Matt Carlson, **Journalistic Authority: Legitimating News in the Digital Era,** New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017, 256 pp., $90.00 (hardcover), $30.00 (paperback).

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Journalistic Authority: Legitimating News in the Digital Era provides a thorough overview of sources of journalistic authority, updating the topic with attention to the ways that authority is perceived to be shifting in light of digital technology. It is a useful text for graduate seminars on journalism studies and provides a helpful introduction for scholars interested in studying particular aspects of authority, as it synthesizes a number of different approaches to the concept while treating it relationally and discursively.

Authority, Carlson proposes, is not a stable trait that is possessed or not by particular speakers. Rather, it is a social construct of the right to be listened to, or "an understanding formed through the interactions among all the actors necessary for journalism to exist" (p. 7). The book is organized around various aspects of these relationships between journalism, journalists, and the tools, discussions, and publics with which and with whom journalists negotiate authority.

In this model, journalists claim authority through three related components. Invoking group identity, journalists claim authority based on their adherence to accepted standards of professional behavior; textual practices, whereby adhering to certain formal and structural requirements of journalistic texts confers authority; and metadiscourse, where journalists define for themselves which components comprise good, authoritative texts and practices in their field. That authority is then mediated through the journalist's relationships with audiences, sources, technology, and critics. Each of these aspects of authority is challenged in some way by digital technology.

Each substantive chapter of the book treats one of these relational elements, summarizing literature on the relevant relationship to describe how it contributes to journalistic authority and how digital technology changes or has the potential to change that aspect of authority.

Via journalistic identity, journalists themselves use "professional" behavior as a foundation for their legitimacy, claiming authority to tell the truth and be believed because of the way they behave. Professionalism is a contested term, as Carlson notes, but he focuses on its definition as the means by which members of a particular social group claim control over their realm of work. He narrows in on autonomy, objectivity, and expertise as key elements of journalists' own conceptualizations of professionalism, which in turn grants them authority. In some ways, digital technology has "deprofessionalized" journalism, as it lowers the entry barriers to the occupation for people who might not have the training or qualifications traditionally considered necessary to practice.
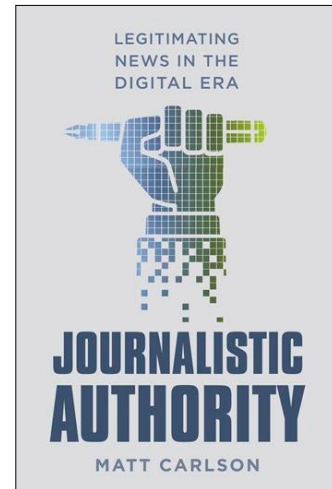
Journalists also claim authority by creating news texts aligned with expected formats as narrative-based accounts presented in contexts that convey meaning and interpret reality for audiences. Digital formats complicate journalistic authority in that they allow audiences to consume individual news stories and narratives in snippets, distanced from their intended context as part of broadcasts or printed documents. This means some of the meaning of news texts is no longer in the journalist's control—audiences can now consume one political story alongside gossip or lifestyle stories, sports, and even native advertising, which is paid content that looks like news reporting.

Finally, journalists claim authority for themselves through their narratives about their own work. High-profile awards, including the annual Pulitzer Prize, reinforce standards for credibility and excellence that signal to those inside and outside the occupation how good, authoritative journalists produce content. In this and other ways, journalists tell stories about their own work to claim authority and control over the expectations around best practices in the occupation.

Journalistic authority is situated within relationships between journalists and the public, their sources, their tools, and their critics.

Journalists depend on audiences to give them authority. The introduction of digital technology into news production processes gives audiences even more control over journalistic authority, as individuals can now claim online platforms and command audiences to give their own perspectives on current events, where previously only journalists had access to the formats that could reach mass audiences. Journalists possess nonbinding authority that is constructed through mediated texts channeled through news organizations.

Journalists grant and gain authority through their selection of sources. Sources become visible experts as journalist rely on them; conversely, journalists rely on sources to buttress and solidify their own positions of authority as knowledgeable experts on particular events. They often do this through indexing, selecting authoritative voices who represent mainstream or common views of events to represent the range of opinion on particular topics. In general, journalists use the voices of sources who are selected carefully and strategically in order to convey particular messages and event portrayals to their audiences.

Journalistic authority is mediated through technology, both within news organizations and between journalists and their sources and publics. Particular technologies introduced recently have changed journalists' routines, in many cases by making information more readily accessible and portable. In various ways, objects of journalistic work mediate narratives of journalistic authority, supporting and undermining it. Digital media makes it easier for those outside the boundaries of "professional" journalism to position themselves as journalists. Technology also enables journalistic witness across space and time, where previously journalists were constrained to eyewitness accounts.

Finally, media criticism offers valuable lessons about journalistic authority. Public criticism of journalists' behavior and content highlights the boundaries of and authority imbued in "acceptable" journalistic practice and form.

Throughout these chapters, Carlson deftly summarizes and intertwines a large body of literature dealing with various aspects of journalistic authority. The primary value of this text lies in its thorough examination of the different facets of journalistic authority in the United States and how those are, or could be, transformed in light of the current mediated environment. The discussion of authority from multiple angles and inclusion of a variety of literature makes this book a useful addition to syllabi and scholarly bookshelves for those seeking an introduction to the patterns and context of authority in U.S. journalism.

Carlson speaks to the present moment of journalism studies by examining the effects of digital technology on various aspects of journalistic authority. Journalism itself has been ambiguously defined, with definitions and boundaries that change over time, and the current state of "post-industrial journalism" highlights this ambiguity (p. 20). In an age where audiences have greater control over their media consumption practices and more chances to become news producers themselves, the negotiation of journalistic authority is even more contentious. This observation and the exploration of digital contexts for journalistic authority are important and set the stage for a number of new research directions on elements of authority and their interaction with digital technology.

The narrow focus on the United States constitutes a shortcoming of the book. As the author notes, authority is constructed in cultural context, and the text's application to journalism cultures across national borders is limited. While the choice to limit the discussion to the United States is reasonable, it would have been valuable for Carlson to note throughout the text ways in which the various relationships and elements of authority do or do not seem to carry across geographic borders. For instance, particular elements of the journalist-audience relationship are likely unique to journalism produced in market-driven contexts like that in the United States, while other elements extend across economic and political differences. This shortcoming provides a useful starting point for future research. Future scholarship should seek to expand the knowledge of journalistic authority beyond the United States, extending our understanding of which elements of authority are stable across borders and which change with political and social context.

Journalistic Authority: Legitimating News in the Digital Era is a useful text for scholars seeking to assign an overview to advanced undergraduates or graduate students, and it is a helpful summary for those seeking to develop their own research on particular manifestations or relationships of authority.