

Second Order Journalism: A Study of Selected Niche Authorities on Facebook and Twitter

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Abstract : Social media has become a powerful tool in bridging the distance between individuals regardless of their location. It has become a convenient platform for public discussion and, consequently, generated the phenomenon of citizen journalists who have become both proactive and reactive participants in the dissemination of news, information and other epochal and historical events. This phenomenon has fueled the growth of niche authorities who deliver exceptional democratically consequential information online. This study, therefore, investigates how some selected niche authorities maintain their status on social media. Using the selective processes theory, the study further interrogates the information shared by niche authorities and further analyses the extent to which a public interest-altruistic motive or personal interest-self-serving motive drives their agenda of new sharing and usage. Through cyber-ethnography and, qualitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews, data was gathered and analysed from the posts of two purposely selected niche authorities on Facebook and Twitter. The findings indicate that niche authorities maintain their status by being consistent, prompt, informative, resourceful and interactive in their postings on the social media platform. The study also discovered that even though niche authorities are motivated by both public interest-altruism and interest-self-serving, the latter had a higher of motivation than the former.

Keywords : social medida, citizen journalist, niche authorities, selective processes theory

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