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Inter-networked News:

Media Convergence and the Relationship between Blogging and Journalism

by

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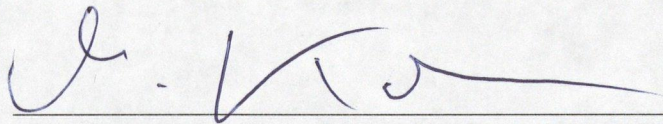
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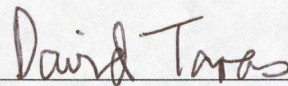
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Inter-networked News: Media Convergence and the Relationship between Blogging and Journalism" submitted by Aiden Buckland in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts.



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Abstract

This study examines the relationship that developed between bloggers and newspapers journalists during the resignation of Trent Lott from the post of Senate Majority Leader in 2002, and the Killian memo scandal of the 2004, Presidential election. It argues that the relationship between bloggers and newspapers journalists highlights the inter-networked environment which news is produced in today. As various news producers from all media compete and co-operate with on another in the production of news, bloggers highlight the interconnected nature of the news narrative that is produced. Representing a new way to present news born out of media convergence, the bloggers in this study produce a daily multimedia news narrative.

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Chapter One: Introduction

On December 5, 2002, Trent Lott gave a speech to honour his friend fellow Senator Strom Thurmond at his 100th birthday celebration in Washington DC. Senator Lott knew that members of the mainstream press were covering the event. He also knew that the event was being broadcast on CSPAN. What Lott did not know was that fifteen days later the remarks he made during that speech would lead to his resignation as Senate Majority Leader. On September 8, 2004, Dan Rather and news producer Mary Mapes aired a news segment on 60 Minutes II about how President Bush, who was in the midst of an election campaign, did not fulfill his duties with the National Guard in 1973. They knew that the documents they used to prove this fact were suspect because the experts they consulted to authenticate them had voiced some concerns over their authenticity. What Rather and Mapes could not anticipate is that within the next twelve days their reputations and their network would be dragged through the mud and that Rather would be forced to make a public apology for their errors in judgment.

What these cases have in common is they were both a result of the combined efforts of both journalists and bloggers. In both of these cases bloggers were first to present what became the dominant issues in the coverage of each story. These two cases are just the beginning in what has become a long list of examples in which the journalistic narratives of bloggers have influenced or directly impacted the way in which members of the mainstream press cover events. It is this relationship between bloggers and mainstream journalists that will be the focus of this study. What is the nature of their relationship? How do the authors from traditional news media relate to these bloggers?

What is the product of this relationship? Answering these questions will be the focus of my analysis.

In this study I will argue that the relationship between blogging and journalism highlights the nature of our inter-networked news environment which has been created and fostered by the convergence of news media. Blogging itself, with its hypertextual presentation, represents a new way of presenting news which is born out of media convergence. Using a case study approach I intend to analyze the frames produced by bloggers and journalists in the two stories just mentioned in which bloggers were said to have a major impact on the coverage.

Frames in the news media are like packages which journalists place information into when they create their stories. The way that information is packaged has an influence on what aspects of a story become salient and which are left out. By examining the frames of bloggers and mainstream journalists in the cases of the resignation of Trent Lott and the Killian memo scandal at CBS I will be able to draw some conclusions about the relationship between bloggers and journalists. Do some frames transcend the narratives of both media? How do the authors of each media place the other in their own frames?

Providing a definition of what constitutes a blog is difficult because bloggers are as diverse as the people who partake in the activity. The simplest way to describe bloggers would be to call them internet authors. Michael Keren provides one of the most recent and concise definitions of the phenomena, he characterizes blogs as, “online diaries with links to Websites of presumed interest such as traditional media outlets or other blogs” (Keren, 5, 2006). The aggregate of these interlinked journals has been

characterized as an alternate universe known as the blogosphere which Keren points out was coined by Steven Levy in a 2002, Newsweek article. The portion of the blogosphere that we will focus our attention on are the bloggers who produce a daily news narrative which is centred around current events and uses links to traditional and non-traditional media to fuel their coverage.

Emerging in the late seventies the idea of technological convergence has become a modern day reality. Media convergence refers to the coming together of separate modes of communication through the advancement of technology. With the versatility of the personal computer, cellular phone or personal digital assistant as examples of convergent technologies attention in the academy has shifted from how these technologies would emerge to how they will and are impacting the way that we communicate. In studying the relationship between blogging and journalism it is impossible to ignore the impact of media convergence and the insights that the study of convergence can offer our understanding of this relationship. In the following sections I will explain why I have chosen to explore this relationship and how I intend to conduct this study.

1.1.1 Why Study the Relationship between Bloggers and Journalists

Since the introduction of the internet into western societies in the late 1980s there have been many attempts to identify and analyze the impact this new medium has had on our lives. We live in a world where doctors can meet patients, investors can do business and governments can provide services to their citizens all using computer mediated communication technologies. In the past six years one of the most noticeable impacts the internet has made is on the profession of journalism. First we saw major mainstream news providers slowly migrate some of their resources into cyberspace in the mid to late

nineties in an attempt to cash in on the promise of media convergence. At the same time that news organizations were pushing their content into cyberspace bloggers emerged utilizing those sites and others as sources for providing their daily narratives to a growing number of readers. This study will be able contribute to the literatures surrounding blogging and media convergence.

The relationship between these bloggers and their readers, who are mostly other bloggers, would not be drastically different than the relationship between a small colonial newspaper and their audience. The colonial press was characterized by its single person operations. Behind most publications there was one man who served as editor, writer, advertiser and printer. News was much slower as the editor needed time to gather information and write the stories for their newspaper. At this point in time the role of the individual newsman was to resemble that of a information broker, who pieced together a newspaper from reporting, short stories, essays and letters from prominent people in the community (Schudson, 1978). In the blogosphere the essays and letters are replaced with hypertext links to other sources of journalism. What does it mean for mainstream journalism that this role has been recreated by the blogosphere?

As bloggers assume the role of modern day information brokers remediating the role of the colonial press in cyber space their relationship to mainstream press becomes a significant object of study. Are the narratives produced in the blogosphere being co-opted by mainstream journalists or do bloggers represent a truly independent voice unaffected by the corporate influences found in the mainstream press? At a time when the concentration of media ownership is a pressing issue for democratic society the role that these bloggers choose to play in society becomes significant. Away from the corporate

influences of the news industry, bloggers craft their daily news narratives. The extent to which these bloggers are co-opting and are co-opted by journalists in the mainstream press will be what this study contributes to the current literature surrounding the phenomena of blogging.

Technological development provides new modes of communication and blends the functions of old ones which forces news producers to change their approach when presenting news. As journalists adapt to the emergence of new communication technologies the impact of those technologies on the way in which journalism is practiced has been a focal point of this body of research. With news organizations expanding across multiple news delivery media the development of a multimedia news narrative has become apparent. The relationship that can be found in the frames of the bloggers and journalists in this study makes this multimedia narrative more apparent as the bloggers are able to weave together the separate narratives from news producers over multiple media.

Blogging represents a new way to deliver news that is consistent with earlier predictions of a new narrative developing from media convergence (Kawamoto, 2003). As bloggers weave their own daily multimedia narratives, interacting with authors in the mainstream press, we are witnessing a new way of presenting news. The relationship that has developed between the frames of the bloggers and journalists in this study will shed some light on how news production manifests itself in an environment which thrives on media convergence, like the blogosphere. This relationship can be characterized by the concept of co-opetition presented by Daily et al (2003) in their notion of the convergence continuum. It is at this level of convergence that news producers from various media both

compete and cooperate with one another in the production of their daily news narratives. The study of blogging and journalism offers answers for some of the questions that have arisen out of the media convergence literature.

1.1.2 The Cases in this Study

The two media events that we will examine in this study will be the resignation of Senator Trent Lott from the position of Senate Majority Leader in 2002 and the Killian memos scandal from the 2004 Presidential election which led to an official apology from Dan Rather and the President of CBS News Andrew Heyward. Each of these events has been considered by many authors, both inside and outside the academy, to be definitive journalistic triumphs for the blogosphere (Keren 2006; Hewitt, 2004; Burstein & Kline 2005). Focusing our attention on these two events will provide snapshots in the relationship between bloggers and journalists.

After remarking in a speech that America would not have had “all these problems” if Strom Thurmond who ran as a segregationist candidate was elected President instead of Harry Truman in 1948 (Edsall, A13, 2002), Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott was thrust into a political crisis. Held accountable for his remarks, first by the bloggers and later by the two newspapers in the sample, Lott apologized six times in attempt to retain his leadership position. With calls for his resignation coming from the blogosphere, mainstream journalism and finally his own party, Lott scheduled a leadership review to answer questions about his ability to lead the Republican Party in the Senate. The apologies seemed to make little difference and after Senator Bill Frist announced his intention to run in the leadership race Lott resigned his post as Majority Leader. The analysis of this case will focus on the coverage of this story which appeared

in the blogosphere and mainstream press during the fifteen days between Lott's remarks and his resignation. During this time there were many events such as Lott's apologies, the President's reaction and reactions of his fellow Republicans which fuelled coverage of this controversy.

With falsified records from a dead National Guard officer, Dan Rather reported in the last two months of a Presidential election that the sitting President of the United States received preferential treatment during his service in the Guard. The documents also indicated that President Bush failed to fulfill his duties as an officer in 1973, when he failed to take a drug test. Lt. Col. Jerry Killian, who passed away in 1984, was the alleged source of the memos and within 24 hours of the memos being aired the blogosphere, his family and some of his National Guard colleagues provided reasons to doubt the authenticity of the documents presented by Rather. The strongest evidence emerged from the blogosphere when bloggers were able to replicate the documents using Microsoft Word, which provided visual confirmation on their websites.

From the moment the story aired on 60 Minutes II until CBS made an official apology 12 days later the journalistic procedures of CBS News were closely scrutinized by authors in both the mainstream press and blogosphere. Rather and CBS News stood by their story and struggled to provide evidence of the documents' authenticity while the journalists and bloggers in the sample provided their own evidence and analysis of the errors in judgment and journalistic process in the CBS News division responsible for the scandal. The analysis of this story will focus on the period of time between the original airing of the Killian Memo story until the official apology and admission by CBS News that the documents were false. There was sporadic coverage of this story until Rather's

resignation and final broadcast as lead anchor on CBS Evening News, but this coverage referred to this incident as background for Rather's departure.

The two cases chosen for this study are significant because of their impact on the development of the relationship between blogging and journalism. Both of these events are examples of when bloggers were able to directly impact the coverage of mainstream journalism with their work online. The resignation of Trent Lott and Dan Rather are also two of the first high profile examples of the relationship which has developed between bloggers and journalists. The foundational nature of these two cases to the relationship that has developed between blogging and journalism is what makes them an appropriate place to start when trying to understand this relationship.

1.2 Research Question

The central research question will be as follows:

What is the nature of the relationship that exists between bloggers and journalists?

This question rests on the key assumptions that; there is a relationship between bloggers and journalists; this relationship impacts the way the authors of these media construct their narratives; and finally that this relationship is accessible through the articles produced by these authors. We will now briefly explore these core assumptions.

Blogs made their first big journalistic impact in the wake of 9/11 when they provided information from ground zero to the world. As Keren indicated, "...they provided first-hand images and personal perspectives on the traumatic events informing disoriented audiences about the shaky world around them" (5, 2003). Since then blogs have continued to make their impact felt within the news media. Bloggers have been involved in several high profile media events over the last six years including the

resignation of Trent Lott, the War in Iraq, the Jayson Blair scandal, the Killian memos scandal, the Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina just to name a few.

According to the website CyberJournalist.net maintained by Jonathan Dube, the editorial director for CBC.ca and purportedly the first journalist to blog about the news, there are over 300 journalists globally who currently blog the news. These are journalists who file reports for their mainstream employers as well as maintain a blog which is updated on a regular basis and usually linked to their employer's website. Of course there are also a number of freelance journalists who also maintain a personal blog where they chronicle their lives covering the news. Blogs are now recognized and even featured in mainstream journalism from sources like the *Guardian* in London and on CNN's daily political news digest *Inside Politics*. Given the position that blogs seem to hold within mainstream journalism today it is safe to say that there is a relationship between blogging and journalism and that the two media are making an impact on one another. What does it mean when we say bloggers are making an impact on mainstream journalism? Which bloggers? How can we tell them apart from their diarist counterparts?

Approaching the articles from the perspective of frame analysis provides a solid foundation for the examination of the relationship between bloggers and journalists. Frames offer a way of accessing the relationship by providing a means for discerning how the authors of each medium approached the coverage of these two cases. The way in which these authors framed their stories provides a subject of analysis that is accessible in the articles found in each media. Both of the cases in this study are among the first examples the relationship that has developed between the mainstream and blogosphere. Obviously a more direct approach to accessing this relationship would be to interview the

mainstream journalists and bloggers involved in these cases. Because of the inaccessibility of the participants in the sample group in this study framing represents the best way to access the relationship between the newspapers and bloggers in this sample. The use of frame analysis allows us the opportunity to see how the frames of each medium cross over and interact with one another. What does it mean if a framing category emerges in the works of both mainstream journalists and bloggers? When the frames of these media compete with one another whose frames become dominant? These questions will be addressed as we move closer to the answer to our central research question.

1.3 Research Outline

In this chapter I have provided a reason for undertaking this study, we will now review the outline of the subsequent chapters in this thesis. In Chapter Two we will examine the theoretical framework of this study with a brief literature review of each of the major bodies of theory. This theoretical framework is based primarily on three theoretical areas: the emerging theory surrounding blogging, media convergence and the perspective of frame analysis. We will review the relevant literature and history of each one of these bodies of social theory providing a solid theoretical basis on which to position the analysis.

In Chapter Three we will examine the methods employed in the analysis of this study starting with an examination of the case study approach to qualitative research. We will examine the issues of generalizability and validity as they apply to case studies and offer arguments for how to deal with these challenges. We will then examine the data which was chosen for this study and the methods that were used to collect it. Lastly in

this chapter we will examine the coding methods applied in the analysis of the bloggers and journalists in this study. When using frame analysis it is very important to develop exhaustive framing categories. We will discuss the framing categories found in this study conceptualizing each category before applying them to the data.

The analysis of the Trent Lott case will be the focus of Chapter Four. We will begin with an analysis of the initial coverage and review the important events that took place during the period under study. The rest of the chapter will be dedicated to exploring the framing categories that were identified in the data and how the narratives developed between the mainstream press sources and the blogosphere. As we examine the frames that were used in each medium the emergence of an inter-networked news narrative between the authors of both media became apparent. We will explore how the author's of each media co-opt the frames of the other to produce this narrative.

Chapter Five will explore the Killian Memo case in a similar manner. Starting with an analysis of the conflict in the initial coverage and a review of the major events in the case we will then examine the framing categories that emerged in the articles of both media. In this case we will see how the authors of both media competed and cooperated with one another in the deconstruction of a wayward piece of journalism, perpetrated by CBS News. We will witness how bloggers became contributing partners in the development of this story. This case also highlights some of the key differences between the journalistic narratives being produced in the mainstream press and the blogosphere.

Chapter Six will provide an analysis of the findings in the previous two chapters and draw conclusions about the relationship between mainstream journalism and blogging. In this chapter we will explore the emergence of blogging as new way to tell

stories born out of the advancement of media convergence. I will argue that blogging is representative of the concept of storytelling convergence. Secondly we will look at the notion that the relationship between blogging and journalism makes the inter-networked nature of our current news environment more salient. I conceptualize the current news media environment where news producers exist in a network of networks where the content produced is the result of the competition and cooperation between the actors involved in these networks. The inter-networked news environment is a model that I propose for understanding the relationships that are being forged between news producers as a result of the steady progression of media convergence.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Before answering the research question a theoretical framework that combines the theories of media convergence, blogging and frame analysis must first be conceptualized. In order to understand how media convergence can be used to explain the relationship between bloggers and journalists it is important to first understand how the concept has emerged from a theory concerned with technological advancement to a theory which seeks to explain how these advancements shape our communication. We will explore how the theories of media convergence can be used to understand the relationship between blogging and journalism.

Next we will examine the emerging theory that has developed around the activity of blogging. This literature primarily focuses on the way in which technologies used in the activity of blogging, like hypertext, have fundamentally changed the relationships between readers, writers and texts. There have also been a number of studies which have looked at blogging and mainstream journalism. The literature that has developed around the phenomena of blogging is very fragmented not unlike the medium itself. Since bloggers do so many different things with their blogs researchers have approached the medium from many different angles. What binds these studies together is the unique character of their research subject. The insights that these studies have provided into the characteristics of this medium will be an important starting point for our understanding of blogging in this study.

In the last section of this chapter we will conceptualize the perspective of frame analysis and how it will apply to this study. The concept of frames and framing has been used in the academy now for over 30 years. In order to understand how the concept is

used in this study we will examine how it emerged and how it has evolved over this time. Robert Entman has referred to framing as a “fractured paradigm”, which emphasizes the need to sort through the relevant literature before operationalizing the concept in my analysis. The concept of framing offers a means to access the relationship between bloggers and journalists through the articles that they write. By analyzing how the authors of each medium package their stories we will be able to see how those packages are shared and contested in each of the cases under study.

2.1.1 Convergence

Whether we refer to corporate mergers like AOL and Time Warner or news organizations cross promoting each other like the CNN and the *Washington Post* or even the introduction of the Blackberry¹ there are many things which are currently being referred to as convergence. The concept of convergence has become particularly relevant to the news industry as information technologies provide new means to deliver news content to consumers. How these information technologies are changing the practice of journalism has been the focus of scholars and industry professionals who are interested in the rise of media convergence. First we will examine the emergence of the term convergence and its historical relationship to journalism. Then we will examine some of the key concepts from the convergence literature which are pertinent to this study and explain what contribution can be made to this body of literature.

The term convergence has been applied in many fields since its emergence in the seventeenth century. Since the mid 1970s the term has been used in relation to the

¹ Blackberry refers to a handheld mobile device that acts as a phone, personal organizer and web browser

development of information technology. As computers became more sophisticated and it became possible to store information digitally convergence became a concept used in reference to media producers. There are many forms of convergence, for this study we will focus on convergence within the news media referred to as convergent journalism (Quinn, 2005). Although technological convergence plays a large role in convergent journalism, technology is not the primary focus of this literature. The literature that we will explore focuses on how convergence is changing the practice of journalism from the organization of the newsroom to the production of news for multiple platforms.

2.1.2 Convergence in Academia and Industry

Nicholas Negroponte of the MIT was one of the first academics to present the notion of media convergence in the late 1970s. Negroponte used three overlapping circles to describe his conception of convergence in a presentation to representatives of various media industries whom he hoped would fund his research in 1979. The three circles represented the broadcasting industries, computer industry and print industries and he predicted that the overlap between the three would be almost total by the millennium (Kawamoto, 2003, 59). In many ways this original vision of convergence was correct although most people still access these industries using a variety of different technologies instead of the one magical device that would provide access to all three of these industries.

Ithiel De Sola Pool introduced the notion of the “convergence of modes” in his 1983, book The Technologies of Freedom. As he explained,

the current convergence between historically separated modes of communication lies in the habituality of digital electronics...electronic technology is bringing all modes of communications into one grand system.”(Pool, 1983, 28)

Pool's book was part of a parallel awakening to the concept of convergence that was taking place in the early 1980s in both the academy and the broadcasting industry. Convergence in the eighties was synonymous with John Scully who left the Pepsi Corporation to become the CEO of Apple Computers. Scully embraced Negroponte's vision of convergence and as Gordon pointed out, "[w]hen the word convergence showed up in the business press in the 1980s and early 90s it was often in connection with Scully and Apple"(Kawamoto, 2003, 59). If the notion of media convergence was not adopted by people in private industry like Scully and others the spread of the concept would most likely have been much slower.

Everette Dennis characterized the emergence of convergence in four stages starting with this incremental awakening. He suggests that the early 90s saw some early adoption of convergence in the press followed by a period of uncritical acceptance in the last few years of the decade. The last decade of the century saw many news producers migrating some or all of their content into the World Wide Web. The last phase that Dennis identified was the presumption of failure that coincided with the dot com crash in the first few years of the millennium. This presumption of failure is based on the notion that convergence would be a universal solution to all of the problems facing the news industry, like declining subscription rates in the newspaper industry.

2.1.3 Convergence and Journalism

Stephen Quinn has focused his research on how the concept of convergence has been changing the practice and product of modern journalism. What this change produces is what he refers to as "convergent journalism", which is one of the focuses of this study

(Quinn, 2005). Quinn conceives of convergence as a form of multimedia publishing which is changing the practice of journalism. Quinn suggests that, “Full media convergence involves a radical change in approach and mindset among managers and journalists” (Quinn, 2005, 14). He envisions a newsroom with numerous new editorial positions all designed to determine which platform is best suited for a particular story or which parts of a story will be explored in which medium. For this type of convergence journalists from various media would use a shared assignment desk where the “significance of the news event” would dictate the depth of the coverage and which news media would be deployed in its coverage (Quinn, 2005).

Quinn’s vision of convergent journalism requires a new type of multi-talented reporter who can specialize in every type of broadcast news media from print to television. This vision has led him to publish a considerable amount of material on the tension between media convergence for the sake of better journalism or for the sake of increased profits. Quinn presents convergence as a beneficial business plan for news producers where they can call upon the same journalist for stories for different media for very little or no additional monetary compensation. He also recognizes that the number of multi-talented journalists that an organization could find would be limited and suggests the model would also work well with multimedia assignment editors and teams of journalists from all media working together to tell the same story.

Quinn suggests that media convergence has been driven by the fragmentation of modern audiences and the changing habits of news consumers. The vision that he presented of convergence is inextricably linked to the notion of media concentration; a situations where the number of news producers shrinks as the size of news

conglomerations increases. The concept of media concentration has been explored by Ben Bagdikian in his book, The Media Monopoly. He explored the potential threat that this trend poses to our democratic society. What is interesting about this intermingling of media convergence with concentration is that the bloggers explored in this study serve as evidence that the two concepts do not have to go together in order for convergence to work. Tens of thousands of news savvy bloggers are able to create their own individual news narratives each day using sources from multiple news media without needing to own anything more than a personal computer and a connection to the internet.

In the book Digital Journalism, Richard Gordon examines the concept of convergence and tries to define it relative to its impact on the practice of journalism. In his chapter Gordon explores the concept of convergence and how it is changing news production. He identified five emerging types of convergence in news media: ownership, tactical, structural, information gathering and presentation or storytelling (Kawamoto, 2003). As Quinn suggests, “Gordon’s five categories describe convergence from the perspective of ownership and newsroom structures” (Quinn, 12, 2005). Although Gordon’s focus is primarily on the professional practice of journalism, the concept of storytelling convergence leaves some room for other forms of news media like blogging to emerge.

Ownership convergence is often studied in relationship to media concentration as it refers to large multimedia corporations who facilitate collaboration between news producers of different media. Tactical convergence refers to partnerships that have developed between news producers from different media. Typically this is discussed in reference to the partnerships formed between television and print journalism. Structural

and information gathering convergence refers to the reorganization of the newsroom in order to adapt to convergence in news production. The creation of new positions in the newsroom is often necessary in order to oversee the multimedia deployment of stories. Information gathering convergence is the notion that convergence is forcing journalists to produce news narratives for multiple media in order to meet the demands of convergent journalism.

The most interesting and least explored of the types of convergence that Gordon identifies is presentation or story telling convergence. He suggests that technological convergence will provide the means for a new way to present news. Although he refers to vaguely to 'web journalism', Gordon does not spend much time elaborating on what new types of storytelling are evolving from the convergence of news media nor does he look outside of the mainstream press for possible emerging examples like blogging. As Kevin Kawamoto suggests that the emergence of blogging may be a new form of digital journalism. Kawamoto refers to bloggers as a "motley community of ad hoc news hounds and pundits" (Kawamoto, 2, 2003). It is my contention that from this community of bloggers we can see the emergence of a new type of multimedia news narrative that is consistent with the concept of storytelling convergence.

Larry Daily, Lori Demo and Mary Spillman attempt to address what they saw as a, "[l]ack of a common behavior-based definition of convergence and lack of a common instrument for measuring convergence efforts"(2003, 2) in a paper submitted to the newspaper division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. They were less interested in whether or not media outlets were practicing convergence and more on to what extent these organizations were practicing

convergence. Their study presents a convergence continuum in which there are five levels of convergence among news organizations: cross-promotion, cloning co-opetition, content sharing and full convergence (Daily et al, 2003). As a news producer moves along this continuum the authors suggest that the convergence behaviors that they display go through a snowball effect. When an organization has reached full convergence then they display all of the convergence behaviors from the previous four levels as well as the additional behaviors of full convergence.

The level of this continuum that is most pertinent to this study is the level of co-opetition. As Daily and his colleagues describe, “At this level staff members of separate media outlets promote and share information about some stories on which they are working...but at this level years of competition and cultural differences combine to create mutual distrust and limits the degree of cooperation and interaction”(Daily et al, 2003, 5). It is at this level of the continuum that the relationship between bloggers and mainstream journalism exists. When two news organizations are cooperating Daily et al suggest that staff members would, “share information on selected stories with news partners. Have newspaper reporters and columnists who are comparative experts on their beats appear on the television newscasts to more fully explain a specific story...share visual content...”(2003, 7). When they are competing Daily et al suggest that news producers will, “...express distrust of their partners by questioning the quality of their work.” (Daily et al, 2003, 7). The concept of co-opetition will be used to understand how bloggers and journalists relate to one another.

As bloggers weave their multimedia news narratives using hypertext links to draw in resources from all other news platforms accessible through the internet they are practicing story telling convergence. Although there is some disagreement over whether or not blogging can actually be considered journalism, which we will explore in the next section, the hypertextuality of this medium allows its authors to successfully blend the narratives of various news media in a way consistent with Gordon's description of story telling convergence. The relationship that has developed between the mainstream press and the blogosphere also falls in the middle of the convergence continuum as described by Daily, Demo and Spillman.

What is interesting about this literature is that except for brief mentions by Kawamoto, Gordon and Quinn there is no attention given to the journalistic activities happening on the fringes of mainstream journalism, like what is happening in the blogosphere. These authors look to the newsroom to see how convergent journalism is changing the professional practice of news production rather than looking toward the technologies that are changing the profession and creating the potential for emerging types of journalism. What is occurring in the blogosphere hovers on the outskirts of what we now consider to be journalism and giving this new medium consideration will allow us to shed some light on its role in society and in convergent journalism. As we examine the structure of the frames produced in the two newspapers and the blogosphere in this study we will see how co-opetition emerges between the two media and how these bloggers present a new kind of news narrative.

2.2 Understanding the Blogosphere

Although blogging is a relatively new phenomenon it has received a considerable amount of attention from the academy. To start we will examine the literature which has concerned itself with defining this phenomenon which serves as a foundation for our current understanding of blogging. One of the core elements of the practice of blogging is the use of hypertext links to construct narratives so we will explore the relevant literature that has developed around this technology. Bolter and Landow have laid the groundwork for our current understanding of hypertext so we will explore their works in particular. Blogging has also been examined by academics interested in the study of life writing. These authors have examined how blogging has altered the reader/writer relationship. Finally we will examine the literature which has developed around blogging and its impact on journalism.

Rebecca Blood has identified three basic types of blogs; personal journals, notebooks and filters. Personal journals focus mainly on the internal thoughts and feelings of their author's. The notebooks are characterized by longer more focused essays and may contain elements of either an internal or external focus. Filters focus their writing on the world around them linking to news sites and other sources for outside material to fuel the daily production of their blog. The blogs chosen for this study would most closely resemble the filter category that Blood identifies. In the case of the blogs in this study they mainly filtered information from mainstream and internet news sources.

In a study of a blogging community after the attacks of September 11, 2001 Krishnamurthy divided the practice of blogging into four quadrants on a graph dividing the bloggers first based on whether their writing was personal or topical and secondly

divided by whether the blog was produced individually or by a community (2002). The blogs chosen for this study would fall in the topical-individual quadrant of this grid with the exception of one blog out of twelve. These first attempts to categorize the work of bloggers were continued by the work of the Blog Research on Genre project (BROG) group.

Blogs have been utilized by journalists, educators, politicians, business people and private individuals for a multitude of purposes. As Herring et al stated,

Journalists see blogs as alternative sources of news and public opinion. Educators and business people see them as environments for knowledge sharing; blogs created for this purpose within an organization or institution are sometimes called k(nowledge)-logs. Last but not least, private individuals create blogs as a vehicle for self expression and self-empowerment.(Herring et al, 2004)

The blogs that we will focus on in this study are what Herring et al refer to as enhanced columnists (2004). These blogs construct a news narrative from the combination of quoting and linking to other online news sources along with providing their own essays and analysis about current events and media coverage. These blogs are usually very political and they use a wide variety of links to support their essay writing. The bloggers will often link to a variety of different sources, from mainstream journalists to other bloggers.

2.2.1 Blogging and Hypertext

It is pretty widely accepted among those who study hypertext today that the idea originated with Vannevar Bush, who identified that the linear system we use to organize texts is inadequate and cumbersome. It was his contention that our thinking process was naturally associative therefore our means of storing and processing information should also be associative. The memmex, a machine that he conceptualized but never built, was

supposed to contain a collection of texts, potentially every text, on microfilm. Using a series of levers and dials the reader would be able to call up a text and then write in the margins on a plastic film and then connect that plastic film to the text. The result is a hypertextual system of information where there are a multitude of pathways through the system unlike the more traditional linear system. Bush's conception of the memmex led to the developments in the field of computer science and is the basis for hypertext theory. We will now review the work of John Bolter and Robert Landow who are two foundational scholars in this area of research.

For Bolter, hypertext represents a remediation of the technology of inscription. He compares this remediation to the move from papyrus to codex (Bolter, 23, 2001). Hypertext is able to re-organize the writing space in a way that alters the experience for both the reader and the writer. For Landow it represents a revolution in the way we produce texts. He describes that, "A full hypertext system unlike a book and unlike some of the first approximations of hypertext currently available (Hypercard, Guide), offers the same environment to both reader and writer" (Landow, 1998, 07). The main difference between the two theorists is the perspective they take in their approach to their respective studies. Bolter takes a more historical perspective placing hypertext among the various other remediations in the history of literacy, whereas Landow focused more on the potential that this new structure has for changing the medium of modern texts.

The most important influence of hypertext is how the technology changes the relationship between readers, writers and texts. According to Bolter, the multi-linearity of the hypertextual medium changes the ability of the writer to present ideas. Bolter suggests, "Why should a writer be forced to produce a single linear argument or an

exclusive analysis of cause and effect, when the writing space allows a writer to entertain and present several lines of thought at once?”(Bolter, 107, 2001). The multimedia narratives in the blogosphere exemplify this concept by using hypertext to recount the articles of multiple news sources mixed with their own writing.

Landow suggests that because hypertextual documents bring the roles of reader and writer closer together, the author of a hypertext document has less power over the text than the linear writer. Landow explains that, “Hypertext, which creates an active even intrusive reader, carries this convergence of activities one step closer to completion; but in so doing, it infringes upon the power of the writer, removing some of it and granting that portion to the reader”(Landow, 90, 1998). The power that Landow is describing is the power to choose what which hyperlinks and narratives to follow. Although his book makes no mention of blogging specifically we can see how this transfer of power manifests itself in the blogosphere.

When the technology of hypertext is examined through the lens of collective action or organization we get the concepts of hypervoice and inter-networking. Within the blogosphere in both cases an “opinion storm” or “blog swarm” developed around these issues (Hewitt, 2005). These terms refer to a phenomenon that Anada Mitra has identified in her study of the South Asian Women’s Networks (SAWNet) called hypervoice. This phenomenon occurs when groups of people use the internet to communicate about particular issues of interest to them. When bloggers use hypertext links to connect their blogs to similar narratives found in the mainstream and other blogs it creates a hypertextual group drawn together by there shared interest which creates a hyper-voice like phenomena around an issue.

The term inter-networking has arisen from studies of social movements and the affect that computer mediated communication has had on these movements. As non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups connect and collaborate using the internet new types of communities are formed. Langman indicates that, “These new kinds of Internet-based social movements, cyberactivism, are fundamentally new and require new kinds of theorization”(Langman, 2000, 44). Langman analyzes how internet technologies have encouraged a network society where groups that would normally have no connection to one another come together through the internet to achieve larger goals. Coming from a combination of social movement literature and computer based communication literature the notion of an inter-networked environment for social movements can be easily applied to the relationship between news producing media.

The concepts of hypertextuality, hyper-voice and inter-networking are essential for our understanding of the inter-networked news environment. The hypertextuality of the blogs presented in this study is a key feature of their narrative and a defining characteristic of the relationship between bloggers and the mainstream press. Through the use of hypertext, as we will see, bloggers construct their narratives on top of the narratives found in the mainstream. When this happens it creates a phenomenon similar to hypervoice which brings attention to an issue like the racist comments made by Trent Lott. The notion of inter-networking becomes an important tool in understanding the relationships that have developed between news producers of different media.

2.2.2 Blogging as Life Writing

In a special issue of the journal *Biography* in 2003, Madeleine Sorapure, Andreas Kitzmann, Laurie McNeil and Helen Kennedy all contributed articles that dealt with blogging in relation to the study of life writing. These articles focused mostly on how the medium impacts the narrative of the diarist and the implications of an environment that was both a private space and public performance. These authors expanded the notion of how the technology of blogging challenges our understanding of the reader-writer and writer-text relationships in the process of diary writing. Their research can also be used to understand news bloggers even though their work is not strictly autobiographical.

In the case of blogs the audience is no longer at the edge of the page, but they are sitting in front of a computer screen. Laurie McNeill highlights the interactivity of the medium in her study of blogging as she suggests that readers are very willing to respond to the daily entries of the internet diarist creating an interactive community between author and reader. The ability of the readers to respond and comment on the entries made by the writer instantly changes their relationship. Readers can become an active part of this new narrative.

Along with confounding the reader-writer relationship in terms of intensity and interaction it also affects the motivation of the writer to maintain the diary. McNeill states, “for the online diarist having readers means that the diarist has both joined and created communities, acts that will inform the text”(McNeill, 2003, 32). How the readers inform and influence the text is a valid concern, but it is not specific to the online diary format. The idea that diaries have often been written as a means of communicating to family, friends or the future is echoed by Madeleine Sorapure’s analysis of the affect of

an active readership. She indicates that, “the Web’s interactivity and the immediacy of its publishing enhance that aspect of diary writing concerned not with solitary and private reflection, but with communication and community”(Sorapure, 2003, 10). If we assume that the hand written diarist is carrying on a conversation with the future, then what the internet does is move that conversation into the present. This sense of community also guides the keyboards of bloggers who have chosen to focus their efforts on current events and the production of news.

With regards to the writer-text relationship Sorapure refers to the material separation between the writer and the text. She suggests that it, “calls attention to the ways in which the interface between writer and text influences the construction of the autobiographical self and story” (Sorapure, 2003, 4). Building on the writing of Landow and Bolter this suggests that the technology of blogging alters the way in which individuals create their narratives. Blogs act like a hypertextual database of entries which can be read in whatever order a reader chooses. Sorapure reminds us that, “a print diary is also structured like a database of entries, the self-representation it contains appears to be more continuous and unified by virtue of its being chronologically continuous, bound together in a book or notebook and read linearly” (Sorapure, 2003, 8). This shift in the writer-text relationship can explain how the bloggers in this study construct their news frames.

Life writing literature also informed Michael Keren’s research in his book Blogosphere: The New Political Arena. Dr Keren introduces us to the politics of the blogosphere, which he suggests are melancholic. Providing us with an analysis and characterization of the medium’s political role in society, his study of the blogosphere fits

into the growing body of research that is helping us to define this new medium. As Dr Keren points out the blogosphere represents an environment for emancipation where everyone who has access to a computer is afforded a chance to voice their views in a public sphere. He refers to the blogosphere as a new political arena that is defined by its solitude and political helplessness. Although Keren recognizes the journalistic achievements of the blogosphere the blogs in his study were in the diarist genre of blogging. The bloggers in my study are concerned with contributing to a public discourse that takes place in the mainstream press.

The literature of life writing provides key conceptualizations of the author-reader and author- text relationships as well as a characterization of the authors of the medium. The interactivity of blogging must have some impact on the construction of the bloggers' narrative. The impact of new technological opportunities on the narrative of the blogger is also apparent from the widespread use of hypertext linking. The interaction between the newspaper reporters and bloggers in this study represents one aspect of what some bloggers are choosing to do with their newly emancipated voice. The extent to which the news narrative that has emerged in the blogosphere will be a voice of emancipation or just another narrative for mainstream news media to co-opt still remains to be seen.

2.2.3 Blogging and Journalism

The majority of the literature written about blogging and journalism has focused on the extent to which blogging constitutes a form of journalism. Tanni Haas, Marc Fisher and Paul Andrews grapple with the question of whether blogging is journalism. Susan Robinson and Jane Singer examine journalists who maintain blogs in order to determine how the practice of blogging is influencing journalism. Thomas Johnson and

Barbara Kaye found that their survey respondents were spending around 9.1 hours per week interacting with bloggers and have been doing so for the past year (2004, 629). These results came from their study designed to determine how blog readers conceive of these new sources for journalism and how much credibility they assign to other blogs. Although a large number of people who responded to their survey use blogs regularly for information gathering, there are some scholars who question the value of blogs as a journalistic product.

Haas, Fisher and Andrews all concluded in their studies that blogging did not meet the standards of modern journalism. Haas asserts that because news narrative in the blogosphere does not completely challenge the discourse of mainstream news media that blogs do not represent a radical departure from traditional media. She concluded that the act of linking to mainstream sources re-enforces the dominance of the mainstream press instead of utilizing the wide variety of sources available online to create an alternative news narrative. Haas suggests that, “rather than influencing the coverage of mainstream news media, it appears that blog writers not only cover the same topics but also rely on them for information on those topics” (Haas, 389, 2005). When we consider that bloggers do not have the same access to time and resources that authors in the mainstream have this comes as no real surprise.

Marc Fisher also contended in his 2005, study that blogging was not journalism because of the fact that bloggers rely so heavily on the writing of mainstream authors. As he stated,

As if the relationships among government, the campaign industry and the news media were not troubled enough, now comes a new player that purports to be a fresh, grassroots voice but is rapidly evolving into an agent for spin, stealth

identities and yes, scattered around the wild world of blogging, some aggressive and original reporting. (Fisher, 43, 2005)

For Fisher the prevalence of this aggressive and original reporting is far outweighed by the other non-journalistic behavior being displayed in the blogosphere. Andrews, a journalist by profession, acknowledges that although blogging may have something to contribute, it is “discrete and separate” from what we know as journalism (Andrews, 2003, 64).

To hold the journalistic work of the blogosphere up to the professional standards of modern journalism will always result in misunderstanding the practice of blogging the news. Most bloggers lack the time and the resources to compete with major news organizations so instead they rely on the coverage of the mainstream press to inform their own writing. This dependence of news bloggers on the mainstream press is a key component of their relationship. By examining the frames produced by bloggers and the relationship they have to mainstream press frames we will be able to begin to understand the role that news bloggers are playing in society.

Susan Robinson (2006) and Jane Singer (2005, 2006) provided an analysis of what they called j-bloggers. J-blogs are sites that are used, promoted and maintained by mainstream press outlets like MSNBC, CNN or the *New York Times*. The research that has been conducted on j-blogs is a good starting point for a broader discussion of how blogging is influencing mainstream journalism. The institutionalized blogs that exist in the realm of the j-blogger represent the same type of co-opting that Keren identified in the blogosphere. As mainstream news producers provide blogs for their employees the act of blogging the news becomes a normalized journalistic activity. None of the bloggers

in this study would fall into the category of the j-blogger although some of the bloggers are professional journalists. What makes them different is that they are not affiliated with a mainstream news provider exclusively.

By examining the work of bloggers and newspaper reporters I will be able to contribute to our understanding of the medium of blogging by furthering our understanding of the relationship that emerges from the analysis of their frames. By examining how these media influence each other's frames the relationship between the authors of the two media becomes more salient. Bloggers seek to share a part of the responsibility that the mainstream news media bears from their role as the fourth estate. They produce a news narrative designed to inform their readers in a way that is as unique as a bloggers' world view. For the mainstream the blogosphere has become a novelty news source which provides newsworthy stories on an occasional basis.

2.3 Framing

Emerging in mid-seventies framing has been used in the academy in the last three decades to deconstruct the messages found in the mass media as well as discern their impact on individual cognition. In order to understand how theoretical perspective of framing fits into this study we will first examine the origin of frame analysis. From the beginning framing has been a divergent field of study focusing on the frames of both individuals and frames that appear in the mass media. So, it will be important to review how framing literature has developed over the last 30 years along these two streams. Lastly we will examine where this study fits in the landscape of framing research and why framing was the best way to answer my research questions.

2.3.1 Origins of Frame Analysis

Framing research has is rooted in the works of three main scholars; Erving Goffman, Gaye Tuchman and Todd Gitlin. Each scholar approached frame analysis with different empirical objectives, but all three shared a similar basic understanding of what constitutes a frame. They all conceived of frames as cognitive constructs used for the transmission and reception of meaning. Frames function like a net catching particular aspects of a message and making them more salient to the receiver. Because they are cognitive constructs, frames can be identified in the messages we send as well as the processes we employ to decipher the messages we receive.

An example of a frame that is often found in the media would be what is referred to as the game frame, which has been identified in the data of this study. This frame is most often applied during an election when journalists will focus on the competitive aspects of a particular event rather than the ideas that are presented. When a politician gives a speech during an election campaign news stories about the event will often focus on how that speech has affected the strategic position of the politician. By making some parts of a message more salient others issues are obviously muted by a particular frame. In keeping with the example of the horse race frame, when a reporter chooses to focus on the strategic elements of a political event the substance of the politician's message is usually presented in strategic terms. Further conceptualization of this framing category will be addressed in the next chapter along with the conceptualization of the other categories. Frames place a spotlight on specific aspects of a message inevitably leaving other aspects less noticeable in the surrounding darkness. To understand framing as a

theoretical construct we understand each of the three foundational scholars and their original works in framing research.

Most noted for his development of dramaturgical theory Erving Goffman was also the first scholar to write about frame analysis. In his book, Frame Analysis, Goffman sought to explain how people determine, “what is it that’s going on here?” (Goffman, 1974, 8). His fascination with how individuals determine what is real; lead him to extensively explore situations in which reality is being staged like in the theatre or in a con. Goffman would suggest that we can tell the difference between a play and reality because of the frame that we use. Focusing his analysis on common examples of everyday interaction Goffman hypothesized about how individuals may seek to understand their interaction and the concept of framing was his answer. His book does not provide much empirical evidence of interaction, but does provide an in depth analysis of common scenarios created by Goffman. His analytical style explored an exhaustive collection of possible interpretations of a give type of interaction. From this initial study, frame analysis was adopted by Tuchman and Gitlin in their major studies which applied the concept of frame to the production of news.

Tuchman presents the notion that news not only provides an account of daily events, but it also serves in the construction of social reality. Using this notion as the basis of her study she produced the second major work in frame analysis with her 1978, book Making News. Tuchman argues that by providing individuals with the necessary information for any level of civic engagement news organizations play an integral role in an individual’s construct of social reality. As she states, “I reasoned that the news media set the frame in which citizens discuss public events and that the quality of civic debate

necessarily depends on the information available”(Tuchman 1978, ix). Tuchman’s conception of the frame then is as a function of news production..

By problematizing the most basic elements of news production, Tuchman provides analysis of the news industry that indicates how institutional forces guide the hand of reporters who create the news. Particularly relevant is her concept of the “web of facticity” which seeks to explain how news organizations have developed routines to produce mutually self validating facts within their writing. When a reporter creates a story about an event they will use quotes from people who were at the event in order to validate what they write about it. By using sources and quotes instead of just writing about the event in their own words reporters are able to create a narrative that does not rely on their own personal credibility. This web of facticity places the onus of credibility on the source that the reporter is using.

This becomes important in our second case study as we see an example of when the web of facticity breaks down and a source turns out to be not credible. The result of this breakdown damaged the credibility of the CBS News organization in general and Dan Rather and Mary Mapes in particular. The concept is also important for understanding the hyperlinking behaviors of the bloggers in this study. The web of facticity can be applied to explain the role that hypertext links play in the construction of the bloggers’ narratives in this study. By linking to mainstream press sources bloggers allow their readers to verify the articles that they produce by visiting the source themselves.

Tuchman also introduced the concept of news repair which was further explored by Bennett, Gressett and Haltom in their 1985 analysis of the story of Cecil Andrews whose self immolation caught national attention in the major news media in 1983. News repair is the process of dealing with narratives that cause problems or are problematic for news producers. The Cecil Andrews story was initially covered by a small newspaper in Jackson where the incident happened and it took a week for the event to make its first national headline. After its publication the story was subjected to disruptions in the diffusion in the national media and editorial commentary about its news worthiness. The concept of news repair is important for understanding how the authors of the newspapers in this study relate to the journalistic efforts of the bloggers in this study.

Gitlin's approach to framing theory was similar to Tuchman's in that he focused his study on frames that primarily appeared within the mass media. Gitlin's book, The Whole World is Watching, dissects the frames that appeared in the news of the later half of the 1960s, about the Students for a Democratic Society and the larger antiwar movement. Gitlin was a member of this group, and he compares the media frames to what was happening historically within the group. He focuses his analysis on how different reality was within the group compared to how the movement was portrayed in the news media.

Gitlin examined the relationship that developed between the group and news media. He observed how the antiwar movement was about to pressure on the news media to cover their views, but also how the news media co-opted and changed the movement by normalizing their message by creating celebrities out of their leaders and leaders out of the movements celebrities. He accomplishes this from his own recollection and

numerous interviews with others involved at the time. In the end Gitlin identifies how the mainstream news media typically presented society's dominant ideology and re-enforced those power structures within their stories. The co-option and normalization of the movement's frames is similar to the process that happens in the cases presented in this study.

These three works serve as the foundation for more recent theories of framing. From Goffman we have taken the duality of framing as being both a construct for the presentation and also the interpretation of information. From Tuchman we see the institutional and structural influence on the construction of frames within the news industry. This helps to explain the initial hesitation of journalists to use the work of the blogosphere in the Trent Lott controversy. Gitlin shows us how ideology embeds itself within the frames of news organizations. These original three works on framing have laid the foundation for the last 30 years of framing research.

2.3.2 Where Framing Research has gone

Since its emergence in the mid seventies frame analysis has developed in many divergent directions. As Robert Entman indicates, "...nowhere is there a general statement of framing theory that shows exactly how frames become embedded within and make themselves manifest in a text, or how framing influences thinking."(Entman, 1993, 51). Entman has indicated that framing encompasses two divergent subjects of analysis, texts and people. Framing theory has been used to both analyze the message we produce as well as to grasp how we internalize information. Furthermore, with these two subjects of analysis there is still a divide between message reception and production.

With regards to frames and their use in the study of news media Scheufele indicates that, “Because frames have to be considered schemes for both presenting and comprehending news, two concepts of framing can be specified: media frames and individual frames” (Scheufele, 1999, 106). This distinction recognizes Entman’s earlier distinction between texts and individuals. Along with the division between individual and media frames, framing literature can also be divided between whether the frames are treated as a dependent and independent variable in the research. Using these two divisions in framing literature Scheufele has constructed a four cell typology of framing in order to organize and interpret the previous literature of framing research. The typology attempts to classify previous research as well as provide research goals for each of the four cells. The typology was constructed with the goal of building a framing theory as a part of the larger body media effects research.

Individual frames are cognitive constructs used in the process which allows an individual uses to understand their surroundings. In one of its earliest definitions Goffman described the frame as, “definitions of a situation [that] are built up in accordance with the principles of organization which govern events” (Goffman, 1974, 10). In a more recent definition Entman describes individual frames as “information processing schemata” (Entman, 1991, 7). The pursuit of mapping these cognitive constructs is tied to the more general question of how human beings make meaning. For those who are interested in studying individual frames, the frame acts like a filter colouring all of the information that is processed through it. In the context of frame analysis, individual frames are most often studied in relation to media frames to determine the impact of one on the other.

This kind of study attempts to determine how much power media frames have over individual cognition. Gamson's book, Talking Politics, compares his analysis of media frames with an examination of individual frames through an analysis of focus group discussion. The discussions took place after the groups were exposed to the media frames identified in the study. The focus groups were questioned about the issues presented in order to determine if the individuals would rely on the frames that were used in the media to describe their understanding of the issues. Gamson focused on the text of these discussions and analyzed them to determine to what extent the media frames became salient.

The assumption that these studies rest on is that the extent to which people speak about the topics the way the media has framed them proves that the media frame influenced the participants' understanding of the event. The problem with this type of study is that it does not account for the frames that individual group members had prior to their exposure to the news frames. Although Goffman's notion of frame as being the process by which we answer 'what it is that is going on here' asserts that these frames would be different among individuals. Although Goffman's study focused on frames which are shared among individuals the questions that he suggests frames seek to answer could lead to a multiplicity of different understandings of events. The study of individual frames is highly resonant with the pursuit of a general understanding of human cognition. Although blogs represent a closer link to the individual frames of their authors this study is positioned in the body of literature concerned with the analysis of media frames.

Media frames represent a subject of analysis which can be found in the mediated communication of individuals. These frames reach a wide audience and help to shape the articles written by journalists or the entries crafted by bloggers. Gamson and Gitlin conceptualize the media frame as an informational package where the frame represents the container in which the information is presented. Entman conceptualized the media frame as an issue of salience within media texts and he suggests that the frame of an article will make certain aspects of a story more salient than others. According to Entman,

The concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text. Analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location—such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel—to that consciousness (Entman, 1993, 52)

Within the news frame lays the intent to influence our understanding of a certain event. Because news bloggers are writing for large daily audiences, like newspaper reporters, the frames of the medium could be considered media frames.

The frames of both the newspaper articles and blogs will be examined in this study as media frames. Frames offer the opportunity to see how the authors of each media conduct their production of a news narrative. This allows us to see whether or not the authors of both media share particular frames and also how they employ such frames in each media. Frame analysis gives us a means of characterizing the way in which the authors in each media perform their individual function in order to understand how the two relate to one another. We will come back to the concept of framing as we move through the next chapter dealing with the methodological issues of this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study approach informed by a framing analysis perspective. In most quantitative studies of frame analysis researchers determine what frames they are looking for prior to the study and a set time with which they will search for them. Since I have chosen a qualitative approach this would be an impractical way to conduct my study so the case study approach provides a useful alternative. Using a case study approach requires well defined cases which have clearly defined boundaries, so it will be necessary to outline the two cases chosen for this study in more detail. The concept of the frame will help guide the coding and analysis of my data by providing me with a stable research object to explore. First we will examine the benefits and limitations of using a case study approach in qualitative research. Then we will explore the parameters of the two cases in this study. Lastly we will discuss the coding method employed in my analysis and conceptualize the framing categories which were found in the data.

3.1 Case Study Approach

The case study approach allows a researcher to look deeper into an issue, event or person to deal with the nuances of a specific research subject. One of the problems with the case study methodology is that there is still no concise definition of what constitutes a case. This is partly because cases are used in various capacities such as in teaching, record keeping and professional practice. For the purpose of this study we use the definition posited by Campbell and Stanley that, “a case is a detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena” (1966, 7). The cases that will be examined in

this study will be examples of the interaction between blogging and mainstream journalism.

The research case is quite different then these other instances of case work. As Cutler indicated,

Research cases are used to investigate activities or complex processes that are not easily separated from the social context within which they occur. Their suitability is founded on two factors: the bounded nature of cases; and the flexibility in choosing data gathering processes. (Cutler, 2004, 367)

In this study the cases examined are news stories that appear in both the blogosphere and two major daily American newspapers. The subject matter of these stories bound them together which helped to define the limits of each case. The complexity of the relationship between blogging and journalism makes a case study approach the most beneficial for this study because it allows me to focus my analysis on specific stories in order to understand the complexities of the relationship between blogging and journalism.

The criticism of case work has generally focused on notions of the generalizability and validity of the results that come from the analysis of a specific case. Bent Flyvbjerg highlights this criticism by noting that within the academy, “General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.” (Flyvbjerg, 2004, 421). The context-dependent knowledge that is generated through the use of case studies helps us to truly understand what is happening. It is through context dependent knowledge that we move from “rule based beginners to virtuosos” as described by Pierre Bourdieu (Flyvbjerg, 421, 2004). Since I have chosen to use a case study approach in this study we will examine these criticisms and the relevant arguments in defence of the case study approach.

3.1.1 Case Studies and Generalizability

One of the most prevalent criticisms of case study methodology is made on the presumption that there is limited generalizability of the results to wider society. The basic argument is that because case studies are by definition more focused than other types of research, like surveys, then a researcher is not able to generalize their findings to the greater population or society. Although it is true that by adding more cases to this study there would be a greater ability to generalize about the greater community of mainstream journalists and bloggers, but the value of the case study approach is not diminished because of this perceived limitation. We will now look at some of the arguments put forth in defence of the generalizability of the case study method.

The first thing to consider about the notion of generalizability and social science research is that it is based on the idea that we can generate predictive theories and universals for human behavior if we just have a large enough and therefore representative sample for our study. The idea that with enough objects of study that we can predict human behavior is problematic for many researchers. Flyvbjerg would even go so far as to suggest that, “predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals” (Flyvbjerg, 2004, 432). Indeed it is not the goal of this study to generate theory that is capable of predicting the behavior of either bloggers or newspaper journalists, but rather to understand how they coexist and what kind of relationship they have.

Flyvbjerg challenges the notion that we are unable to generalize from one or a small number of research cases by forwarding the notion of extreme or deviant cases. These cases are unique example of events or behavior that allows the researcher to get the point across in a more dramatic manner. This is similar to the notion of instrumental cases where the case, “serves only a supportive role, a background against which the actual research interests will play out” (Berg, 2007, 291). The cases chosen for this study would fit into the notion of an extreme or instrumental case. Because blogging is an emerging news narrative and because it is still relatively new occurrences that highlight this relationship are outnumbered by occurrences that would suggest there is no relationship. In this study the two cases that will be examined will allow us to examine how the theory of media convergence can be used to understand the relationship between bloggers and mainstream journalists by focusing on incidents where this relationship is salient. Our concern is focused more on the emergence of blogging as a new form of convergent journalism and understanding its relationship to mainstream news than proving that this relationship exists.

What is strategic about the selection of the cases for this study is that in both incidents the journalistic work being done in the blogosphere was co-opted by prominent authors of both newspapers and that there was a great deal of overlap between the frames of each medium. The resignation of Trent Lott and the investigation launched by CBS News into the Killian Memos story provide examples of when the frames of the blogosphere and mainstream news producers clashed and resulted in a change of course by the mainstream press. Although it is impossible to prove that bloggers’ narratives had

a direct impact on the framing of the two newspapers selected for this study it is important to recognize that these sources share overlapping audience.

3.1.2 Case Studies and Validity

The second major criticism that is levelled at the use of the case study approach concerns the validity of the results. Validity is related, “to the nature of our findings, and the degree to which these are a true reflection of what we formally state we are dealing with in declaring our aims and objectives”(Halloran, 1998). Case study research in particular and qualitative researchers in general, often struggle with the notion of validity in research and finding a way to prove that the findings presented are close to this “true reflection”. With the case study approach there is a perception that there are many more opportunities for a researcher’s subjective bias to enter into the research process. When using case studies researchers must choose the boundaries of the case as well as identify the aspects of the case which are most pertinent to the research questions. Because of this, there is a perception that the finding produced from case study research could merely represent the pre-conceived ideas of the researcher making these decisions. Flyvbjerg and Cutler have both responded to the issue of validity in case study research and we will now briefly examine their responses to better understand this issue.

Flyvbjerg suggests that, “The case study contains no greater bias towards verification of the researcher’s preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias towards falsification of preconceived notion than towards verification” (Flyvbjerg, 2004, 429). This idea is based on his assumption that good qualitative researchers will examine their cases looking for the means to falsify the theories that drew them to the case in the first

place. Flyvbjerg's assertion that case studies contain a greater bias toward falsification serves as a reminder that a certain level of rigor is necessary for the successful deployment of this methodology.

Cutler has a more practical approach when dealing with the issue of validity in case study research. He identifies three tests that can be applied to make sure a qualitative study can be considered valid; construct validity, internal validity and reliability. The goal of construct validity is to remove subjective judgment in the data analysis stage of research. One way we can produce this type of validity in research is by using multiple subjects for analysis (Cutler, 2004). In order to achieve internal validity within a study Cutler suggests that a researcher seek out alternate explanations for the events that they are studying. Again this gets back to the notion that Flyvbjerg introduced about falsification in qualitative research. Reliability is achieved in research by the demonstration of the transparency of research methods used to gather and analyze data. A solid research design allows for other interested academics to attempt to reproduce the results of a study thereby increasing the reliability of the study. As Cutler suggests, "reliability can be addressed through the use of a protocol that describes each step in the research process." (Cutler, 2004, 370).

3.2 Constructing the Cases

Before we take a look at the methods employed in the analysis of these cases we will first briefly review how the data was collected and who the bloggers are that were studied. In order for these cases to be valuable for this study it was important to carefully choose which sources were chosen for analysis. There are many news events which are covered by the mainstream press and bloggers so I will provide justification for why

these two events were chosen. It is also true that there are many news producers in the mainstream news media and blogosphere so we will examine the sources chosen for this study to explain why they were chosen at the exclusion of others.

3.2.1 Data Collection

In order to understand the relationship between these two media it was important to select cases that highlight the interaction between them. Both the Trent Lott and Killian Memos controversies have been identified as important events in the history of news blogging. Tanni Haas, Thomas Johnson & Barbara Kaye and Michael Keren have all recognized the importance of both of these news events in the history of blogging and journalism. From the outside the academy blogger and *New York Times* best selling author Hugh Hewitt and editors Dan Burstein and David Kline have also highlighted these events in their books about the blogosphere. What makes both of the events important to the relationship between bloggers and journalists is that in both cases the frames used in the mainstream press changed to match the frames found in the blogosphere about the issue.

So, if we accept that these cases were journalistic triumphs by authors in the blogosphere then the relationship between blogging and mainstream journalism should be most salient in these cases. Both of these issues could also be considered critical discourse moments. Gamson and Modigliani described critical discourse moments as events that “make the culture of an issue visible. They [critical discourse moments] stimulate commentary in the media by sponsors and journalists” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, 11). So, critical discourse moments are events that stimulate media coverage of persistent themes such as racism or journalistic integrity as seen in the events of this

study. By highlighting the culture of these issues it becomes easier to analyze the relationship between the two media.

In both cases chosen for this study there was a definable beginning and end to the story. In the case of Trent Lott the story began with the birthday party of Strom Thurmond and ended with the resignation of Lott from the position of Senate majority Leader. In the case of the Killian memos the story began with the broadcast of the memos by the television news magazine 60 minutes II and ended with an apology from CBS News and the announcement that they were launching a formal investigation into their news division. These clear cut beginnings and ending to these stories are beneficial to the case study approach employed in this study because as Cutler points out, “if the boundary is vague or porous, the situation is not a case” (Cutler, 2004, 368). We will now review the trajectory of each story and briefly recount the major events that took place in each case.

3.2.2 Data Sources

To maximize the value of these cases for the purpose of understanding the relationship between bloggers and mainstream journalists, two issues became clear in the data gathering process. First there was a need to limit the amount of sources that were included in the analysis in order to maintain the ability to do a proper analysis of each case. Because bloggers use a wide variety of sources in the construction of their narratives it became clear that the number of mainstream sources would have to be limited or they would have become overwhelming. Since both the newspapers in this study provide online access to their stories the ability of bloggers to link to their narratives and respond to them was much easier and demonstrated by how often bloggers

would link to the newspapers during the study. Although online news producers like MSNBC provide video footage for bloggers to link to the easy of access for newspaper material is still unmatched.

Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are among the top five most widely circulated newspapers in America. The online material provided by these newspapers makes them an invaluable source for the hyperlinking practices of bloggers. By placing their daily newspaper articles online it makes it easier for bloggers to link to their stories as sources. Although TV and radio news are used as sources newspapers are more frequently used in the blogs that were studied. Unlike television or radio news outlets newspapers provide a news product that is more easily incorporated into the narrative of news bloggers. In both cases these newspapers were among the outlets in the mainstream press to recognize the journalistic work being done in the blogosphere

The second issue that became clear in the data gathering process was that the number of blogging sources in the study would have to be broader given the frequency of a bloggers posting and differing styles of their narratives in order to better understand this relationship. Bloggers like Andrew Sullivan would frequently post long essays in his blog, including hypertext links to exterior sources, whereas Glen Reynolds in both cases would rely mostly on linking and quoting to construct his narrative. In both cases there were bloggers that were singled out by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* for their contributions to the story. In the case of Trent Lott the work of Josh Marshall, Glen Reynolds were all highlighted and during the Killian case the works of authors at powerline.com and Charles Johnson of Little Green Footballs were commended for their work. As I read through these blogs I would visit and collect the work of other bloggers

who were referenced for their discussion of these issues. For both cases there were six bloggers analyzed. We will briefly examine these bloggers.

The bloggers that I have chosen for this study have very different backgrounds and goals for what they want to accomplish with their writing. There are three professional writers, three academics, a group of lawyers and a web designer. In order to produce a relevant sample of blogging data I consulted both the mainstream news coverage and the recent literature about blogging from inside and outside of the academy. We will now take a look at the bloggers who were chosen for this study in terms of these features and their involvement in the two cases.

Joshua Marshall, the author of talkingpointsmemo.com, is a professional writer who has written for various mainstream publications around Washington DC. Marshall's blog is one of the most widely read blogs in America and his blogging was featured very prominently in the Trent Lott scandal. Duncan Black, who uses the internet pseudonym Atrios, was also featured prominently in the Lott controversy for providing new and interesting evidence for his readers, like a scanned replica of the 1948 Presidential ballot. Black is an academic, who has worked at various universities including the London School of Economics. He has also worked for the prominent liberal media research organization Media Matters for America, who are, "dedicated to comprehensively monitoring, analyzing, and correcting conservative misinformation in the U.S. media." (http://mediamatters.org/about_us).

Andrew Sullivan is a self-described libertarian blogger who has had a 20 year career in mainstream journalism. Sullivan was the youngest editor of the *New Republic* and has found new life on the internet with his self-titled website where he hosts his blog

The Daily Dish. Sullivan has been one of the most popular political bloggers and is still positioned prominently in the Technorati project's top one hundred list (Technorati.com). He was recognized as being among a group of conservative bloggers who gained attention during the Lott controversy (Hewitt, 2005). The other self-described libertarian blogger in this study is Virginia Postrel who is also a professional journalist and writer. She is most known for her books about American political culture, The Future and its Enemies and The Substance of Style.

Glenn Reynolds, the author of the conservative blog instapubdit.com and is a professor of law at the University of Tennessee. He writes one of the most popular conservative blogs in America and was also recognized for his condemnation of Lott during the controversy. Daniel Drezner is a fellow academic and blogger who now works as an Associate Professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Drezner has also been a regular contributor to the New Republic's online organ from 2003-2004. Drezner's self-titled blog was placed prominently in the coverage of the other blogs during the Lott controversy for his "memos to Karl Rove" feature.

Powerline.com is the only blog in this study that has more than one author on a regular basis. This blog is written by three lawyers, John Hinderaker, Scott Johnson and Paul Mirengoff from California. The authors have also been connected to the Californian conservative think tank the Claremont Institute. Their blog was recognized as one of the key elements in the Killian controversy providing a thorough deconstruction of the memos only hours after they went to air. Charles Johnson's littlegreenfootballs.com was another prominent conservative blog which made a big impact in the Killian controversy.

Johnson, a Californian web designer, was considered to be one of the four original online sources for criticism of the Killian Memos. Johnson describes himself as a life long democrat who now supports George Bush and the Republicans because of the events of 9/11. Now that we know more about the subjects of study we will move on to the methods for coding the data.

3.3 Coding the Data

The study of media frames can differ depending on whether or not the researcher chooses a priori framing structures to conduct their analysis or develops their own issue specific frames based on their data. Issue specific frames provide for a more detailed analysis of a particular issue in the media allowing the research to dive deeper into the subtleties of the particular case. As DeVreese et al note;

An issue-specific approach to the study of news frames allows for investigation of the framing of particular events in great specificity and detail. It may capture specific aspects of selection, organization, and elaboration that are present in news coverage and pertain specifically to a well-defined issue (DeVreese et al, 2001, 109)

Because of the extensive amount of research conducted on media framing it is hard to ignore the framing categories that have been developed over the past three decades. In this study I have chosen to take a mixed approach in an attempt to capture the nuances contained in the frames of both media. As I went through the process of coding and grouping my data the categories that emerged were consistent with frames that have been identified in previous literature.

I have employed a coding method consistent with both qualitative thematic analysis and constant comparative analysis. The former guides a researcher to work closely with their data to identify emerging themes. This approach is similar to constant

comparative analysis which has been used in previous farming studies. As Lepre et al describe with this method, “coders first conduct an individual line-by-line analysis of each story, first coding incidents in as many categories as possible and then integrating the categories as larger themes that took shape” (Lepre et al, 2003, 10). Since constant comparative analysis was originally designed for multiple coders it became necessary to modify the approach to compensate for a single coder.

As I examined the articles from both bloggers and newspaper journalists I attempted to identify as many different framing categories as possible. The first step in the coding was to conduct the line by line analysis of the data creating passage map and highlighting the many issues and strategies that emerged from the text. The second step was to work through the data a second time identifying as many different themes that developed throughout each story. The final step in my analysis was integrating those themes into the framing categories that will be discussed in the next section. While integrating these diverse themes and strategies it became apparent that the frames that were identified in each case were consistent with framing categories that have emerged in previous literature.

3.3.1 Game Framing

The game frame has been one of the most prevalent frames identified in the literature (Devitt 1997, Valkenbridge et al 1999, Kerbel 2000, Lawrence 2000, Brewer and Sigelman 2002). This frame typically portrays politics as a game which has clearly defined winners and losers and highlights the strategic elements of a story. These frames have also been presented in framing research as strategy frames (Iyengar, 1995), horserace frames (Gamson 1989) and conflict frames (Valkenbridge et al, 1999). In all

these cases the conceptualization of these frames is similar in that stories that fit into this category must focus on the strategic elements of an event or issue.

The strategy theme examined the political impact of specific developments on the careers and political aspirations of various individuals. In this theme politics is presented as a never ending struggle to maintain public support, that is waged primarily in the media. By weaving together official reactions and political conjecture authors analyze a controversy as a competition between competing public relations campaigns. To maintain support one is expected to maintain a good public image, which depends on many independent factors. Politics is presented and critiqued as a form of public performance with public figures comprising the cast. Strategy focused articles served the dual function of facilitating and critiquing the public relations campaigns of public figures. In the case of Lott's controversy this theme was used to explore the political fate of Trent Lott, the political impact this controversy had on President Bush as well as the Republican Party as a whole.

These frames are most commonly found in the news during political elections, but as Brewer and Sigelman pointed out in their study these frames also appear between elections. As they indicated, "...an especially noteworthy pattern in that the stories were all published in 1997, neither a congressional nor a Presidential election year. Obviously campaigns constitute a major and ongoing portion of the phenomena about which the media seek out political scientists for expert commentary." (Brewer and Sigelman, 2002, 26). In both cases examined in this study the game frame was applied although only in the Killian case was there an actual election occurring at the time of the coverage.

The game frame was applied to the Trent Lott case by both journalists and bloggers in an attempt to judge the impact of Lott's comments on his political future and also potential solutions to the controversy. In these frames politics was portrayed as a never ending public relationship game which could be won or lost on the basis of public appearances and press conferences. Issues such as sincerity, personal history and inter-party political strategy all became part of the game that these frames addressed. Addressing the issue of Lott's political fate these frames outlined the public relationship game and portrayed the Senator most often as losing the battle.

With a Presidential election coinciding with the release of the Killian memos the strategy frames in this case were applied in various ways. With a similar public relations theme these frames presented the notion that not only politicians but reporters and news producers must also be involved in the public relations game. These frames were used to explore the fate of Dan Rather with CBS News along with possible strategies for him and the news division he represented to recover from this controversy. Naturally because this story was released in the midst of a Presidential election, and the content directly dealt with President Bush, the game frame was also used to explore the strategic implications of this controversy on the candidates, their parties and the election in general.

3.3.2 Responsibility Frames

The responsibility frame is another one of the two dominant framing categories that were identified by Valkenbridge. The responsibility frame packages a story in terms of the attribution of responsibility to some person or political organization. In both cases the responsibility frames were used to highlight the perceived failures of the mainstream

press to cover both of these stories properly. What is interesting is that this frame appeared in the writing of both the newspapers and the blogosphere.

In the Trent Lott Case this frame was used to highlight the mainstream press's responsibility to provide analysis of Lott's remarks. Although these frames were more dominant in the blogosphere there was at least one article from both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* which addressed this notion of journalistic responsibility. This frame was also used to explore Lott's previous associations with racist organization and more racist remarks made in public. These frames put forth the notion of public accountability based on the idea that public figures must be held responsible for their actions and words.

In the Killian case this frame was used to examine the failure of CBS's news department to live up to its journalistic obligations in light of the 60 minutes II broadcast of the falsified documents. These frames appeared in both the newspapers and the blogosphere and dealt mostly with pinning down which part of the journalistic process broke down in CBS's production of this story. There was also the positive attribution of responsibility that came from the newspapers in this study which credited bloggers for their work during this story. These frames as they appear in both cases are consistent with a process known as news repair as which I will explore further in the analysis.

3.3.3 Other Frames

The other framing categories that were identified in these cases, but were not dominant in the coverage were the human interest, ad hominem and leadership frames. The human interest frame was identified in the initial coverage of the Trent Lott case in the mainstream newspapers. The ad hominem frame was identified solely in the coverage

of the blogosphere in the Lott case and in the frames of both the newspapers and the bloggers in the Killian case. The leadership frame was identified in the initial coverage of the Killian case and to a lesser extent in the Lott case in both the newspapers and some of the bloggers. These framing categories played a very minor role in the coverage in both cases, but are significant because of the change in framing that occurs in each case.

The human interest frame is characterized by its narrow focus on the life of one person and how an issue has impacted them. In the case of Trent Lott the human interest frame was used in the coverage of Strom Thurmond's birthday party. The focus of the articles published in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* was centered on Thurmond himself and how various party members chose to honour his life and accomplishments. The intent of this frame is to personalize and emotionalize the reporting of news in an attempt to make a connection with the reader (Valkenbridge et al, 1999). This frame was quickly abandoned in the Lott case as the controversy over his racist comments became the focal point of the coverage in both the newspapers and the blogosphere.

Although this frame has been previously identified and applied primarily in mainstream journalism it only required slight modification to be adapted for the blogosphere. The ad hominem frame is primarily used in the criticism of other authors or public figures. This frame emphasizes personal traits of the subject of criticism rather than basing the criticism on other substantive issues. In the mainstream press this frame is often used to criticize politicians personally instead of the policy initiatives that they are associated with. This frame was used by bloggers to criticize articles from mainstream press focusing their criticism on the author directly rather than the article in question.

The issue of leadership is typically found in the same studies as the game frame in the literature. This frame is often used to analyze the leadership capabilities of a political candidate based on the particular event the article is dealing with. In the Killian case the leadership frame was used in the original stories about the falsified documents to question the leadership capabilities of President Bush based on the notion that he did not fulfill his duties to the National Guard. In this case the leadership abilities of these public figures were judged based on the information that was being conveyed in the articles.

Chapter Four: Framing Trent Lott

4.1 From Human Interest to Personal Outrage

On December 5, 2002 in a jovial manner Lott remarked,

I want to say this about my state: When Strom Thurmond ran for President, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either. (Edsall, A06, 2002)

In 1948, Thurmond and his Dixiecrats offered a third party alternative to the American public that drew its support from a small group of southern states with its segregationist platform. The Dixiecrats focused their campaign on the issue of states rights, which included the right to keep citizens segregated on the basis of race. Over the span of his eight term long career in the Senate Thurmond's position on race seemed to change, as marked by his 1980 vote to extend the voting rights act. Lott's nostalgia for what might have been became the focal point of this controversy because the era he spoke so fondly of was some of the darkest days in the history of American racial relations.

Both of the newspapers in this study covered the birthday celebration using the human interest frame and focused their coverage on the more personal and emotional aspects of the story. Their articles focused on recounting the atmosphere and events of the celebration and largely ignored the inappropriate and racist comments made by Senator Lott. The *Times* chose to print a picture of Senator Thurmond with a short caption reviewing the highlights of the evening. The following excerpt is from the *Post*'s initial coverage of the event;

Thurmond was feted as a kind of living monument to the Capitol. About 500 guests, including many of his current and former colleagues and four Supreme Court justices, attended yesterday's birthday party and ate chocolate-covered strawberries and bowls of banana and butter pecan ice cream. They stood in a

long receiving line to greet the Senator, who was perched on a small riser near the podium. (Leibovich, A01, 2002)

The *Post* provided more in-depth coverage, broaching the topic of Thurmond's segregationist past, but because they also used the human interest frame the controversial nature of Lott's comments was left out.

Neither newspaper printed anything about the controversial nature of Lott's remarks until two days later in an article in response to his first public apology. Within the mainstream press only Ed O'Keefe, an ABC news reporter who was assigned to cover the event, drew attention to Lott's comments in a post on the network's online news column *The Note*. By 9:15 PM on December 6, 2002, three of the six bloggers in this study had all responded to Lott's comments with opinions that ranged from stark condemnation to a call for his resignation. In his initial statement about the controversy Andrew Sullivan wrote, "...the Republican Party has a simple choice. Either they get rid of Lott as majority leader; or they should come out formally as a party that regrets desegregation and civil rights for African Americans." (12.06.02). Although each blogger expressed their opinion uniquely, there was a general consensus that Lott's comments were inappropriate. The way in which the bloggers framed the event was starkly different than the human interest frames found in the *Times* or the *Post*.

The *Washington Post* was the first of the two newspapers to respond critically to Lott's remarks. On December 7, 2002 Thomas Edsall filed the report, "Lott Decried For Part Of Salute to Thurmond" (Edsall, A06, 2002) in which he contextualized the Senator's remarks by providing the relevant history around Thurmond's 1948 Presidential campaign. The *New York Times* published their first critical report on

December 10th in an article called, “Under Fire, Lott Apologizes for His Comments at Thurmond's Party” (Stolberg, p28, 2002) in response to the Senator’s first public apology delivered in person. Although the articles from the newspapers did not openly call for the resignation of Senator Lott they did share some of the same themes that emerged in the blogosphere. Fifteen days after Thurmond’s birthday celebration Trent Lott resigned his post as Majority Leader of the Senate. Before analyzing the frames that emerged in each medium we will first briefly review the major events that occurred during the course of this case.

4.1.1 Trent Lott Case Outline

Throughout the fifteen days Senator Lott made six public statements regarding his remarks including his original response which was delivered by his spokesman Ron Bonjean in writing. Lott’s responses to his remarks transformed from dismissive to deeply apologetic as the controversy wore on. His first response was delivered by his public relations staffer Ron Bonjean on December 7; he stated that, “Senator Lott’s remarks were intended to pay tribute to a remarkable man who led a remarkable life. To read anything more into these comments is wrong” (Edsall, A06, 2002). This dismissal of the gravity of Lott’s statement was quickly followed by a written apology from the Senator himself. When the scrutiny from the media and blogosphere continued Lott launched a public relations campaign that saw him appear on CNN’s Larry King Live as well as Sean Hannity’s radio talk show.

Despite these apologies President Bush rebuked Lott for his comments on December 12, 2002, in a speech given before a mostly African American audience in Philadelphia. President Bush stated that, “Recent comments by Senator Lott do not reflect

the spirit of our country” (Milbank and VandeHei, A01, 2002). Until this speech, the White House had not made any official statement about Lott’s comments, although the President’s opinion was very prominent in the newspaper coverage. Even after this rebuke the White House held the position that Lott’s apologies were sufficient and made it clear that the President would not officially push for Lott’s resignation as Senate Majority Leader. After the President’s remarks Lott held a press conference in his hometown of Pascagoula where he made his fourth public apology and announced that he would be appearing on Black Entertainment Television (BET) for an hour long interview the next week. During his BET interview Lott apologized again and made an effort to atone for his racist past. He also indicated his support for the initiatives of affirmative action during the interview which contradicted his own party’s position.

The day before Lott made his appearance on BET Senator Don Nickles became the first Republican in the Congress to call for Lott’s resignation as Majority Leader. Nickles public statement became the first step in the political process that led to Lott’s resignation. The leadership conference was scheduled to be held on January 6, 2003, which was a date that was rumored to be pushed for by Lott himself. The date of the leadership conference gave Lott three weeks to rally support and the necessary votes in order to win. On December 19, former heart transplant surgeon and Senator Bill Frist declared his intentions to run against Lott in the leadership election and the next day Lott officially resigned as Senate Majority Leader. Lott mentions in his book that his successor Bill Frist helped orchestrate the resignation.

4.2 Game Frames

While reporting on this event the newspaper reporters and bloggers often focused on the strategic elements of this story. In order for this scandal to fit into the game frame politics was portrayed as a struggle between politicians and public opinion. In this game, politicians vie for public support and often compete and support one another in this quest. Public support is of course measured and tracked by tools like public opinion polls, but the reactions of public figures are an important factor. It is these reactions that are used to set the stage for the game as they were used to determine what impact Lott's actions had on his public standing and whether or not he would be able to maintain his position of Majority Leader.

We will examine three main groups of frames which emerged in the game frame category in this case. Managing the masses will focus on the public relations campaign waged by Trent Lott as it was depicted in the newspapers and blogosphere. Next we will look at the collateral damage that Lott's remarks created. In every game there are winners and losers and in this case the authors of both media provide analysis of some of the losers that were created by this controversy. Lastly we will examine how these two media portrayed the wider game of politics and their inclusion of other players such as the Supreme Court, Republican Party and President Bush. The game frame spanned the articles of both the newspapers and bloggers in this study so we will now examine the frames that emerged in both media.

4.2.1 Managing the Masses

Throughout the controversy articles emerged from both the bloggers and newspapers that sought to explore Lott's circumstance, these articles assessed the impact of his apologies and proposed new tools for him to use. The following excerpt from the *Times* illustrates how Lott's radio apology was framed as a strategic move to maintain his position, "Trying to quell an uproar over comments he made last week that were criticized as racially divisive, Senator Trent Lott apologized at length today in a radio interview, saying his words were "terrible.'"(Hulse, p1, 2002). This frame depicts Lott's radio apology as a political tool devoid of any sentiment of personal atonement or responsibility. The focus of the frame was on the apology as part of a political strategy to maintain power. By presenting the apology through this frame the journalist presented a cynical interpretation of Lott's mea culpa that called into question the sincerity of these remarks.

The strategic analysis that emerged from the blogosphere used the position of the newspapers and other bloggers to weigh in on the impact of Lott's public relations campaign. In the following post from Daniel Drezner we see a typical example of how the bloggers used the work of others to formulate their own opinions of Lott's position. Drezner writes;

ANOTHER UPDATE: Arthur Silber reports that Lott was interviewed by Sean Hannity and sounded more contrite than in his previous statements. At this point in the game, however, Silber's correct in pointing out that a chastened Lott in a leadership position is the worst of both worlds -- the Republicans will be politically vulnerable to the racism charge in 2004, and to compensate, Lott will

acquiesce to a lot of Democratic proposals that should be opposed on substantive grounds.(11.12.02)²

The first underlined link leads to another blogger and the second to a review of Lott's radio interview on foxnews.com. Building from the position of this other blogger and by including a link to the source of the interview Drezner was able to make a case for this opinion on the impact of Lott's radio apology. Drezner frames Lott as a weakened player in the game of politics who will be a detriment to his team in future elections and policy decisions.

When placing a scandal like this into the game frame suggestions about what a politician like Lott should do next become an obvious focal point. In the two newspapers it is hard to tell whether or not these strategic suggestions are elicited by reporters or volunteered by the public figures that they are interviewing, but they nonetheless become part of the game frame. In an article from the *Post* Edsall and Balz highlighted the suggestion of Jack Kemp, a long time friend of Lott, that, "Lott needs to go before a civil rights group and make a major speech about race and racial reconciliation in the New South to help clear the air." (A01, 2002). The notion that appearing in front of a 'civil rights group' absolves Lott of responsibility for his remarks highlights the focus of the game frame. These types of suggestions in the newspapers mostly came from other Senators from both political parties.

For many of the bloggers in this study the apologies that Lott offered were not enough to make up for the severity of his original remarks. While most bloggers held that

² The underlined text in blog excerpts is representative of a hyperlink found in the original text unless otherwise noted

there was nothing Lott could do strategically to maintain his position Josh Marshall gave some indication how he felt Lott could have dealt with the situation more effectively. He wrote;

...frankly this strikes me as a pretty feeble apology. He won't say what 'policies' he's talking about. He won't say they're wrong, just that they were 'discarded'. It's probably too much to ask for him to get down on his knees and confess his sins. But given Lott's history of flirtation with neo-segregationist politics and the seriousness of the original statement, something a bit more explicit and specific was and is in order. (09.12.02)

The structure of this article presents the reader that with the notion that if Lott had made a more 'explicit and specific' apology that his strategic position would be better. This frame presents Lott's history with racism as points scored against him which he could make up for with the appropriate play.

The analysis of how Lott managed his public relations campaign was very similar across both media. In some cases it is easy to see how bloggers take cues from the mainstream press in their analysis of Lott's campaign through which links they use in their articles. It is not as easy to see however how these newspapers may have taken cues from the blogosphere on the framing of this issue. It was bloggers who first framed Lott's remarks as a strategic detriment to his own political goals and the goals of his party. Running in parallel media streams bloggers and newspaper journalists provide articles which frame Lott's remarks and apologies as a game to be won or lost by the Senator.

4.2.2 Collateral Damage

In every game there are winners and losers and in the complex game of politics there are many players that can get caught up in this type of scandal. In this section we will explore the game frames which portrayed political actors as losers in the coverage of

this scandal. The two players who were damaged most by this controversy were federal trial judge Charles Pickering and one of Lott's political rivals Senator Don Nickles. Both of these men were drawn into the coverage and framed as losers because of the controversy. Authors from both media provided analysis of the political damage that each of these men suffered during this case which we will now examine.

Charles Pickering who had been serving as a federal trial judge was in the midst of appointment proceedings for the Federal Court of Appeals when his nomination stalled because of concerns over his record on civil rights. Although his nomination hearing happened nearly ten months before Lott's remarks Pickering was included in the frames that dealt with the political losers of this controversy. By revisiting the Pickering nomination issue reporters were able to re-use old news by approaching it from the angle of how Trent Lott related stories impacted the Judge's strategic position. This story from the *New York Times* is an excellent example;

Charles W. Pickering Sr., a federal trial judge in Hattiesburg, Miss., had every reason to believe he would soon be elevated to the federal appeals court in New Orleans with the support of his good friend **Trent Lott**, who was due to become majority leader in a Senate controlled by Republicans. But Senator Lott's new troubles have badly hurt Judge Pickering's prospects, Bush administration and Congressional officials said today. (Lewis, p30, 2002)

In this excerpt we see how recent news of a judicial nomination is re-told within the frame of the Lott controversy. The article provides a link from Lott's political troubles to the political fate of Judge Pickering.

An article on Daniel Drezner's blog gave a different interpretation of the relationship between Lott and Pickering. In an article in which he analyzes quotes from the embattled Senator he provided this take on the Pickering-Lott connection;

WHAT LOTT SAID: "I know his (Charles Pickering's) heart. He is a good man and is not a racist or a segregationist in any way. The things--many of the things said against him he was not guilty of."

MOST GENEROUS TRANSLATION: "Charles Pickering is no Trent Lott."

MOST CYNICAL TRANSLATION: "If I'm going down, I'm taking anyone within a five-mile radius with me." (16.12.02)

Drezner makes the same link as the frames in the newspaper that Pickering is a victim in Lott's political downfall, but provides a different interpretation which included the notion of intentionality. Drezner presented the idea that Lott would intentionally damage the political aspirations of a Presidential appointee because of his own political decline. Whether Pickering's political fate was intentionally linked to Lott's downfall or not both the newspapers and the bloggers presented the Judicial Nominee as a potential victim and loser in their coverage.

These types of news narratives tend to play themselves out in a logical progression within the mainstream press. Controversy surrounding a person in high office is usual followed with speculation about the possibility of resignation and potential replacements. As the media scanned the political landscape for Lott's successor the spotlight of the mainstream press landed on Senator Don Nickles and his membership in a men-only club. The article by Grove which appeared in the *Washington Post* suggested that Nickles "might have some explaining of his own to do." (Grove, C03, 2002) regarding his membership to this club. The scrutiny of the mainstream press seems to fall much like a spotlight illuminating not only the object of their fixation, but also on all of the area surrounding it. The connection between Lott's racism and Nickles alleged sexism was a construction of the Newspaper's frame which linked the two together.

Being the first Republican to publicly call for Lott's resignation placed Senator Don Nickles directly in the spotlights of both bloggers and the mainstream press. In the blogosphere Nickles call for Lott's resignation was portrayed by Atrios as an opportunist move to usurp the Majority Leaders post. Atrios posted;

...forgive me for thinking that the condemnation from some circles isn't motivated more by a desire to see a Senate Majority Leader Nickles than any true concern. Hey, nothing wrong with a little crass opportunism I suppose - whatever real outrage I feel is also admittedly accompanied by some schaudenfreude. (10.12.02)

After suggesting that some of the condemnation surrounding Lott may be a political strategy to elevate Senator Nickles he went on to post that, "Hesiod notes that Don Nickles is an unapologetic homophobe. Is this who the Republican have waiting in the wings? Is this who the libertarian wing of the Republican party supports? If not, who the hell would they support to replace Lott?"(13.12.02). In the blogosphere Nickles' intentions were presented as self-interested political strategy and his political aspirations were depicted as unattainable because of the political liability created by his own discriminatory positions.

4.2.3 Playing Politics

The ambiguous position of President Bush and the Republican Party at large were also explored using the game frame. These frames explored the impact of Lott's remarks on the political position of the President and the party, suggested strategies for each and also explored the history of Republicans using racist appeals as a political tool. Because the President represents the pinnacle of executive power his reaction to events like Lott's comments were presented in terms of how they impact the strategic position of the President. How President Bush reacted, or in this case did not react, was related to his

own political goals as well as his own public image. During the course of the Lott controversy President Bush made very few public comments about the Senator, but his feelings on Lott's position were often portrayed through the use of sources close to the President. Carl Hulse and Elisabeth Bumiller use Republicans close to the president in their article titled, "Republicans Say Lott Lacks Bush's Support"(Hulse and Bumiller, p1, 2002). Lee Hockstader and Helen Dewar referenced White House aides in their articles called, "Sen. Lott Fights to Save Post As Leader; He Calls Remarks 'Grievous' Error" (Hockstader and Dewar, p A01, 2002).

As we see in the following passage the White House Press Secretary was faced with questions about Lott's comments throughout the controversy, "White House press secretary, Ari Fleischer, found himself having to defend Mr. Lott, saying President Bush has "confidence in him as the Republican leader, unquestionably." (Hulse, p24, 2002). The official position of the President was presented as being supportive of Lott's atonement throughout this story even though Lott was framed as a strategic liability to the President. Leading up to and following Bush's rebuke of Lott's comments, the White House maintained the official position that Lott would not be asked to resign.

Many articles explored the threat that Lott posed to Bush in terms of minority support, which was presented as one of Bush's political strong points. As we see in this quote from the *Post*;

Senior Bush aides were worried that Lott's remarks would undermine the support from minorities that Bush has sought to build for the GOP. They equated Bush's comments today to his stand as Texas governor against California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187, when Bush drew a sharp distinction between his "compassionate conservatism" and more combative versions. (Millbank and VandeHei, A01, 2002)

In this excerpt we see how the author focuses on notions of political support and impact. The implication of the phrase “undermine the support” suggests that previous actions by the President that benefited minorities were strategically motivated. The representations of the President through these frames ranged from cynical critiques of Bush’s racial policy to glowing reviews of the President’s stance on race sharing the common theme that racial policy was a strategic pawn in the game of politics. What is most interesting is that the facts of these stories overlap and are interpreted differently based on the individual author’s frame.

The bloggers also portrayed Bush as having a strategic role to play in the controversy created by Lott. Like some authors in the newspapers studied some bloggers called for direct action by President Bush to remove Lott. Sullivan wrote that;

...having someone like Lott as the leader of the Republicans in the Senate is such an intolerable affront. Lott makes the Left's point for them. And he undermines a politics of race-neutrality that is still empathetic to the historic plight of African-Americans while eager to move on. Perhaps older conservatives can look beyond this. Younger ones, who were born after Jim Crow, can't. It's time for Lott to go. And it's time for Bush to say so. (11.12.02)

Instead of replicating the mixed messages that are found in the p Sullivan concentrates on what Bush’s strategic role should have been in this case. The notion presented in this post is that in the midst of Lott’s strategic struggle it was the responsibility of the President to intervene and stop the game. Bush was presented in some blog frames as being politically damaged by Lott’s remarks. Calls for his direct involvement could be seen as strategic suggestions for the President to save face.

Many of these articles focused on racism as a public relations tool for various public figures and institutions including the Republican Party. In their exploration of the

Republican party's 'history with race' Allen and VandeHei present racism as tool for attracting southern voters as we see in this passage;

The Southern Republican campaigns of the 60's and early 70's turned heavily on race. In the 1964 Presidential campaign, Barry M. Goldwater's opposition to the civil rights act that year won him five Deep South states, and some House members were elected on his coattails. (Clymer, p1, 2002)

The Republican Party is represented as a homogeneous group of people who are all tainted by racist policies. By combining this example with other historical examples the journalist sought to expose the Republican Party for their racist history. Racism is depicted as something that is morally reprehensible, but strategically beneficial for the Republican Party.

The adoption of the game frame by the authors of both media illustrates the interconnected nature of the news narrative that is produced by the authors of both media. The fact that the game frame is used to present the case of Trent Lott in both media demonstrates how the bloggers in this study co-opt and re-appropriate the frames found in the mainstream press. The bloggers in this study are able to take the frames and articles they find in the mainstream press and use them to strengthen their own positions through the use of hypertext links and quotes. Much like the use of official sources used in mainstream journalism, bloggers are able to increase the credibility of their work by building on the narratives they find in the mainstream press.

4.3 Responsibility Frames

The second dominant frame found in the coverage of this event dealt with the attribution and failure to live up to responsibility. The responsibility that becomes apparent in these frames is related both to Lott himself and the media covering the story.

With regards to Lott the notion of responsibility manifested itself in some of the coverage which dealt with the political consequences of his remarks and his past history with racist organizations. The reporters and bloggers in this study analyzed the media's role in the coverage of this story and their apparent failure to cover it in the beginning. This failure is based on a notion of journalistic responsibility, the idea that journalists are supposed to be able to judge what issues and events are important for their.

4.3.1 Political Accountability

By placing this story in the responsibility frame some reporters drew upon notions of political accountability in order to highlight the consequences of Lott's remarks. Lee Hockstader, a writer for the *Washington Post*, provides a good example of this technique in the following excerpt:

In the other camp are African Americans, most of who scoffed at Lott's insistence that he had grown and changed from the days of his avowedly segregationist youth in the 1960s. Many blacks said they believe Lott is a racist, and that his remarks reflected his true views and those of many white Mississippians. They said he should resign from his current post as Senate Republican leader. "What he said was stupid, and it was racist," said Betty Thibodeaux, 29, a shipyard welder. "Anybody should be forgiven, but it's always going to stick in my mind that he said it, even though he tries to sugarcoat it now."(Hockstader, A28, 2002)

In this passage the quote from Ms. Thibodeaux is used to represent 'the other camp'. Her quote reaffirms the idea that black voters in Mississippi were not happy with Lott's remarks. This unhappiness is designed to represent the political consequences that Lott would suffer from his remarks. Framing the issue in this way forwards the idea that Lott would be held responsible for the views he expressed at the birthday dinner by Mississippi voters.

As the story unfolded reporters dug into the Senator's past furthering the notion that he should be held responsible for his racist tendencies. *Post* reporter Hulse forwards this notion in an article that analyzes patterns that existed in Lott's past that suggest the Senator was racist. The article began with, "Trent Lott, the Republican Senate leader who faces mounting criticism for his comment last week that the nation would have been better off had Strom Thurmond been elected President in 1948, expressed a nearly identical sentiment two decades ago." (Hulse, p24, 2002). By exploring the Senator's past, Hulse reaffirmed the notion that Lott should be held to accountable for what he says and does. The articles from both media which explore the Senator's past serve to contextualize his more recent comments by underlining a history of racial ambiguity.

Building on the article by Hulse, Andrew Sullivan provided his own twist on how the Senator's past helped to understand his initial remarks. Sullivan wrote;

TRENT LOTT MUST GO: Sorry to those who think I'm making too much of this. But it seems to me that the G.O.P. has zero credibility on racial matters until they get rid of this man as Senate Majority Leader. When I'm in agreement with the Family Research Council, a virulently anti-gay group, you know something's got to give. Last night's revelation that Lott had said almost identical things over twenty years ago - clinches in my mind that this was not a poor choice of words. (11.12.02)

The word revelation links this *Post* to the article explored above by Hulse. Sullivan's reference to the article by Hulse serves as evidence that Lott had made similar comments in the past which corroborates Sullivan's opinion that the incident, "was a classic political gaffe - where the politician in question accidentally says what he truly believes." (10.12.02). In this post, the article by Hulse becomes evidence that legitimizes the opinion presented by Sullivan. The use of Lott's past in these articles draws on the notion

that he must be held responsible for his racist inclinations. In these articles the issues of responsibility and accountability are intertwined in the presentation of the Senator's past.

On the issue of Lott's past some of the bloggers were actually able to provide evidence before journalists in the two newspapers. Through his own investigation, Josh Marshall was able to uncover an amicus brief filed by Lott in the early eighties in defence of a university who discriminated against minorities and prohibited interracial dating. Upon uncovering the document Marshall entered this post;

Deep in the court opinion we find this little snippet noting which individuals and organizations had filed amicus briefs *on behalf of* BJU and Goldsboro.
Briefs of amici curiae urging reversal in No. 81-3 were filed by Earl W. Trent, Jr., and John W. Baker for the American Baptist Churches in the U.S. A. et al.; by William H. Ellis for the Centre for Law and Religious Freedom of the Christian Legal Society; by Forest D. Montgomery for the National Association of Evangelicals; and by Congressman Trent Lott, pro se.
 Drip, drip, drip ... (11.12.02)

The underlined section is a quote from the document which Marshall made available through a hypertext link later in his coverage. What makes this example interesting is that this evidence was adopted in both newspapers in the ensuing 48 hours. From what Marshall indicates the story was first picked up by the Associated Press and Dow Jones newswire services. He posted;

ONE OTHER THING. Next time the AP rips off a story we broke at 11 AM and runs it as their own story at 5 PM maybe they could toss in a little attribution? I know it's their rep and all but do they have to be so slimy. Dow Jones Newswires caught wind of the Bob Jones Amicus Brief from the story TPM broke too. But they were classy enough to say we'd broken the story. (11.12.02)

This example shows how stories from the blogosphere get incorporated into the frames of the mainstream press. Given that the narratives of both media are so similar in this case it

is not a surprise that evidence unearthed in the blogosphere would be used in the frames of the mainstream press.

4.3.2 Obligations of the 4th Estate

Criticism is one of the major themes that emerged in the blogging data. This criticism was framed in terms of the perceived failure of the mainstream press to run with this story as depicted bloggers. The criticism had the built in notion that mainstream journalism has a responsibility to its readers to scrutinize the actions of political figures like Lott. Bloggers criticized journalists for what they failed to include, what they chose to focus on and their motivations for writing stories. All of these types of criticism rely on the notion that the mainstream press has a responsibility to their readers and these criticisms highlight a failure to live up to that responsibility.

In the beginning of this story bloggers mixed their questions about Lott's comments with questions about the lack of media coverage they attracted. The following excerpt from Virginia Postrel demonstrates this trend;

OUT, OUT DAMNED LOTT: Trent Lott must go. He's a disgrace to the South, to the Republican Party, to the U.S. Senate, and to the United States of America. Where's Howell Raines's crusading southern liberalism when it's needed? (Mark Kleiman notes that the NYT is AWOL on the story; I guess country clubs are more important than the Senate.) Why isn't every reporter, at every press conference, asking Lott or his spokesman what the Senate leader meant when he said a Thurmond victory in 1948 would have meant "we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years"? *Exactly which problems?* How would Thurmond have been better? Hector the man. Make him answer. Again and again. (07.12.02)

With the exception of the word Trent all of the outgoing links in this post go to other blogs which supported the argument that the mainstream press, in this case the *New York Times*, were saying very little about Trent Lott's comments. Even the outgoing link to the

Washington Post was used to further supporting the notion that the *New York Times* was truant on the issue. This post re-enforces that notion that not covering these comments was a failure on the part of the *Times*.

From either side of the American political spectrum bloggers often criticized articles, reporters and news organizations for having a partisan bias. This can be seen over three separate posts made by Atrios at the start of the Lott controversy. The suggestion that journalists ignored the story because of a partisan bias offers a motive for their failure to meet their journalistic obligations. In the first post Atrios says, "I'm sure Lott's frightening comments will get at least as much coverage as John Kerry's hair.". Later in the same day he revisits the subject after posting a replica of the 1948 Dixiecrat ticket he wrote,

You see it was all about States' Rights. The State's Right to condone lynching of 'Nigras.' If only Strom had won, and Truman's anti-lynching law hadn't passed, we wouldn't be having all these problems. Simple. Look! John Kerry got a haircut! (06.12.02)

The reference to John Kerry's haircut is in response to a story that was also circulating within the mainstream press at the time. By making reference to this story Atrios criticized the elements within mainstream journalism that chose to cover a story about the cost of John Kerry's hair cuts immediately following Lott's remarks. Atrios presented this choice as evidence that those elements in the mainstream press are blinded by their partisan bias when it comes to story selection. The implicit argument is that because they choose to cover how much money Kerry spends on his haircut instead of Lott's comments the mainstream press must be biased in favour of the Republican Party. Both

of these criticisms re-enforce the idea that the mainstream press is failing to live up to their responsibility to their readers.

4.3.3 Reflections on Responsibility

Both newspapers in this study included an article that praised the efforts of news bloggers during this story. In the column, *The Other Face* written by the *Times*' Paul Krugman the work of blogger Josh Marshall is embedded in the lead paragraph of the story. Krugman wrote,

“Right now we’re debating whether the Republican Senate majority leader is a racist who yearns for the days of segregation or just a good ole boy who says a lot of things that make it seem like he’s a racist who years for the days of segregation.” So writes Joshua Marshall, whose talkingpointsmemo.com is must reading for the politically curious, and who, more than anyone else, is responsible for making Trent Lott’s offensive remarks the issue they deserve to be. (Krugman, p39, 2002)

The article is about Lott’s racist past and it later goes on to credit Marshall and, “a few other internet writers” for keeping the story going. Since Marshall is the only blogger that was quoted or mentioned by name in the article this piece serves as an endorsement of Marshall’s journalistic skill. Krugman puts fourth the notion that bloggers picked up the slack that journalists left by not paying enough attention to this story.

In the Howard Kurtz article titled *A Hundred-Candle Story And How To Blow It*, the author provided a wider endorsement of the journalism being performed in the blogosphere and a harsher rebuke of the lack of coverage in the mainstream. He wrote,

By Monday, with the mainstream press still largely snoozing, Web writers were leading the charge. Andrew Sullivan: “Either they get rid of Lott as majority leader or they should come out formally as a party that regrets desegregation and civil rights for African-Americans.” Josh Micah Marshall: “The real question is why this incident is still being treated as no more than a minor embarrassment or a simple gaffe.” National Review Online’s David Frum: “What came out of his

mouth was the most emphatic repudiation of desegregation to be heard from a national political figure since George Wallace's first Presidential campaign." Says Glenn Reynolds, the Tennessee law professor who jumped on the story in his InstaPundit column: "The guy's majority leader. Reporters, as opposed to bloggers, depend on him for access. The hinterlands are full of bloggers who don't care whether Trent Lott is nice to them or not. That makes them different from the Washington press" (Kurtz, C01, 2002)

The article was designed to chronicle how the mainstream press was "caught napping" when the Lott controversy began. Similar to Krugman's article, Kurtz's naming and quoting of bloggers serves as an endorsement of their work on the internet. By highlighting the bloggers' success, and therefore the mainstream press' failure in covering this story, Krugman and Kurtz mimic the responsibility frames of the blogosphere on this issue. Their praise of bloggers and criticism of journalists forwards the notion that the former failed to live up to the inherent responsibility of their role in society.

When crediting the bloggers for their work on the Lott story both articles assert that mainstream journalists should have carried the story. These articles serve as belated recognition for the work that was done in the blogosphere and also demonstrate the news repair function. The act of recognizing the bloggers for their journalistic accomplishments re-enforces the notion that their articles were journalistic; which reaffirms the notion that the fourth estate has obligations to society which it normally meets. By co-opting the responsibility frames found in the blogosphere these reporters are able to normalize the blogging narrative and weaken the criticism by depicting this failure as a rare mistake. Kurtz especially takes on the responsibility for this failure with his recounting of the timeline of the Lott story and how it was turned down or passed on by various mainstream news outlets.

4.4 Ad Hominem Frames

In some instances bloggers criticized articles without rebutting or refuting any of the material contained in the text. They achieve this criticism through the use of the ad hominem frame which focuses on the character of an article's author or source rather than its content. By proving that there is something wrong with an article's author the blogger is able to serve the function of criticizing the article. Andrew Sullivan participates in this type of criticism a fair bit and the following is an example of this frame;

IN DEFENSE OF MOI: That would be a better headline for Dick Morris's column this morning. It has nothing new, except an embarrassing attempt to argue that Lott is indistinguishable from John Lewis on the matter of civil rights. Oh, Dick, come off it. Then there's this:

Let's start with the fact that I have known Lott for 15 years and have had, perhaps, a hundred or more meetings with him. I got to know him better than any American politician other than Bill Clinton. He is no racist. There is not a racist bone in his body.

Translation: Lott has paid me an awful lot over the years to figure out how to use race and other issues effectively as an electoral tool while not getting caught. If he's a racist, what does that say about me? (16.12.02)

Instead of attacking the arguments presented by Dick Morris, Sullivan attacks the character of the reporter. Sullivan calls in to question the integrity of Dick Morris by suggesting that since he had worked for Lott in the past, it compromises Morris' impartiality. Furthermore Sullivan suggests that because Morris has worked with Lott then he may have racist sympathies as well. By calling into question the character and credibility of the author Sullivan laid the rhetorical ground work for questioning the whole article.

Josh Marshall provides another excellent example of the ad hominem framing strategy. In the following excerpt Marshall employs both the ad hominem and responsibility frames in his critique of an article by David Broder;

Here's David Broder from yesterday on Meet the Press, commenting on Trent Lott's endorsement of the platform Strom Thurmond's pro-segregation, anti-civil-rights 1948 Presidential candidacy ...

"It's not the first time that he has had to explain his association with or references to that kind of race-focused rhetoric in the South. He was involved a few years ago speaking to a group that was pretty overtly racist in the South. Race remains, much as we would like it to be otherwise, a very, very important factor in our national life. And it is a decisive factor in Southern politics. Any Southern politician that you talk to can tell you with precision exactly what percentage of the white vote he or she needs to get, because all of them assume that 90 percent or more of the black vote is going to the Democrats. As long as that racial divide continues, any kind of comment like this on Senator Lott's part is going to behave all kinds of bad resonance."

Does Broder really need his calls returned by Lott that badly? Is that really the best he can do? A 'bad resonance'?

Here's Broder on the shame of President Clinton and how Broder thought he'd besmirched Washington. "He came in here and he trashed the place. And it's not his place."

David Broder, the dean of the Washington press corps. Says it all. (09.12.02)

Not only did Marshall criticize Broder for his failure to properly condemn Senator Lott, but he also included an explanation as to why this condemnation was missing. Marshall's first ad hominem argument is in his rhetorical question, "Does Broder really needs his calls returned by Lott that badly?". This question serves as a commentary on the nature of "inside the beltway" journalism that is often criticized by news bloggers.

The critique is that journalists in mainstream press are too close to public figures and cannot report on them objectively because of this close relationship. This critique helped to support the unaffected outsider discourse that appears in many of the blogs in this study. The image that is projected is that of an outsider who does not suffer from the same biases and influences as mainstream journalists. The second ad hominem argument

presented in this post is intended to call into question the fairness of Broder's reporting pointing out how he was very willing to harshly criticize former President Clinton, but for some reason not Lott. As well, we see in this post how Marshall criticized the author of the article rather than the content in keeping with the ad hominem criticism strategy.

The ad hominem frames presented in this case carried with them the overarching criticism that the mainstream press is too close to people they report on to maintain the objectivity required in their reporting. Both Sullivan and Marshall position themselves as distant outsiders far away and safe from the corruption that has impacted mainstream journalists. The message that these frames send is that what these bloggers bring to journalism is a fresh uncompromised outlook and as the postings indicate a willingness to use that outlook to criticize members of the mainstream press when they are perceived to be not fulfilling their duties. They act like fleas on the watchdog of power demanding better from the mainstream journalists they criticize.

After analyzing these frames the development of a shared narrative which is produced from the cooperation and competition between reporters and bloggers becomes apparent. Watching how frames moved from one medium to another, as authors co-opted the frames from the other medium, illustrates the nature of the converged media environment where stories develop in several media at once with articles often overlapping. The relationship between the bloggers and reporters of this study is characterized by the intertwined narrative that emerged during the Trent Lott controversy. Existing at the level of co-opetition the authors of both media share their stories with the world and compete with each other in delivering their narratives. As we will see in the Killian scandal this relationship becomes more intertwined over time.

Chapter Five: Framing the Falsified Memos

5.1 From Leadership Frames to Journalistic Failure

During the 2004 Presidential election much of the media's attention was focused on either candidate's military histories. The election was unique because of the emergence of 527 groups, which were independent political groups able to run their own campaigns using most of the tools that are available to the actual candidates, like radio and television commercials. Through the course of the campaign each candidate had to endure a direct public relations attack on their military service. For the Senator Kerry there was the 527 group called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth who accused him of embellishing his service record for political gain and turning his back on the American military after he returned home from Vietnam. For the President there was an early September news story from CBS's 60 Minutes II which presented falsified documents that called in to question the President's service in the National Guard.

The story was aired on September 8, 2004 and within twelve hours of its broadcast Charles Johnson of littlegreenfootballs.com had already responded with evidence that the documents presented were forged. Just as in the Lott case the newspapers in the sample quickly changed the way they framed this story to a way which resembled some of the authors in the blogosphere. In their initial coverage both newspapers presented the story in the leadership frame. The evidence from CBS was packaged as a reason to question the leadership of the President. The leadership frame also appeared in some of the initial coverage of the bloggers in this study as well. We will first examine the initial articles that were published in the newspapers then review the major events that took place in this case.

Both newspapers in the sample maintained the same kind of leadership frame that was originally presented in the segment for *60 Minutes II*. This frame typically used to focus on or question the leadership qualities of a particular politician; in this case it was used to criticize President Bush. The implication of the story was that since Bush was not able to fulfill his duties in the National Guard then his ability to lead the country was questionable. Each of the newspapers focused on different aspects of the CBS story. Michael Dobbs and Thomas Edsall wrote for the *Post*;

Documents obtained by the CBS News program "60 Minutes" shed new light on one of the most controversial episodes in Bush's military service, when he abruptly stopped flying and moved from Texas to Alabama to work on a political campaign. (Dobbs and Edsall, A01, 2004)

The article published in the *Times* by Katherine Seelye and Thomas Blumenthal focused more on the issue of special treatment as we see in this quote, "President Bush's Vietnam-era service in the National Guard came under renewed scrutiny on Wednesday as newfound documents emerged from his squadron commander's file that suggested favourable treatment." (Section A, 2004). Both the issue of special treatment and the abrupt end to his military suggest flaws in President Bush's integrity and commitment.

Three of the bloggers in the study group also uncritically accepted the story as it was presented by CBS News and reproduced it in their blogs. Atrios and Marshall, who are often openly critical of President Bush, were quick to utilize the story to further their critique of the President. Marshall posted, "This isn't about what President Bush did 30+ years ago. Or at least it's not primarily about that. The issue here is that for a decade President Bush has been denying all of these things." (09.09.04). This critique calls into question the integrity of the President and implied that he is covered up his past mistakes

from the American public which made him unfit to lead the country. Focused on the issue of special treatment Andrew Sullivan also uncritically accepted the story put fourth by CBS. Sullivan posted;

THE GOODS ON BUSH: This isn't getting any prettier, is it? But it's always been obvious that, during Vietnam, George W. Bush benefited from the soft affirmative action of pedigreed privilege. The CBS-recovered forms are pretty devastating in this respect (09.09.04)

All three of the bloggers who accepted the CBS story at face value used it to question the leadership of the President on the grounds that were provided in the original piece.

Glen Reynolds, Charles Johnson and the bloggers at powerline.com all responded to the CBS article with scepticism. These bloggers used the responsibility frame to question the authenticity of the documents CBS used and called into question the integrity of their news department. Scott from powerline.com posted;

Every single one of the memos to file regarding Bush's failure to attend a physical and meet other requirements is in a proportionally spaced font, probably Palatine or *Times* New Roman. In 1972 people used typewriters for this sort of thing (especially in the military), and typewriters used mono-spaced fonts. The use of proportionally spaced fonts did not come into common use for office memos until the introduction high-end word processing systems from Xerox and Wang, and later of laser printers, word processing software, and personal computers. They were not widespread until the mid to late 90's. (09.09.04)

These bloggers focused on the authenticity of the documents based on the fact that they contained proportionally spaced characters and a superscript th; which were not possible in the early seventies when the documents were written. Charles Johnson of littlegreenfootballs.com posted an image of the original documents as they were posted on the CBS News website along side a copy which he reproduced using Microsoft Word found below in figures 2 and 3.

18 August 1973

Memo to File

SUBJECT: CYA

1. Staudt has obviously pressured Hodges more about Bush. I'm having trouble running interference and doing my job. Harris gave me a message today from Grp regarding Bush's OETR and Staudt is pushing to sugar coat it. Bush wasn't here during rating period and I don't have any feedback from 187th in Alabama. I will not rate. Austin is not happy today either.
2. Harris took the call from Grp today. I'll backdate but won't rate. Harris agrees.

Figure 1 Sample of the document provided online by CBS

18 August 1973

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Figure 2 Sample of a reproduction produced using Microsoft Word

Forty-eight hours after the documents aired the focus of the media and the blogosphere had shifted from questioning the leadership of President Bush to questioning the journalistic integrity of CBS News and the authenticity of the documents that were used in the story. The dominant framing categories that emerged were the game and responsibility frames with some frames which combined the function of the ad hominem and responsibility framing categories. The games frames in the Killian case were used to explore the public relations crisis caused by this story for CBS News as well as how the story impacted the Presidential election. The responsibility frames in this case also focused on the responsibility of the press and the consequences that a story like this story

has for the mainstream press. The ad hominem frames in this case focused on the character of Dan Rather in particular and explored his credibility as a journalist. We will now briefly review the major events that took place in the Killian scandal that lead up to the announcement that CBS News would launch a full investigation into the airing of the documents.

5.1.1 Killian Case Outline

The documents that CBS used in the report were signed by one of Bush's former commanding officers who died in 1984. They indicated that Bush gained entry into the National Guard because of the influence of his father and also that he lost his flight status because he failed to take a medical exam. Before they took the documents to air, CBS producers gave the White House a copy of the files for verification and they were approved. As we have seen the blogs littlegreenfootballs and powerline had responded with in-depth criticism of the authenticity of the documents by the morning after the show aired. Both newspapers in this study had responded with some scepticism about the authenticity of the documents which they based on comments from the surviving family of Lt. Col. Killian and their own experts the day after these bloggers posted their stories .

Throughout the coverage Killian's family, former secretary and fellow officers had identified that the documents were out of character for the late Lieutenant Colonel. As document experts weighed in and their analysis focused on the spacing or kerning of the documents and the placement of a superscript th. Both sides of the debate provided evidence that supported or denied the possibility of the documents being produced in 1973. For CBS the existence of the IBM Selectron, one of the first typewriters to have proportional spacing, was their evidence that these documents could have been produced

by Lt. Col. Killian. This circumstantial evidence was not enough to withstand the scrutiny of CBS's critics in the mainstream press and blogosphere. It was also uncovered that one of the officers mentioned in the memos, Col. Walter Staudt, had already left the National Guard before the dates on that appeared in the file.

As the story unfolded it turned out that a CBS producer Mary Mapes rushed the documents to air having been misled by a former National Guardsman who has had a history with President Bush named Bill Burkett. Ultimately the main problem with this story was traced back to Burkett who supplied CBS with the forged documents. He was a former National Guardsman who had a history of attacking Bush's service record. Burkett claimed that he saw people destroying documents regarding Bush's service record back in the 1990's when the President was running for Governor.

CBS News was very reluctant to produce the names of their sources or expose their journalistic practices at all. It was also speculated late in the development of the story that Burkett was referred to the Democratic Party by Mapes. Once Burkett was identified as the source of the documents, his history with Bush became the central problem with the CBS story. Under mounting questions regarding the memo's authenticity the president of CBS Andrew Heyward apologized and committed the network to an independent investigation to find out what went wrong on September 20, 2004.

5.2 Game Frames

In this case the game frame was applied to both the position of the CBS News division and the Presidential election that was taking place at the time. When framing the predicament of CBS News these articles portrayed the news organization as taking part in a similar contest for public support that politicians are often framed in. In this game the news organization maintains and builds public support through the use of good journalistic practices and loses this support through falsification and misleading their audience. In terms of the election the game frame was used to assess the impact and connection of the Killian memos to both sides of the political contest. Framing the forged documents as a political tool designed to win the election these articles examined the strategic benefits and drawbacks of the scandal on each political party.

5.2.1 *Credibility Gap*

After weeks of standing behind the documents used in the Killian story CBS eventually admitted that they were unable to authenticate the documents. CBS's admission led to speculation about the impact that the story had on the credibility of the news organization. The following article from the *New York Times* provides some analysis of the damage that the story had done to the network, "The network's admission tarnishes the reputation of what was once the nation's most prestigious broadcast news division. Just two weeks ago, its 72-year-old anchor seemed to have one of the biggest stories of the campaign, in the twilight of his career." (Rutenberg and Zernike, p1, 2004). The way this article is framed, the issue of the falsified documents is presented in terms of how it will affect the public image of CBS News. In this article the issue is framed using the game frame which is similar to the how the media frames politics. In this case

CBS News, and by extension other news outlets, are involved in a continuous struggle to maintain public image and credibility. News organizations can achieve this through good journalistic practice and will lose because of mistakes like the use of the Killian memos.

Maintaining the public's trust was also accompanied by strategic suggestions from authors in the newspapers and blogosphere. Most bloggers suggested that the resignation of Dan Rather would solve the crisis of credibility that CBS faced. Sullivan wrote;

RATHERGATE: It seems pretty clear to me that CBS's documents were forged; and that Dan Rather's Rainesian excuses are getting lamer and lamer. This strikes me as a big deal for CBS. It's not just that they made awfully big claims on documents they obviously failed to check out thoroughly enough; but Rather subsequently blustered about their legitimacy. Shouldn't he quit after such a display of recklessness? What would Rather be saying if an Internet site had pushed these docs? (12.09.04)

Of course Dan Rather was only one small part of the construction of this story and his resignation would not prevent all of the other employees at CBS, who were involved in the construction of this story, from repeating their bad journalistic practice. The resignation of Dan Rather is presented as a miracle play which will narrow the credibility gap created by this story for CBS News.

These frames were also used to address how other related forgery scandals had damaged the credibility of the wider mainstream press in recent years. These articles often focused on what other news organizations had done in the wake of their own forgery scandals as a way of suggesting possible strategies for what CBS could possibly do in order to regain the trust of their readers. The following excerpt from the *New York Times* positions the CBS scandals with other media forgery scandals;

CBS News made its acknowledgement as news organizations are struggling with a crisis of credibility that has been fuelled, at least in part, by admissions of fabrication or plagiarism by newspapers large and small. Among those news organizations are The *New York Times* and USA Today, whose top editors resigned after each paper had reported widespread fabrications by one of its reporters. (Carter and Steinberg, p24, 2004)

By reviewing the recent scandals and outlining the severity of the consequences for each organization the author is suggesting a course of action for CBS News. The implication is that if CBS does not take similar measures to address their scandal they would suffer from a credibility gap with the American public. This credibility gap suggests that CBS News was losing the public's trust.

5.2.2 The Killian Memos and the Republican Conspiracy

The game frames in this case were used to assess the impact that the Killian memos had on each campaign as well as to explore what connections the memos may have had with each party. One of the main reasons that the Killian documents became such a big story was the timing of the report. The election was the dominant story in the news cycle so most news was filtered through how it related to the election. The Killian story was presented in these articles as another piece in the election game which each party could use to their strategic advantage.

The first post that was submitted by Sullivan used a frame that connected the Killian memos to the Presidential campaign. He notes;

You've got that and the guy who pulled the strings to get Bush in the Guard saying he's now ashamed of what he did. Now: I hate this kind of sleaze. But the Bush campaign's attack on Kerry's military service makes it all sadly legit. Is there a real, substantive response to this (and I don't mean sliming Barnes as a Democrat)? Are the forms forgeries? Is Barnes lying? I'd be more than happy to read (or run) a cogent, factual rebuttal. (09.09.04)

By linking this article to the previous attack on Kerry's military record Sullivan outlines what he regards as fair play in this election game. The frame used in this article not only places the election in the context of a game, but proceeded to explore the rules of that contest. Sullivan's use of the term 'sleaze' suggests that this type of tactic would not normally be allowed in the election game, but because a similar strategy has been used by Republicans this attack is fair. This article was posted before Sullivan was convinced that the documents were forgeries.

Even though these documents were potentially damaging for President Bush some columnists and bloggers speculated about the possible involvement of his campaign manager Karl Rove. In her article, *Pre-emptive Paranoia*, Maureen Dowd, from the *Times*, explored the notion that Rove could have created the documents. In the following excerpt we see how she used a previously published book as evidence to corroborate the possibility of Rove's connection;

Those who suspect Mr. Rove note that when he was Bill Clements's campaign strategist in a 1986 governor's race in Texas, he was accused of bugging his own office to distract from a debate, according to James Moore and Wayne Slater, authors of "Bush's Brain." (Dowd, p27, 2004)

Dowd uses the evidence from this book to suggest that Rove was capable of falsifying these documents and leaking it to CBS News. The action is presented as a brilliant, albeit diabolical, strategy for the Republican Campaign manager to perpetrate. The suggestion of this type of article is that the documents were a tool in the election game and there is also an implication that the use of the documents would fall outside the rules of this game.

The notion that Karl Rove created the falsified documents was refuted by Charles Johnson almost five full days before Dowd published her column. Johnson posted that;

Some have suggested that these documents may have been “planted” by the evil Karl Rove (cue sound of horses whinnying), to make news media and Democrats look bad. But if you were going to plant false documents, wouldn’t you spend considerable effort to make sure they looked real, so your intended patsy wouldn’t immediately notice that they were created with Microsoft Word? (11.09.04)

The fact that this blog entry predated the Dowd article suggests that she either was ignorant of the blog or chose to ignore it when producing her column. After Dowd’s column was published Johnson provided another critique of the position;

But really. Think about it. You’re the evil Karl Rove, nefarious mastermind behind the Bushitler hegemony. You’ve hatched a diabolical plan to plant forged documents with CBS News and/or the Kerry campaign, to make them look bad when the forgeries are discovered.
Would you, Karl (or one of your diabolical underlings), simply open Microsoft Word and begin typing with the default settings? Print it, crumple it and smooth it out, and fax it to yourself twice, and think that was good enough? (15.09.04)

Although this post was submitted after the column by Dowd it was written in response to Democratic National Committee operatives who were spreading this theory in the media. These posts critique the position that Rove and Republicans could have forged the documents as part of their election strategy they do so in a way that maintains the game frame. The argument forwarded by Johnson is based on the fact that Rove is too smart of a player of the game to be caught using a strategy like this. The implication of Johnson’s frame is that if Rove had used this strategy the falsification of the documents would have been better executed.

The fact that Dowd and Johnson seemingly ignored the existence of the other’s argument highlights the remaining disconnect between the bloggers and newspapers in this study. It could be that Dowd doesn’t read blogs or just doesn’t read

littlegreenfootballs, whatever her reasons for not responding to Johnson's original critique of her position illustrates how easily the news narratives developed in the blogosphere can be ignored. Similarly Johnson may not read Dowd's column or feel that her opinion is worth responding to. This example shows that the level of convergence that exists between bloggers and journalists remains a choice of the individual authors. They choose when to acknowledge, include, rebut or build on the narratives of the other medium.

5.2.3 Democratic-Liberal Media Conspiracy

Even in the beginning of this story the Killian memos were framed as being beneficial for the larger Democratic strategy to discredit President Bush for his service in the National Guard service. The *Washington Post* indicated that the, "Release of the documents came as Democrats and some veterans stepped up their criticism of Bush for allegedly failing to meet his sworn obligations to the Texas Air National Guard." (Dobbs & Edsall, A01, 2004). This article indicates that criticizing Bush's National Guard record was a strategy already being employed by the Democratic Party in attempt to win the election.

Even before it became known that producer Mary Mapes had recommended Burkett to the Democratic Party there was some speculation that the Democrats had a hand in the production of the documents. As we see in this excerpt from Reynold's blog;

More than six weeks ago, an opposition research staffer for the Democratic National Committee received documents purportedly written by President George W. Bush's Texas Air National Guard squadron commander, the late Col. Jerry Killian (10.09.04)

Basing this article on a report from another blog Reynolds forwarded the idea that the Democrats knew about these documents well in advance of their use on CBS. This would suggest that the documents were somehow connected to the Democrats and that they were a part of their election strategy.

When Bill Burkett was revealed as the source for the CBS documents there was a great deal of scrutiny placed on the connections that he had to the Democratic Party. This was due in large part to the referral he received from Mary Mapes. For the Democrats there was a direct connection between their party and Burkett. In this report from the *New York Times* the author examined the impact the scandal was having on the Democratic Party strategy;

Democrats vowed yesterday to keep alive questions about President Bush's Vietnam-era National Guard service despite the admission by CBS that it could not authenticate documents at the centre of a report on his service. But the party instead spent much of the day explaining contacts between Senator John Kerry's campaign and the former National Guard officer who gave the network the documents. (Zernike, p16, 2004)

The author goes on to examine how the Republicans have gained a political advantage because of the scandal. The promotion of the Killian memos could have been a very effective strategy for the Democrats in the Presidential Election, but instead they became a liability muting the Democrats ability to attack the President on his National Guard service record and ultimately thwarting one of their election strategies.

Despite the revelation that the documents were forgeries some journalists and bloggers in the sample and members of the DNC maintained that they were “fake but accurate” (Balleza and Zernike, p24, 2004). This position was disputed in the blogosphere as being an ill-fated Democratic election strategy. John from powerline.com

posted, “It's hard to see how anyone can continue to maintain that the documents are anything but forgeries. As to CBS, that's the end of the story. But the Democrats will try to shift the focus to the idea that the documents, even if fakes, make valid points about the President's National Guard service.” (14.09.04). This post highlights the tenacity of the Democrat’s strategy to discredit President Bush’s National Guard service.

As we have seen the game frame was used in this case to analyze the weakened position of CBS News and the potential strategies employed by each party in the Presidential election. Within these frames there was a great deal of contestation between the narratives of bloggers and reporters. Although the authors from both media often produced opposing narratives on the same topic they did not clash. We saw this in the example of competing narratives of Johnson and Dowd which highlighted the fact that there is still a disconnect between the authors of both media even when they are writing on the same topic. There is also something to be said for the similarities found in the narratives produced in each media. As the game frames emerged within both media the topic that they focused on were often similar, whether it be the predicament of CBS News, the potential for a republican conspiracy or the alleged democratic-liberal media conspiracy.

5.3 Responsibility Frames

The responsibility frames found in this case also focused on the failure of the mainstream press to fulfill their journalistic obligations to the public. The primary difference was that in this case scrutiny was focused primarily on the news division at CBS. The investigation of what went wrong in the journalistic process at CBS News sought to attribute responsibility for the wayward story to one person or to a mistake in

news gathering process. These articles retraced the steps taken by CBS in constructing the story in order to determine what went wrong. These frames were found in both the newspapers and the blogosphere and their application of the responsibility frame is consistent with the process of news repair.

Responsibility frames were also used to examine the role of bloggers in the perpetuation of this story. In these frames the attribution of responsibility was deployed in a positive manner in the newspapers crediting the bloggers in the study with catching this error and making it apparent to the public at large. In the blogosphere these frames were deployed reflexively to analyze the responsibility of fellow bloggers in this case. The last group of responsibility frames that we will examine borders on the boundary between responsibility frames and ad hominem frames.

As the anchor who delivered and helped develop the story Dan Rather was targeted directly by the journalists and bloggers in this study. Some of the frames used to analyze Rather's role in the story attributed the failure to properly check the Killian memos to the reporter directly. These frames presented Rather as the irresponsible party who rushed the documents to air. Other frames in this group focused on Rather's personal qualities in an attempt to critique or discredit the story. Unlike the previous case these ad hominem frames were found in both the mainstream newspapers and the blogs in this study.

5.3.1 Searching Process for What Went Wrong

The process theme emphasized the procedures employed by CBS News as an exercise in news repair, proving to their readers that the mistakes made in this story are a result of CBS News rather than the journalistic process. These articles examined each

individual part of the Killian story in a quest to attribute responsibility to some party. One of the first aspects of the story to be scrutinized was the experts used to verify the documents. Both newspapers first sought out their own experts to weigh in on the memos. As we see in this excerpt from the *Times*;

Philip Bouffard, a forensic document specialist from Ohio who created a commonly used database of at least 3,000 old type fonts, said he had suspicions as well. "I found nothing like this in any of my typewriter specimens," said Dr. Bouffard, a Democrat. He also said the fonts were "certainly consistent with what I see in *Times* Roman," the commonly used Microsoft Word font. (Seelye & Rutenberg, 10.09.04)

The implication of seeking out other expert testimony on the authenticity of the documents is that the experts at CBS were responsible for not catching the falsified documents in the first place.

Upon further examination it became clear that the experts used in the authentication of the documents by CBS were not qualified to determine whether the documents were produced in 1973. As we see in the following excerpt from a *Post* article;

It quickly became clear that the people CBS hired to authenticate the documents had -- and claimed -- only limited expertise in the sometimes arcane science of computer typesetting technology and fonts. Such expertise is needed to determine whether the records could have been created in 1972 and 1973. Independent experts contacted by The *Post* were surprised that CBS hired analysts who were not certified by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, considered the gold standard in the field. (Kurtz, Dobbs and Grimaldi A01, 2004)

By highlighting the standards of the *Post* in this segment the authors are able to reassure their readers that they could have done better with this story. This article still attributes the responsibility for this failure on the experts attained by CBS. As the story unfolded

these experts came forward to speak with other media outlets to save face and re-direct responsibility.

With CBS's experts coming forward to save their own professional reputations the focus of the responsibility frames in this story shifted to the journalistic practice of the CBS News team. As we see in the following passage from the *Post*;

The lead expert retained by CBS News to examine disputed memos from President Bush's former squadron commander in the National Guard said yesterday that he examined only the late officer's signature and made no attempt to authenticate the documents themselves. (Dobbs and Kurtz, A08, 2004)

This article serves to relieve the responsibility that had been mistakenly placed on the experts attained by CBS News and began to shift that responsibility to the news team who aired the story.

The news that CBS's experts questioned the authenticity of the Killian memos was also echoed in the blogosphere. Marshall posted that;

The late news that two of CBS's own experts had questions about the authenticity of these documents is really all you need to know to see that this piece never should have run as it did. At a minimum, when the original story ran, CBS should have shared with viewers the questions their own experts were apparently raising about the documents' authenticity. (15.09.04)

Marshall is unambiguous about who should bear the responsibility for this error in judgment. The point he is making is that the team at CBS were the ultimate gatekeepers for this story and that if there were questions about the authenticity of the documents they should have erred on the side of caution.

Ultimately it was determined that the source that CBS used for the documents, Bill Burkett, had likely forged them to harm President Bush. Burkett was identified as a

partisan adversary of the President which should have made his contribution to the story suspect. In this quote from the *Times*, Burkett was depicted as an adversary of the President, “Mr. Burkett is an avid Democrat and a frequent contributor to the Texas Democratic e-mail list. His name also shows up occasionally as a contributor of criticism of the Bush administration on a Web site, onlinejournal.com.”(Kirkpatrick and Rutenberg, p11, 2004). By following through and focusing on the process used by CBS to produce this story the responsibility for this journalistic failure rested finally on the shoulders of the producer Mary Mapes and anchor Dan Rather for their choice to use Burkett’s evidence despite its questionable nature. By presenting a full expose on Mr. Burkett and his involvement in this story both newspapers are able to show how they could have presented this story better.

5.3.2 Crediting Bloggers Efforts

Similar to how the work of bloggers was praised in the Trent Lott case the frames in this group focus on the blogger’s role in the coverage of the Killian scandal. While reconstructing the anatomy of this story the authors from both newspapers provided a reflexive analysis of the scandal attributing certain aspects of the coverage to the work of bloggers. William Safire of the *Times* had produced the first of these frames in his article *Those Discredited Memos*. Safire credited the early work of bloggers in creating scepticism about the documents online. He wrote that, “Alert bloggers who knew the difference between the product of old typewriters and new word processors immediately suspected a hoax: the “documents” presented by CBS News suggesting preferential treatment in Lt. George W. Bush’s National Guard service have all the earmarks of forgeries.” (Safire, p23, 2004). Safire also goes on to review the contributions of other

newspapers including the *LA Times* and the *Dallas Morning Star*, which highlights the multi-vocal nature of the current news environment.

Much of the attention from newspapers was placed on the speed of the response from the blogosphere. In an article from the *Post* much later in the coverage Howard Kurtz wrote;

Scott Johnson, 53, writes for a Web site called Power Line. Charles Johnson, 51, posts on Little Green Footballs. They were among the bloggers who blew the cyber-whistle by charging that the documents used by "60 Minutes" in its report on President Bush's Air National Guard service appeared bogus.

It was like throwing a match on kerosene-soaked wood. The ensuing blaze ripped through the media establishment as previously obscure bloggers managed to put the network of Murrow and Cronkite firmly on the defensive. (Kurtz, C01, 2004)

The role of the blogosphere in the perpetuation of this story was much more widely recognized by the newspapers in this study than during the Trent Lott case. Unlike the Lott story the bloggers inclusion in these frames is not a reflexive acknowledgement of a failure to meet journalistic obligations, but to criticize the practice of journalism at CBS News in particular. During the Lott controversy bloggers were framed in terms of being right when the mainstream press were clearly wrong for missing the controversy. In this case the bloggers are included in the mainstream narrative as co-producers of the story and attributed with the responsibility for bringing it to light so fast.

In this case bloggers were treated as contributing members of the Killian story while CBS was scrutinized for poor journalistic practices. Identifying that the documents used by CBS were forged was enough for bloggers to be included in the mainstream story as contributing members in both of the newspapers in this study. In this case the focus of the news repair activity is performed to reign in the wayward narrative of CBS and

bloggers were able to contribute to that process. These frames spotlight how journalists and bloggers both compete and cooperate to develop an intertwined news narrative.

5.4 A Rather Dirty Fight

The frames found in this group were caught somewhere between the responsibility and ad hominem frames. These articles focused on Dan Rather attributing him with the responsibility for the mistakes made at CBS. These frames were found in both the blogosphere and *New York Times*. In the *Post* there were a few articles defending Rather and criticizing blogger triumphalism, but for the most part the reporters at the *Post* expressed their empathy for Rather's position. Although bloggers and the *Times* Tim Rutenberg shared a similar position on Rather's character the delivery of their criticism was very different.

Andrew Sullivan focused his criticism on the notion that Dan Rather was a biased reporter. As we see in this excerpt from Sullivan, "THE ROLE OF BIAS: I was hammered on the Paula Zahn show last night for claiming that the reason for this colossal embarrassment is the obvious anti-Bush bias of Dan Rather and CBS News." (15.09.04) Throughout the Killian controversy criticism for partisan motivations bounced back and forth between both the newspapers and the bloggers in the sample. Instead of addressing the substantive issues with the process employed by CBS News in sending this story to air Sullivan focused on perceived deficiencies in Rather's character.

Still placing Rather in the position of responsibility in his frame Tim Rutenberg contextualized the story by examining Rather's history with Republicans. In his article from the *Times*, Rutenberg wrote that, "Ever since tangling with Richard Nixon as a White House correspondent more than three decades ago, Dan Rather has been the

television presence conservatives love to hate.”(Rutenberg, p22, 2004). The suggestion that comes from the article is that Rather’s history of tangling with conservative politicians, especially the Bush family, means that he must be biased. The negative attention that Rather attracted from conservatives over the years became one of the cornerstones of the analysis of CBS’s mistakes. In this article Rather’s credibility and character are questioned on the basis of his journalistic record.

Some of the criticisms of Rather’s character that emerged in the blogosphere were vicious. In response to an interview conducted by Rather with Killian’s former secretary Johnson posted;

Last night’s performance by Dan Rather and 60 Minutes was a pathetic vaudeville. They admitted in the first few minutes that their “Killian memos” were frauds—then, with absolute contempt for the intelligence of their viewers, spent the rest of the segment trying to convince us that it didn’t matter, digging up more questionable “experts” (why didn’t CBS call Adobe or IBM and interview real experts?) and shamelessly prompting an 87-year old Bush hater to say the things Dan Rather wanted her to say. (16.09.04)

Some of the articles posted by bloggers were even more personal in nature. Reynolds provides a good example of this in the following excerpt, “And for Dan Rather, perhaps a copy of *Intellectual Morons : How Ideology Makes Smart People Fall for Stupid Ideas* would be in order. Though I’ve never *really* thought of Dan as an intellectual.”(Reynolds, 10/09/04). The suggestion of course is that Rather is a biased journalist. What is missing from all of these criticisms of Dan Rather is the same level of evidence they provide in their other posts.

Even though these frames appear in the work of both reporters and bloggers their delivery is starkly different. What separates the narratives that emerge in the blogosphere and the newspapers, when it comes to the criticism of Dan Rather, is context. The same

type of ad hominem responsibility frame emerged in an article from the *Times*, but the primary difference was that this article provided the relevant history to back up the claim. Sullivan, Johnson and Reynolds all forward the notion that Rather was biased without providing any evidence or analysis to prove it. Even though the story from the *Times* could be used to corroborate the claims made by the bloggers within these frames none of these bloggers make the attempt to provide such context. The freedom to write whatever they deem fit is displayed in the writing of these news bloggers. This freedom allowed the bloggers in both cases to make the journalistic impact that they made, but these frames indicate the drawbacks of this kind of unrestrained commentary.

We saw in this case how the authors from the two newspapers compete and cooperate in their construction of stories. We saw the competing narratives of the games frames presenting the perceived political strategy and consequences from both sides of the political spectrum. With the responsibility frames in this case we saw how the authors of both newspapers can cooperate to and combine their efforts to reign in a wayward story and how some were willing to credit bloggers. The ad hominem frames in this section shed light on the unrestrained nature of the writing found in the blogosphere. There is no requirement forcing bloggers to provide hyperlinks or evidence in their writing unlike journalists who must meet rigorous journalistic standards in order to publish.

Chapter Six: Journalism, Blogging and Media Convergence

After analyzing the frames that were used in these cases there are a few conclusions that can be made about the relationship between journalism and blogging. We will start by examining the limitations of this study and the potential for further research in this area. Then we will examine how news blogging fits the profile of Rich Gordon's concept of storytelling or presentation convergence (Kawamoto, 2003). Secondly we will examine the concept of an inter-networked news environment as a model for understanding the relationship between these two media in light of the frames analyzed in each case.

6.1 Limitations and Further Research

Using frame analysis to access the relationship between the bloggers and newspapers in this study has two main limitations. The first limitation is caused primarily by the sample group themselves. Throughout each case there were a limited amount of examples which clearly showed the relationship between the bloggers and journalists in the sample. The second limitation of this approach is caused by the volume of mainstream press and blogging data that would be required to truly flesh out this relationship. Because the bloggers chosen for this study use such a wide range of sources it becomes nearly impossible to track down every link they make to the mainstream press. Even if one were to approach the data collection by first collecting the work of bloggers and then collecting the articles they link to, then the articles in the mainstream that reference the bloggers but are not linked to would be left out.

Moving forward with this study a few directions for further research become evident. The relationship between bloggers and journalists in general has changed

drastically in the last few years. If one were to continue to explore this relationship today the first place to start would be with journalists who blog and who use blogs. The recent works by Jane Singer and Susan Robinson are beginning to break ground on the issue of journalists who blog. To further the goals of this study one would benefit from talking to journalists to determine to what extent they use blogs in their work.

Conversely it would be interesting to continue the exploration of the relationship between bloggers and journalists from the perspective of bloggers like Andrew Sullivan who are breaking into mainstream journalism. Focussing further studies on the transformation of these bloggers and they become more legitimate would also shed some light on how they relate to the mainstream press. As certain bloggers become more prominent in the products of mainstream journalism, by appearing as experts or pundits, it will be interesting to see whether or not the way in which they blog changes.

6.2 Blogs and the Emergence of Storytelling Convergence

Given the hypertextual nature of the blogging narrative bloggers do not just practice media cross promotion; their blogs are defined by it. By weaving together sources from all available media, bloggers are able to construct a daily news narrative that is unique to their medium. As we have seen in the frames identified in each case the bloggers in this study, through practice of hypertext linking and quoting, often construct their own news narratives on top of the narratives of the newspapers in the sample and the mainstream press in general. Emerging from the technologically converged medium of the internet blogs embody Gordon's prediction of story telling convergence.

As we saw in the ad hominem frames of the Lott case bloggers see themselves as unique and existing outside the boundaries of the mainstream press. It is this position of

the outsider which allows bloggers to fulfill the role of a truly converged news narrative. Without the restrictions of the news industry bloggers are able to pick and choose whatever sources they deem fit in the construction of their narratives. This leads to the production of a news product which has the potential to be a truly multimedia narrative. Because of the practice of hypertext linking bloggers not only provide their own narrative, but also the narratives of whatever sources they are basing their story on.

The use of hypertext in the blogging narrative produces the kind of cross-promotion that is a defining feature of media convergence. By featuring the work of other authors, from both the traditional and non-traditional news media, bloggers promote the work of that author. Even when a blogger uses a link to connect an article to a source that they are criticizing the implicit message embedded in the use of hypertext that the material on the other side of the link has been deemed worth seeing by the blogger. In this way bloggers promote the sources they link to in much the same way that news organizations promote one another in the current state of media convergence. There is very little difference between a blogger linking to a mainstream article and Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post* being consulted as an expert by CNN.

The acceptance of the journalistic role of bloggers in the responsibility frames used in both cases also indicates that this cross promotion is not limited to just the blogosphere. By recognizing the effort of bloggers in these cases the newspapers in this study promote the idea that some of the work being done in the blogosphere is also worth reading. Also we saw how between the two cases bloggers went from receiving sparse congratulations from two mainstream authors to becoming a valid partner in the construction of the story. It is difficult to speculate whether these stories would have

unfolded with the same results had bloggers not been involved. Would Trent Lott's comments have garnered as much attention from the mainstream press if bloggers were not involved? Would the Killian memos been as sharply scrutinized? The answers to these questions is difficult to determine for certain, but it is safe to say that the way in which bloggers were included in the responsibility frames of each case indicates the value of their contributions.

The emergence of storytelling convergence within the blogosphere makes the existence of our inter-networked news environment more salient. With bloggers constructing multimedia news narratives they place themselves in the role of information brokers within this environment, directing their readers to the articles they deem pertinent to a given subject. In an era characterized by the information overload created by the vast amounts of news media available, bloggers serve the role of guiding us through this information to the articles and sources they deem interesting. We will now explore in more detail the concept of the inter-networked news environment and how the relationship between the bloggers and newspapers in this study helps us understand it.

6.3 The Inter-networked News Environment

The best way to understand the relationship between blogging and journalism is through the model of the inter-networked news environment. The inter-network news environment is a model used to explain how news producing networks compete and cooperate to produce an intertwined news narrative. The model assumes that a basic level of media convergence exists within the news environment. This model is most noticeable when news producing outlets from various media including print, radio, television and the internet all focus their efforts on one specific issue or event. As a story enters the

news cycle of the inter-networked environment it begins an iterative process where the various news producing outlets create stories that compliment, replicate or criticize the stories being produced by other outlets until the eventual dissipation or resolution of the story.

The two cases explored in this study are prime examples of how this news environment operates. In the cases which I explored in this study information was being consumed and iterated at a multitude of points over various news media including print, radio, television and of course the internet. As a story like Trent Lott's resignation entered into the news environment multiple media outlets picked up the story from various sources and produced their own iteration of the event. In the case of Lott his appearance at the birthday celebration was covered by CSPAN, ABC's *The Note*, both major newspapers and the bloggers in this study. Within fifteen days of Lott's initial remarks the story was resolved and the iterations of the story all but ceased after the Senators resignation from the position of Majority Leader. With Lott's recent bid for the post of Minority Whip within the Republican Party one might argue that these iterations never truly end, as the issue of his resignation became part of the recent coverage surrounding his new post.

As we have seen in the cases analyzed in this study the transcendence of the game and responsibility framing categories in both cases also suggests the inter-networked nature of this relationship. In order for news producers within this network to be able to communicate effectively it would make sense for them to approach issues with the same frames. In order to construct a narrative based on the mainstream news it is not surprising that bloggers frame issues in the same way. In order to participate in the news media it

becomes necessary to communicate in the same terms just as it is important for a scholar in communication studies to frame their work in a similar way to other scholars in the field.

The relationship between the bloggers and journalists in this study is best characterized by Daily et al's notion of co-opetition, found in their version of the convergence continuum (2006). The authors of these media are at this level of convergence where they will both cooperate and compete with one another in the production of their individual news narratives. Authors from both media demonstrated in the cases analyzed that they had no trouble co-opting frames and evidence from the other medium. In the case of the blogosphere they co-opted the framing strategies used by the mainstream to discuss the strategic elements of the Trent Lott case. As we saw in the Killian case the mainstream did not hesitate to incorporate the contributions of bloggers in proving the memos were false.

What binds this news environment together is the progress of media convergence. As large news corporations expand their reach into new forms of media they create the networks that form the foundation of this environment. With new ways of story telling emerging within these converged environments, like blogging, the relationships between these networks becomes more apparent.

6.4 Final thoughts

The internet is a medium made up of individuals whom are both connected and separated by the technology. Sitting in front of one's computer is a intrinsically individualized activity which separates the users from one another. Only one person can operate a keyboard or mouse at a time and one person must make the decision of where

to go once they connect to the World Wide Web. Once connected to the internet the individual becomes part of an unbreakable communications network which allows them to connect to individuals and groups around the world. Blogging represents one of the many advances in communication software which can straddle this inherent dichotomy of computer mediated communication. The bloggers in this study form communities of interest which serve in some respects as a deliberative layer added to the inter-networked news environment in which we live. The nature of that deliberation and whether or not it will be co-opted and normalized by mainstream news sources is still yet to be seen. After analyzing the frames of bloggers and journalists in this study I am left with a mix of hope and apprehension when it comes to the future of this relationship.

My sense of apprehension is born out of the unmitigated freedom that bloggers possess in the construction of their narratives. Some bloggers have protested that this freedom does not exist because of the editorial function that their readers occasionally perform. It is true that bloggers are constrained by the limits of what their readers will tolerate. When it comes to issues of partisan bias, journalistic rigor and accuracy in reporting there is no check on a blogger's work. As we saw in the Killian case bloggers attacked the character of Dan Rather with no evidence or analysis to prove their accusation, even when reporters in the newspapers provided these things. This kind of freedom without repercussion is dangerous for traditional media. There is nothing to stop bloggers from either side of the political spectrum from using their platform weaken the credibility of traditional media.

What fills me with hope is that some people working in traditional media have made the effort to bring bloggers into the fold. The production of news is a complex and

crucial function for the health of democratic society. The introduction of independent voices, whose focus is on the production and criticism of news is a good sign for democracy. With corporate concentration of mainstream press the introduction of these new voices could not have arrived at a better time. Whether the relationship between bloggers and journalists is beneficial to themselves and society will be determined by the individuals involved. As we have seen in these cases this relationship has the potential to yield positive results. Whether things will stay that way is yet to be seen.

The relationship between the authors of these two media is characterized by the struggles that manifest themselves in their coverage. The bloggers in this study struggle for both independence and recognition, desperately trying to be a part of the media conversation which shapes our social reality. The reporters in this study struggle to provide quality journalism to their readers. The most important struggle that the authors of these media participate in is that one that is waged over the truth. The authors of both media present the notion that they possess it and through their struggle over the truth they bring us one step closer to it. It is through this negotiation that journalism becomes better.

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