***"The News Begins on Twitter"***

**Israeli Journalists' Perceptions and Usage Patterns of Twitter as a Work Tool**

**ABSTRACT**

Twitter is one of the most popular social networks worldwide. Over the past decade, it has become a central journalistic tool worldwide. Like many of their colleagues around the world, the majority of news professionals in Israel hold active Twitter accounts. This study aims to understand exactly how these professionals utilize Twitter for their personal as well as professional needs, and the various perceptions they have concerning its role in their lives. Senior media professionals with active Twitter accounts (n = 63, 78% of this population) were contacted personally and asked to answer a questionnaire that included closed and open questions. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The former allowed for identification of Twitter’s adoption patterns, daily usage, and appraisal in the journalism arena. The latter added user experiences and personal meaning. The exploration of Twitter as a journalist’s tool has not yet been studied in the Israeli context. In this sense, it highlights some of the unique patterns of Twitter’s reception among this group, especially in light of its extremely limited diffusion into Israeli society as a whole.

**Keywords:** Twitter, Innovation adoption, Journalism, Work tool, New media, Israel

**Introduction**

Twitter, launched in 2006, is considered one of the world’s most popular social networking sites, with about 300 million active accounts (Statista, 2019). In most Western countries, Twitter has been adopted in impressive numbers by regular citizens, as well as by celebrities, elected officials and other political figures, businesses, news organizations and news professionals, most of whom regard it as one of their central arenas of activity. Although Twitter is not highly popular among the general population of Israel, compared with other countries (Statista, 2019), most Israeli political figures and news professionals have adopted it as a dominant work tool, as have their colleagues around the world.

The current study, first of its kind, attempts to examine the role of this social networking site in the private and professional lives of Israeli reporters, commentators, and news presenters by asking: How do these news professionals use Twitter? For what purposes? How do they perceive it? What significance do they ascribe to it?

The data for the study were collected using a questionnaire distributed among leading Israeli news staff who are employed in well-known news organizations (including online news sites), and who hold active Twitter accounts.

**Theoretical background**

*Adopting new communication technologies*

The various ways in which technologies and ideas are diffused, adopted, and implemented are fertile ground for theories and models regarding the interaction between people and technology. Two theories are likely to provide an effective theoretical framework for examining the way Twitter is being adopted among media people: The Diffusion of Innovations Model and the Technology Acceptance Model.

The Diffusion of Innovations Model (Rogers, 2003) examines how, why, and to what extent ideas and technologies are diffused and then adopted or abandoned in various channels among individuals or social groups. The adoption and dissemination processes of technologies are dependent on, among other things, the characteristics of the technological innovation, the characteristics of the social framework, the identity of the “agents of change,” decision-making processes, and the variety existing within the media. Under the model Rogers proposed, diffusion is a process in which a new phenomenon is mediated through a media channel over a period of time among individuals or in a social group. Individuals within a society have different tendencies toward both adopting innovation and spreading it among other individuals. There are three distinct stages during which the individual or social unit moves from a situation of awareness to adopting the innovation (knowledge) to forming an opinion or approach about that innovation (persuasion). Afterward, a decision is made on whether to adopt or reject the innovation (decision), and then an authorization and implementation process takes place (implementation), with the innovation, at this stage, either becoming useful and standard or being abandoned on a permanent basis (confirmation). Sometimes the innovation is not adopted at all, and sometimes it will be abandoned after a short period of time. Other studies that examine the theory refer to additional influential factors—for example, the way in which cultural and economic policies can hinder or encourage the adoption of technologies (Dholakia & Kshetri 2001). While the Diffusion of Innovations Model focuses on the social-environmental context of the adoption process, the Technology Acceptance Model views these factors merely as the point of departure and focuses on the psychological-cognitive components of accepting the technology (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996; Venkatesh & Davis 2000; Venkatesh et al. 2003).

The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis 1989) is commonly utilized to explain users’ behavioral intention to use a technological innovation. The model involves two variables: (1) *Perceived ease of use*, which refers to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (Davis 1989, 320); (2) *Perceived usefulness*, which is deﬁned as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” (Davis 1989, 320). Venkatesh and Davis (2000) proposed a revised Technology Acceptance Model thatincorporated additional variables such as *experience* and *subjective norm*. Venkatesh et al. (2003) further developed the original model, adding, among other things, the extent to which a potential user perceives the decision to adopt a new technology as non-mandatory (voluntariness) and his or her perception of other important peoples’ opinions that he or she should use the new technology.

*Adoption of new communication technologies in Israel*

Comparative measurements of adoption of new communication technologies and the various active platforms that accompany them worldwide demonstrate that Israelis are among the most enthusiastic and eager adopters of such innovations, including most popular social networking sites (Statista, 2019). Various studies have examined the central place of mobile phones in Israeli society (Schejter & Cohen 2002, 2013), and later, the ever-increasing status of the smartphone (Author et al. 2017; Author et al. 2013). The accepted explanations for the impressive smartphone adoption rates in Israel are based on several unique characteristics of Israeli society, such as close familial connections, usually accompanied by the habit of frequently being updated on relatives’ well-being (Almog, 2004; Yair, 2011), an unstable security situation that occasionally raises the personal and national anxiety level (Schejter 2008; Yair 2011), and the Israelis’ attraction to technological innovations (Author et al., 2013; Cohen & Lemish, 2003; Schejter & Cohen, 2002, 2013).

In recent years, WhatsApp has become one of the most popular apps in Israel. A study conducted among Israeli WhatsApp users (Author et al. 2014; Qualitest, 2018) revealed impressive adoption levels. An additional study, examining WhatsApp usage patterns during wartime, showed that the application fulfilled important functions primarily identified with traditional communications tools, foremost by providing news updates of what was happening at the front (Author et al. 2015). These findings highlight the relatively limited tendency of Israel’s general population to adopt Twitter (Statista, 2019). The distinction between society as a whole and sub-populations, such as Israeli news professionals, calls for examination. In the current study, we wish to expand our understanding of this phenomenon by examining usage patterns and perceptions of Twitter as a journalistic work tool among Israeli news staff.

*Journalistic practices and norms*

Researchers of journalism tend to view the work of journalists as a product of a complex tapestry of factors driven by professional constraints and journalistic practices and norms (Deuze 2005, 2002; Gans, 2007; Schudson, 2001; Weaver et.al., 2007). Objectivity, lack of bias, neutrality, and the aspiration to present reality “as it is” feature prominently among the many values shaping the work of the Western journalist. Even though it is recognized today that complete objectivity is impossible, this principle is still seen as a supreme guiding value among the majority of journalists active in centrist media (Cook 2001; Schudson, 2001; Zelizer, 2004). One of the prominent derivatives of the dominance of the principle of objectivity in journalism is the aspiration to broaden the circle of sources and ensure their reliability and efficiency (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1986; Cook, 1998). Schudson (1997) defined this well, writing, “One study after another comes up with essentially the same observation … the story of journalism, on a day-to-day basis, is the story of the interaction of reporters and officials” (p. 14). In their broad study, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) discovered that most of the journalists in the United States define the most important part of their work as providing a professional interpretation of the reported events and that this is even more important than the actual dissemination of the information.

Another prominent characteristic of the work of the Western journalist is the tendency to rely on colleagues in the field being covered for brainstorming, creating a common commentary, and mutual reinforcement. Zelizer (1993) even went as far as to define the journalists as an “interpretive community,” a definition that unites with the familiar concept in the research field of pack journalism (Russell, 2003) and enriches it on additional levels.

 Deuze (2005) developed what he defined as the “journalists’ ideology,” a common professional philosophy for most of the news staff active in the centrist stream in Western countries. The five main components of that “journalists’ ideology” are the values of providing service to the public, objectivity (including neutrality, fairness, and credibility), professional autonomy, immediacy (in the sense of ensuring that up-to-date information is disseminated in the most efficient way possible), and working according to the ethical principles that are accepted and agreed upon by other members of the profession. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) also sought to gather together the main norms that guide journalism, including commitment to truth, ensuring professional autonomy, meticulousness regarding news quality and reliability, surveillance of the centers of power in organizations, and more.

Studies conducted in recent years that focused on the unique characteristics of online journalism found that despite the fact that several differences can be identified between the professional norms system of veteran and new journalists, the core principals have remained the same (Agarwal & Barthel, 2015; Deuze, 2005; O’Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008).

Research on Israeli journalism, particularly that focusing on the journalists of recent decades, identifies a great deal of similarity between Israeli journalists and their peers in other Western countries in terms of the relative salience of professional norms (Shamir, 1988; Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014; Tsfati, Meyers & Peri, 2006).

The article will seek to examine, among other things, how Israeli news staff views the effect of Twitter use on their professional functioning and ability to act in light of the journalistic norms listed previously. This may be the reason, even if only partial, for its great popularity among this particular group of users.

*New communication technologies in the service of journalists*

The contents of the journalistic toolbox change in response to technological, economic, and cultural changes. The characteristics of the changing tools, especially as the age of new media began, have aroused great research interest in recent years (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009; Garrison, 2000; Reich, 2005; Singer, 2005; Tandoc & Vos, 2016; Weaver & Willnat, 2016). Most of the researchers sought to examine the effects the new tools have had on the characteristics of journalists’ work and their products, and range between ascribing them with far-reaching effects and denying any effects at all (Reich, 2005). While it is true that the age of new media enabled the birth of online journalism, the greatest competitor that has arisen to traditional journalism since its establishment, it has also simultaneously enriched the journalistic toolbox with several new and highly effective tools: The Internet, email (Author, 2005; Garrison, 2000; Maier, 2000), social networking sites (Paulussen, & Harder, 2014; Tandoc & Vos, 2016; Weaver & Willnat, 2016), blogs (Hermida, 2009; Singer, 2005), and the smartphone. In a study that examined the effects of the Internet becoming a primary journalistic tool for political journalists in the US, Author (2005) determined that the variance in the patterns of use of the new tool can be explained, among other reasons, by the characteristics of journalists’ work, as well as by the professional norms that guide them.

What do we know about the adoption of new communication technologies in Israel? Unlike most scholars at the time, Reich (2005) claimed that the Internet—as well as other new media technologies—did not change journalism in a fundamental way, especially as a work tool. According to Reich, journalists continued to use landline phones as their most popular means for gathering information. Are Reich’s observations still correct now?

*Twitter as a journalist work tool*

Twitter was launched in 2006 as a service that can be described both as microblogging and a social networking site accessible through a website or an application adapted for smartphones (Kwak et al. 2010). In many cases, Twitter fills a similar role to that of a news outlet regarding information dissemination (Pentina & Tarafdar, 2014), and it plays a major role in disseminating raw information on a global level (Parmelee & Bichard, 2011).

In recent years, in light of the increasing presence of reporters, commentators, and news presenters on Twitter, research on this arena have begun to flourish (Broersma & Graham, 2013; Hermida, 2009, 2010, 2012; Lasorsa et al. 2012; Parmelee 2014; Usher et. al, 2018; Bane, 2019; Wihbey et.al, 2019). Coddington et al. (2014) defined Twitter as “The central circulatory system of information among reporters” (p. 394) and analyzed Twitter use among political reporters as an effective work tool to see whether they were keeping to objective norms. They expected to find that the reporters were relying more on tweets from sources and less on examining facts. In his study of Columbians journalists on Twitter, Garcia-Permodo (2017) found that many of them – and especially elite reporters - did not follow the strict objectivity norm, and expressed their own voices and points of view rather frequently. However, other central journalistic norms were still kept and followed. Lasorsa (2012) also analyzed Twitter use among American journalists in light of centrist journalistic norms. The researchers found that, particularly in regards to journalists representing medium-sized or smaller media organizations, it is possible to identify behavior that carries a real challenge regarding distancing oneself and objectivity: voicing personal opinions, exposing work processes, and personally nuanced interactions with communities. In an additional article from the same year, Lasorsa found that female journalists have a greater tendency toward transparency and exposing personal details than do male journalists. Other researchers (Hermida 2010; Hermida et al. 2014; Paulussen & Harder, 2014; Wihbey et.al, 2019) demonstrated how the use of Twitter as a work tool contributes to expanding the number of sources available to the journalists. Revers (2014) discusses the tension created by the intensive journalistic activity on Twitter between the news organizations’ wish to control their staff and the ethos of transparency that is an inseparable part of the desire for objectivity. In another article, Revers (2015) refers to the far-reaching significance of Twitter that turns out to be an endless pool of political information relevant to the journalists’ work. The viewpoint of media organizations was also discussed by Cozma and Chen (2013) in an article focusing on Twitter’s contribution to the professional activity of foreign correspondents. Swasy (2016) discusses the inner pressures that are been put on journalists to adopt Twitter and make the usage of it noticeable to all.

Bruns and Burgess (2012) show how Twitter has become an incomparably effective arena for the fast dissemination of news items, particularly when dramatic news stories break. He calls to the still-hesitant news organizations—some of which fear that their staff members who are active on Twitter will be recognized only on their own merits; with the news organizations losing essential credit—to quickly send their representatives into the arena, due to its increasingly important position.

Despite the increasing evidence that Twitter has been adopted as a journalist work tool in Israel too, this has not yet received sufficient research attention (one of the rare exception is Tenenboim’s 2017 study of how Israeli journalists use Twitter during wartime). Therefore, the first research question explores how Israeli media professionals use Twitter. The second research question scrutinizes how Israeli media professionals perceive Twitter, and what personal and professional influences they ascribe to it**.**

**Methodology**

This study uses a research method that combines quantitative and qualitative data to examine the roles that Twitter is playing in the lives of Israeli news professionals in light of a unique diffusion process. Research questions focused on how Israeli journalists, commentators, and news editors utilize Twitter for their personal and professional needs and on the various perceptions they have concerning its roles in their lives.

There is no list or database of senior media professionals who post on Twitter. Since Israel is a small-scale country with a limited number of media channels, both legacy media, and digital ones, we attempted to sample the entire target population. We created a list of names that included news reporters (in eleven areas of coverage), commentators, television and radio news anchors in Israel. Our media professionals came from three national television channels, five online news sites with the highest number of visitors, five popular print newspapers and two national radio stations. We then searched the Twitter accounts of those media professionals and identified 100 accounts that were active at least once during the month preceding the study.

All senior media professionals with active Twitter accounts that were identified as the target population were contacted directly and personally through telephone calls and email, to obtain agreement to return the questionnaire. Respondents were then asked to answer a questionnaire that included closed and open questions. A high response rate (*n* = 63, 78% of the relevant population) was attained within two months. Data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The former allowed identification of the adoption patterns, daily usage, and appraisal in the journalism arena of Twitter. The latter broaden the picture in light of user experiences and personal significance. Creswell (2009) argues that combining quantitative and qualitative methods has many advantages, saying: “The combination of strengths of one approach makes up for the weaknesses of the other approach” (Creswell, 2009, 12).

**Findings**

**Profile of the respondents**

In an attempt to sketch a profile of the survey participants, the following findings were found noteworthy: 63 news staff, including senior news presenters, correspondents, and commentators, responded to the questionnaire. All the respondents were Jewish, and the vast majority (75 percent) were men. Most of the respondents (68 percent) belonged to the 25- to 45-year-old age group. Under 25s were disproportionately represented (13 percent) if we consider the characteristics of the working environment (news organizations). There was also a certain presence (6 percent) of news staff who were over 65. About two-thirds of the respondents held university degrees (66 percent), and about one-quarter had completed post-high school studies outside the academic world.

Regarding the characteristics of the journalistic role, 37 percent of the respondents defined themselves as correspondents, 22 percent as commentators, 10 percent as presenters, and the remainder used mixed definitions (having dual roles or not entirely discriminating between roles). Most of the respondents (60 percent) are veteran media staff who have been active in the field for over ten years (12 percent for over 20 years). About one-quarter have been active for between five and ten years in the field of journalism. Fewer than 5 percent of respondents had less than two years’ experience. We cannot identify dominance by a particular means of communications (whether regarding the medium or the organization in which the respondents are employed), and there was not even clear dominance of a particular area of coverage among the survey participants (about 11 percent work in the national-political field, 8 percent in economics, and 7 percent in sports).

**Usage patterns**

About 45 percent of respondents have had an active Twitter account for at least two years, 18 percent have had their Twitter account for one to two years, and the other survey participants have less than one year’s usage (about 3 percent joined the network during the three months preceding the survey).

The survey findings demonstrate that Israeli news people’s Twitter use has a clear professional orientation: 64 percent of the respondents tweet only as part of their journalistic position, and 77 percent of those tweets are designated for their colleagues (and not for the general public). However, only 18 percent of the respondents tweet under their own name on the Twitter account belonging to the news organization for which they work.

**Evaluating Twitter as a journalist work tool**

In accordance with Weaver and Wilhoit's (2016) study of American journalists, the current study finds that the overall perceptions that Israeli journalists hold with regard to Twitter's influence on them is mainly favorable. The respondents gave Twitter a generally positive evaluation (see Figure 1). Most of the news people considered Twitter to be “an excellent work tool” (75 percent), so much so that they “can’t see how they would be able to work without it at this point” (54 percent). Only a small minority (5 percent) agreed with the statement “Twitter annoys me.” Six statements on a Likert scale were used to create a positive-attitude index variable toward Twitter (Cronbach’s alpha = .80).

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Figure 1: Journalists’ Viewpoints regarding Twitter use

**Twitter’s presumed influence on the journalistic arena**

Regarding Twitter's presumed influence (See Figure 2), half of the respondents state that the networking site has an important role in determining the media’s agenda (only 7 percent claim that Twitter is irrelevant in determining its agenda). Likewise, 51 percent say that the atmosphere on Twitter influences the news people, and 56 percent believe that Twitter is mainly intended for, and directed at, the journalistic community. Six statements on a Likert scale were used to create a presumed- influence index variable toward Twitter (Cronbach’s alpha = .75).



Figure 2: Viewpoints regarding Twitter’s role in journalistic work.

To test the first hypothesis, that the positive attitude index varied according to the length of time the respondent had held an active Twitter account, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. A significant difference (*F* (4, 52) = 2.03, *p* < .05) was found in the positive attitude index. Those at the higher end of the positive attitude index had been active on Twitter for more than two years (M = 4.29, SD = .71), and those at the lower end had been active for less than three months (M = 3.5, SD = .44). Thus, the first hypothesis was confirmed.

To test the second hypothesis, that the presumed influence index varied according to the length of time the respondent had held an active Twitter account, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. A significant difference (*F* (4, 51) = 3.088, *p* < .05) was found in the presumed influence index. Those at the higher end of the presumed influence index had been active on Twitter for more than two years (M = 3.56, SD = .56), and those at the lower end had been active for less than three months (M = 3.0, SD = .47). Thus, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

Furthermore, no significant relationships were found between the respondents’ seniority levels (years as a media professional) and other characteristics of their work, education level, or gender.

**Qualitative analysis**

Analysis of responses to the open questions on the questionnaire reveals seven primary reasons for the adoption of Twitter: (1) Curiosity, (2) Encouragement and/or pressure within the system, (3) The potential for quick updates and expanding the circle of sources, (4) The desire to present a unique voice to colleagues, communities, and actors relevant to the field of coverage, (5) The desire to be exposed to additional sectors, (6) The wish to “not be left behind” and (7) The possibility of quickly and effectively “staking out territory.” Let us elaborate on these with a few examples:

 (1) **Curiosity**. The majority of the responses mentioned following the new and intriguing medium. So, for example, one of the correspondents argued that he have initially adopted Twitter due to “my curiosity and investigative observation of the discourse in digital media.” Another correspondent noted that he had noticed that “other friends used it, and it intrigued me.” Similarly, another journalist reported her motivation for adopting Twitter: “Curiosity to find out about the said medium that was not so popular in Israel in its time, certainly not among journalists in Israel, but it has gathered momentum in the world.”

(2) **Encouragement and/or pressure within the system.** In the spirit of Bruns and Burgess (2012), Swasy (2016), and others, who wrote about Twitter’s importance from the viewpoint of a news organizations, many of the survey participants noted that pressure and encouragement from within the system were among the main factors in their decision to adopt Twitter as a work tool and new arena for activity. As one of the correspondents wrote: “Recently the system has opened up to everyone, and it has become a necessity.” Another journalist took up Twitter in response to “A request from the news desk to open an account,” and a third joined due to “Pressure from colleagues, pressure from the digital department.”

(3) **The potential for quick updates and expanding the circle of sources**. One of the most prominent explanations given by the survey participants for joining Twitter is the potential for rapid updates and increasing the circle of sources, which are identified in the new platform. One of the journalists explained his reason for adopting Twitter: “Following sources ’round the world. ... The possibility to communicate with them and receive updates in real time. I became engrossed in Twitter during the Gaza flotilla raid in 2010, during which the activists made wide use of Twitter as part of their activities. Twitter became an important source of information.” Another journalist noted that: “The nuclear talks between Iran and the world powers—most of the updates come from Twitter. After that, I understood that the worlds of ‘breaking news’ and of journalism, in general, are primarily there.” A senior news editor provided his unique viewpoint: “When I began as a night news editor, I needed ‘fillers’—supplementary stories that ‘fill’ the world during times when nothing is happening here. I opened Twitter to be updated on the ‘tweets’ from foreign media sources, and then I discovered how dominant Twitter activity is for our correspondents.” This finding complies with similar studies in the field, as the literature review has shown (i.e., Hermida 2010; Hermida et al. 2014; Swasy, 2016; Usher et al, 2018), though wartime circumstances may alter these tendencies, as described by Tenenboim (2017).

(4) **The desire to present a unique voice to colleagues, communities, and actors relevant to the field of coverage.** Due to ethical, professional, and other limitations, most news correspondents cannot express their own opinions as part of the news coverage. Twitter provides them with a platform to make their voices heard, particularly to bodies that are valued and relevant to their work, as one of the news correspondents wrote in response to the question regarding the motivation for adopting Twitter: “The wish to write my opinion regarding certain issues (in brief) and humorously and freely.” Another journalist notes that “you can say things on Twitter you did not say when broadcasting or convey a little of what lies behind the scenes. The public likes what lies behind the scenes.” Comparing patters of Twitter usage among Israeli and international correspondents during the 2014 Gaza war, Tenenboim (2017) found that Israeli journalists who wished to promote critical voices within the strongly patriotic atmosphere during wartime, did so in a rather sophisticated way, mainly by retweeting others, instead of tweeting their own opinions.

(5) **The desire to be exposed to additional sectors**. Another primary factor for choosing Twitter as a work tool and new arena of activity was the desire to reach sectors that the organizations where the study participants work do not usually consider news consumers. Thus, for example, a veteran journalist noted: “I began following colleagues in my field of coverage and saw that I could also contribute information and increase the dissemination of my sector, particularly to a focused community.” Moreover, another noted “the wish to open up to new, younger, communities that use social media on the Internet and don’t necessarily listen to Reshet Bet [radio station].” Swasy (2016) also noted that the new potential audiences found on Twitter -mainly on a global level - were among the central explanations for the overwhelming adoption of this new journalistic work tool. Similar findings were also found in Enli and Simonsen’s recent study (2018).

(6) **The wish to “not be left behind”** is also one of the main factors noted by the journalists. From the moment that Twitter turned into a significant journalistic arena, even those who were not the first to adopt it understood that staying away from this platform would likely be extremely costly to them—both personally and professionally. One of the media people determined that what had led him to eventually join Twitter was “the understanding that this is the future, and I need to be in several arenas.” Another journalist noted that he wanted “to be relevant. The news begins on Twitter.” Moreover, a third revealed “understanding that there is an active arena here that it is worth being part of. ... [It is] an important tool and I did not want to remain behind.”

The final factor arising among the study participants was (7) **The possibility of quickly and effectively “staking out territory,”** meaning to be helped by the speed by which Twitter spreads new information to wide communities so that scoops and other journalistic achievements can be attributed to those responsible for them. One of the journalists called it “the ability to be updated about events in real time and be the first to bring content.”

**Discussion**

Park (2012) suggests that models of dissemination and adoption of innovations should be examined in an integrative manner to predict the use of technology in general and of Twitter in particular. Park’s primary finding is that the decisive factor in the intention to use Twitter is a subjective norm, and the primary factor that is a block to using Twitter is its lack of compatibility. In accordance with Park’s ideas, the impressive adoption rates of Twitter among news professionals around the world hint that there is possibly decisive importance to people’s subjective evaluation of the technological tool during its adoption, and all the more so among a relatively small group such as Israeli journalists. Going back to Roger's (2003) list of preconditions to the successful adoption of innovations may reveal another major explanation to the phenomenon discussed here: Twitter's unique characteristics strongly comply with journalistic practices and norms. Utilizing it as a work tool is expected to help journalists improve their performance. In this sense, we may argue that Israeli journalists' perceptions of Twitter as a work tool and their usage patterns indicate that this group of news professionals is no exception to the global (and especially Western) trend.

We can argue, based on the study findings, that the adoption of Twitter as a journalistic work tool and an arena for new journalistic activity in Israel is not just comprehensive, but also carries deep significance for local news professionals. Like the survey findings that examined the various aspects of the adoption of the Internet as a journalistic work tool over a decade ago (Author, 2005), the current study also determined that the status of Twitter as a new work tool was influenced by how long it had been used, and it's being viewed as having real influence on the journalistic arena.

The current study is based on a sample of volunteers that is not necessarily representative of the population of media people using Twitter. Despite a reasonably successful attempt to reach senior media people in Israel with a Twitter account, general conclusions must be drawn cautiously. In addition, this study seeks to examine the subjective evaluation of using a technological tool and thereby asks the respondents for self-reflection on the decisions that they made, the realization of the targets they set for themselves, and their functioning as media people. It is only natural that the answers were subjective and influenced by a variety of factors connected with the way the self and the profession converge. This aspect is also one of the reasons for choosing to include open questions that would allow identification of additional layers in the answers by the media people. It is important to note that both the area of activity examined here and its relationship with the media organizations are dynamic (for example, an organization’s strategic decision to encourage or obligate its employees to use Twitter to advance the organization’s goals). The level of exposure of Twitter tweets in the mass media is also a factor that can temporarily or permanently affect the attitude and significance that media people ascribe to this arena. Therefore, the current study findings must be examined in their context. Future studies should further investigate the role of Twitter as a journalistic tool, and its various potential influences on the work of news professionals. In the Israeli context, future studies should aim to better understand the differences between Twitter's centrality among specific groups and its rather limited status among the general population (especially compared with other social networking sites).

Research on the place of Twitter as a journalist work tool and a journalistic arena in the Western world has indeed flourished in recent years, but the topic has rarely been studied in the Israeli context. In this sense, the current study, demonstrating Twitter’s central and distinctive role among Israeli news professionals, makes a significant contribution to enriching our understanding of this global phenomenon.

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