatory Journalism: Guarding Open Gates at Online Newspapers*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

St. John, Burton. *Press Professionalism and Propaganda*. London: Cambria Press, 2010.

Stray, Jonathan. "A Computational Journalism Reading List." *Jonathanstray.com*, April 18, 2011. <http://jonathanstray.com/a-computational-journalism-reading-list>

Streckenfuss, R. "Objectivity in Journalism: A search and a reassessment." *Journalism Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1990).

Taylor, Kate. "Wikileaks and the Media: Dancing with the Devil." *The Globe and Mail*(Montreal), Saturday, Dec. 18, 2010.

Thiel, Joshua. "The Statistical Irrelevance of American SIGACT Data." *Small Wars Journal*, (2011).

Walejko, Gina and Thomas Ksiazek. "Blogging from the Niches." *Journalism Practice* 11, no. 3 (2010): 412-427.

Websdale, N. and A. Alvarez. "Forensic Journalism as Patriarchal Ideology: The Newspaper Construction of Homicide-Suicide." In *Popular Culture, Crime and Justice*, edited by F. Bailey and D. Hale, 123-141. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2008.

Wien, Charlotte. "Defining Objectivity Within Journalism: An Overview." *Nordicom Review* 26, no. 2 (2005): 2-15.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Colbert Report, Monday April 12, 2010. Broadcast archived at <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/270712/april-12-2010/julian-assange>.

<sup>2</sup> Comments attached to Colbert Report segment on Julian Assange, April 12, 2010, archived at <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/270712/april-12-2010/julian-assange>

<sup>3</sup> For example, in a video interview placed online by the Guardian newspaper during the initial release of the Afghanistan war logs, Assange noted the leak “would reveal the true nature of the war....so that people could see what was really going on and take steps to address the problem.”

<sup>4</sup> Wikileaks’ legal troubles are ongoing and hence difficult to summarize. Currently, Assange has been granted political asylum by Ecuador, and is trapped inside the Ecuadorian embassy, facing possible extradition to Sweden on charges unrelated to Wikileaks, while the United States pursues the possibility of asking that Britain or Sweden expedite Assange to face espionage charges. As well, a protracted financial boycott of Wikileaks by U.S. corporations processing donations to the group has led Wikileaks to the brink of financial collapse, leading them to formally suspend their submission system as of October of 2011.

<sup>5</sup> In the United States, the discussion of whether or not Wikileaks was a media outlet figured heavily in discussions about the proposed Federal Shield Law for journalists in the summer of 2010 (Lee, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> For further discussion of journalistic boundary work, see Anderson 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Even within tradition newsrooms, reporters who handle online operations have been marginalized by their peers; though this has recently begun to change at some media outlets, skirmishes over online practice continue to reflect prejudices against work produced on and for an online environment (Domingo and Paterson 2008, 2010). Over the past decade, the framing of blogging as a non-journalistic form has been the most prominent example of such boundary work (Lowery 2006): in recent years, Twitter’s increasing relevance as a site of journalistic activity has engendered boundary work around that platform as well (Hermida 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Assange was highly regarded in Central and South America, in particular, to the extent that he briefly discussed relocating Wikileaks operations to Brazil.

<sup>9</sup> For an account of the deterioration of the relationship between Wikileaks, the Times and the Guardian, see Samuel Ellison, “The Man Who Spilled The Secrets,” Vanity Fair, February 2011.

<sup>10</sup> The entire cable database was published after the encrypted file was discovered online and de-encrypted by using a password inadvertently included by Leigh in his book on the

---

Guardian's dealings with Assange. Aware that the de-encrypted file had been made available on a torrent server, Assange placed the full set of cables on the Wikileaks website.

<sup>11</sup> Most notably, Glenn Beck spread this misunderstanding among his viewers, but it was a frequent enough media error that Wikileaks founder Jimmy Wales found himself mistaken for Julian Assange by U.K. Customs officials in November of 2011. Some of the confusion was generated by Wikileaks itself, which described itself as "an uncensorable version of Wikipedia" in early 2007. See "Who stands to gain from Wikileaks?" BBCNews, March 13, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6443437.stm>

<sup>12</sup> For an example of this kind of argument, see Kirsch, Adam, July 26 2010 The New Republic <http://www.tnr.com/blog/foreign-policy/76562/why-wikileaks-still-needs-the-new-york-times>

<sup>13</sup> At the time of the writing of this article, Manning has not be proven to be the source of the leak, though a trial is underway and investigators claim to have matched some material on Manning's computers with those released by Wikileaks.

<sup>14</sup> For example, a Twitter message posted to the Wikileaks Twitter stream on July 12, 2009, claimed that Wikileaks' practice of scientific journalism set them apart from other media sources.

<sup>15</sup> For further discussion of the relationship between Lippman and Meyer, see Wien 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Analyzing the initial attitudes toward CAR found in 1970s trade journals, Powers explains that "a tendency exists to see the raw materials of computer-assisted reporting —namely data — as paradoxical units of journalistic knowledge. In such formulations, data comes to be understood both as necessary for truly objective journalism and insufficient on its own terms to achieve it. Rather than seeing forms of work engaged with such data as appropriately journalistic, it is viewed suspiciously, as incapable of producing artifacts easily recognized as journalism. The individuals most identified with those forms of work are subordinated to "real" journalists capable of producing such journalism" (Powers 2011).

<sup>17</sup> For sample criticism, see Scola 2010 and the comments on Hendler 2010.