

Genuinely New: The Strategy of Remix in Live Blogs

JENNA NG

Abstract: This article examines the strategies of remix as used to author live blogs in mainstream news media. The importance of this lies in how authorship shapes not only the form of the text but also its critical content and reading experience. Studying a variety of live blogs as used on *The Guardian* website, the author observes and classifies three such strategies: remix for continuity and diversity of content; for connecting digital and physical time-spaces; and for sociability on both the worldwide and mobile web. In light of the reproducibility of content in digital media, the article also re-considers the nature of digital authorship in terms of how such authorship engages in a more extensive global dialogue, adding to a glue of social media that holds together different voices across spaces.

Contributor: Jenna Ng is Anniversary Research Lecturer in Film and Interactive Media at the University of York. She is primarily interested in the aesthetic, cultural and technological dynamics of digital moving images, but she also has research interests in digital culture, social media, mobile technologies, moving image technologies and digital heritage. She is the editor of *Understanding Machinima: essays on filmmaking in virtual worlds* (Bloomsbury, 2013), has made multi-media work incorporating films, web installations and QR codes, and has published work in various essay collections and journals, including *Animation* and *Cinema Journal*.

The shift from print to digital textuality is ongoing (Hayles 2005), heralding changes to a variety of issues from ontology, form and authorship to narrative, reading and aesthetics. Yet while much study has been made of the materiality of digital texts (Cubitt 1998, Leonardi 2010), relatively little attention has been paid to their authorship (beyond the co-creation of creative texts in participatory culture). (Jenkins 2008) Yet it is a topic of importance, as the authorship of texts shapes not just their form but also, as this article will argue, the reading experience they produce and, indeed, their critical content. In this article, I examine the writing of the “live blog”, an updated version of the popular decade-old form of digital text known as the blog. In particular, I consider how live blogs are written and composed, specifically in relation to the strategies of remix. How does remix operate in the writing of live blogs? How does remix change the way the text is read, critiqued, shared, and experienced?

The origin of the blog (shortened from John Barger’s 1997 term “weblog”) lies in documentation: a mode of recording – indeed, *logging* – web links which plot cyberspace wanderings (Wortham 2007). Several aspects of blogging have changed over the last decade, such as the introduction of “push button” blogging tools by Livejournal, Xanga, Blogger and, more recently, Wordpress and Tumblr; dramatic expansion of the blogging community (Kumar et al 2003); and the evolution of the blogosphere (Kumar et al 2004). However, the fundamental nature and identity of the blog as a means of documenting has stayed remarkably stable. Notwithstanding the wide range of habits, interests and practices involved, personal musings, recipes,

Ng, Jenna. “Genuinely New: The Strategy of Remix in Live Blogs.” *Authorship* 1.4 (Summer 2013). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21825/aj.v2i2.793>

Copyright Jenna Ng. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

quizzes, news stories and all manners of events and encounters in life and at work continue to be diarised online. Even what one sees can be recorded online in the form of “glogging” (from “cyborglogging”) with a wearable camera (Karimi et al, 2004: 176).

One key characteristic of documentation via the blog is its “liveness”, by which I simply mean the fact that a blog is (or should be) constantly updated and therefore continues to develop as a text. To that end, I also note Jill Walker’s definition of a blog as “a *frequently updated* website consisting of dated entries arranged in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first” (2007, 45; emphasis added). The updates, the chronological arrangement (a symbolic timeline of a life, laying out a past, a present and, perhaps most importantly, indicative of a future signifying a person not yet dead or an event not yet terminated),¹ and the circulation of feedback and comments from the reader community all lend the blog a sense of animation in terms of how the medium grows, changes and thereby expressing “liveness”.

In the mid-2000s, news organisations and blogging establishments explicitly took up the liveness of the blog – in terms of how it is easily developed and updated – in the form of (what else would they call it?) the live blog. Used initially to broadcast updates of technology conferences such as those by Macworld and TechCrunch, live blogging has now “rapidly become the dominant form for breaking news online – deployed by virtually every major news organisation on their home page and the online answer to 24/7 television news.” (Wells, 2011, np) Thurman and Walters (2013) echo this observation by pointing out how news sources such as *The New York Times*, Al Jazeera, the BBC, and *The Financial Times* have been using live blogs as “increasingly the default format for covering major breaking news stories, sports events, and scheduled entertainment news” (82). Live blogs are not limited to stories or events; they can also be thematic, such as Andrew Sparrow’s politics live blog on *The Guardian*, where the correspondent brings to the reader “rolling coverage of all the day’s political developments as they happen” (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/series/politics-live-with-andrew-sparrow>). Indeed, Thurman and Walters define “live blogging” as “a single blog post on a specific topic to which time-stamped content is progressively added for a finite period—anywhere between half an hour and 24 hours” (ibid).

To that end, we may discern certain characteristics of the live blog which distinguish it from other conventional blogs. First, a specific narrative almost inevitably shapes the live blog, be that an event, a theme or “a specific topic”.² Second, the live blog engages specifically with real time, whereby the reader and the correspondent take up the same temporality of the unfolding event. This connects to my earlier point: due to the live blog’s explicit coverage of a particular narrative, the correspondent not only presents (and the reader follows) the narrative, they also share the timeline of that

¹ “We are mortal because we live in the past and in the future—because we remember a time when we did not exist, and foresee a time when we shall be dead.” (Borges 2009: 99)

² A clarification on the classification of “narrative”: in conventional narrative theory, narrative necessarily contains the condition of recounting (i.e. speaking, telling, showing) something that has already happened. However, in this article I focus on the temporal progression of events as the determinant of narrative in the live blog, put together as it were by cause and effect into a specific connected chain of situations.

narrative in the unfolding event.³ In comparison, conventional blogs are asynchronous, with the reader more often than not reading the blog post in a separate time from its posting. Thirdly, the live blog's "liveness" is more than its progression as indicated by its updates, but also displays what Nick Couldry calls "online liveness", or "social co-presence on a variety of scales from very small groups in chat rooms to huge international audiences for breaking news on major Web sites, all made possible by the Internet as an underlying infrastructure" (2004: 356-7). The live blog thus extends beyond an interaction between reader and blogger, but also achieves "a sense of always being connected to other people, of continuous, technologically mediated co-presence with others known and unknown." (Auslander 2008: 61) This sense of connection will be further considered when trying to understand the live blog as an example of reader participation within the concept of remix.

In these frameworks of, respectively, narrative, time-space, and social presence, I argue in this article that these characteristics of the live blog support the practice of *remix* as its central authoring strategy not only as a literacy act, but, more significantly, also as a performative one. As Diakopoulos et al (2007) note, while the term "remix" traces its origins in the manipulation and recombination of audio tracks, it is now "generalized to refer to separating and recombining many other types of media, including images, video, literary text, and video game assets". (133) Much academic attention has focused on remix as a literacy practice (Lessig 2005; Knobel and Lankshear, 2008), yet, as I will show, it can also be performative in nature. In the rest of this article, I will use examples from a range of live blogs by major news providers to examine how remix operates as a key authoring strategy in the live blog, specifically in three ways: (i) continuity and diversity; (ii) time-spaces; and (iii) re-presentation and sociability. I have two goals in this study. The first is further research on live blogs by analysing how they are authored by news organisations: as Thurman and Walters point out, "despite the increasing prevalence of the [live blog] format, the production, consumption, and material form of Live Blogs has been under-researched" (82). The second is to suggest how we may further consider remix, and particularly remix in social media, to be an authoring tool for digital media in general.

1. Remix and narrative

As noted, the live blog combines (in varying degrees) numerous media elements, such as photographs, videos, print text, tweets and hyperlinks, usually from various sources, to form a coherent narrative of the event. For example, *The Guardian*, arguably the most dominant news provider in live blogging (Thurman and Walters 2013), used the following media in its live blog on the first day of the papal conclave (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/12/papal-conclave-to-choose-new-pope-day-one-live-coverage>):

³ Of course, it is possible to read the post afterwards. However, arguably the *raison d'être* of the live blog – because it is updated in real-time – is to enable its synchronous following in real-time as the blog develops.

1. hyperlinks to previous *Guardian* articles and columns, and to other information sources such as Wikipedia, ABC news and CNN;
2. text written by the correspondent;
3. YouTube video of a part of the morning's mass at St Peter's Basilica;
4. Images from Reuters, Getty Images, Associated Press, BBC News;
5. Tweets from the Twitter accounts of Cardinal Dolan, Catholic News Svc, and other *Guardian* journalists;
6. An interactive guide, "courtesy of la Stampa and VaticanInsider.com", on "who's who in the process of choosing a pope";
7. Streamed video content from their onsite correspondent via Ustream;
8. A Google Map showing "where the Sistine chapel is, and where St Martha's House, the cardinals [sic] residence during the conclave, is"; and
9. An audio interview with their onsite journalist.

Live blogs may also contain other media: for example, the BBC live blog (which they prefer to term "live text service", with the column headlined as "As it happened") includes e-mails from readers ("Michael, London, UK emails: I am praying that the conclave has voted for a progressive Pope") and their texts ("Linda in Ghana texts: Although not Catholic, I have stayed behind after work to know who the new Pope will be") (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21777747>). However, most other live blogs, such as that of *The Financial Times*, "The Lede" of *The New York Times*, and "This Just In" of CNN, just to name a few, contain only the first five media.

The despatch and combination of these media tend to closely follow the narrative structure imposed by the event. BBC's live text coverage of a football match, for example (http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/teams/a/arsenal/live_text/default.stm), contains very few media besides text as updates on the game; the temporal progress of the match is defined by events (who has just given away a penalty; who is taking the penalty; who has scored) as the main determinant of the blog. The "Politics Live with Andrew Sparrow" live blog on *The Guardian*, (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog/2013/mar/18/leveson-press-regulation-royal-charter>), is an update of "all the day's political stories live from Westminster and beyond" and deliberately takes the form of a news broadcast, amalgamating summaries of politicians' speeches, a rounding up of the stories and a lunchtime summary with viewer reactions. Even where there is a relatively wide range of media elements in the live blog, such as in *The Guardian's* coverage of the papal conclave, those, as well, tend to

be incorporated in continuity with the event of the election. For example, while waiting (as they did on the first day and some of the second) for the choosing of the new Pope, *The Guardian* incorporated hyperlinks to betting companies on candidates' odds, live streamed footage from The Vatican, and an interactive guide as to how the Pope is chosen, among other information. The use of media in live blogs is very associative and tends to be set around specific indicators of plot – “who is going to be pope?”; “which team is going to win the match?”; and, for the unveiling of the new Samsung Galaxy S4 smartphone, “what will it be like?”

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2013/mar/14/samsung-galaxy-s4-launch-live>). For the last, besides tweets from their onsite journalist, the only other media to be included are (i) YouTube videos of Samsung's video commercials; (ii) the livestream link to the event; and (iii) hyperlinks to other news media sources similarly reporting on the Samsung event. This use of media ties in very closely with the event – seeing a new mobile device for the first time – with the media elements underpinning its rhetoric, such as the embedding of Samsung's commercials to further raise the anticipation for the unveiling, or the inclusion of links to other reviews and reports of the device. Media is also used to reinforce the chronology of the events, with blog posts such as “7.05pm ET: It's starting! ... soon!”; “7:12pm ET: It's started. They're playing the commercials. The third one”; “7.13pm ET: ‘Welcome to Samsung Unpacked 2013’” etc.

In this respect, live blogs are not remixing insofar as they merely cite media to support or underpin a main argument. Yet I argue that the narrative of the event readily supports remix in live blogging as an authoring strategy to augment or amplify its meaning, and as such it becomes a strategy to heighten the text's levels of interest and nuances. Remix as performance relies on the creativity in colliding ideas or texts to consciously change meaning of component texts, in the process both rendering new texts and enriching the way we view the source ones. The between-ness of a text becomes a creative space where new meanings, content, juxtapositions, and ways of seeing can be actualized. (Ng 2013) For example, mock trailers re-combine scenes from well-known films to subvert their genres (the horror movie *The Shining* as a family drama; the romantic comedy *Sleepless in Seattle* as a stalker horror movie; etc.), changing the meaning of the film by creating a new trailer *and* allowing us to look at the original film anew. Another classic example, to date viewed more than 3 million times, is the remixing of scenes from the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* TV series and the *Twilight* movies, forming a new work – “a re-imagined narrative,” as the author characterises it in the video description on YouTube – which collides the two originary texts and creates new ways of viewing (as the YouTube video write-up states: “Seen through Buffy's eyes, some of the more sexist gender roles and patriarchal Hollywood themes embedded in the Twilight saga are exposed – in hilarious ways.”) Such a remix of media can thus be used more innovatively as a strategy in live blogging by invoking collision rather than associative alignment, re-shaping the narrative of the event and adding interpretive interest to it.

A rare example of such a remix strategy in a live blog can be seen in the Over By Over (OBO) live blog on *The Guardian* on 30 July 2008, covering South Africa's 2008

cricket tour of England on the first day of the Third Test (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2008/jul/30/englandvsouthafrica2008.englishcricketteam3>). The OBO reports in real-time, covering each over of the game with updates on the game's progress (how many runs were scored; how the balls were bowled; whether a wicket fell and so forth) and commentary. By the time the game broke for lunch, England were doing badly in the match, as the correspondent concludes in his comment on the last over before lunch: "That's lunch anyway, with England in a stinking smoldering pile." As the correspondent continued to update the blog during lunch, he chose to include a video in one of the blog posts with the line: "Scenes from the South African dressing room this lunchtime: I think this might sum it up." The word "this" was then hyperlinked to a YouTube viral video (watched more than 3 million times) of the Elmo (from Sesame Street) stuffed toy which falls over and rolls around the floor to infectiously funny shrieking laughter (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CO04rXDTcMo>). This is live blogging remix at its best (if rare): the unexpected collision between the dour tedium of Test cricket, usually perceived as one of the most boring of sports due to its interminable length (easily 7 to 8 hours a day over 5 days) and incomprehensible rules (too many examples to list here) against the almost infantile delight of a red soft toy in a classic situation of slapstick – falling over and getting up and falling over again – all set to Elmo's uproarious laughter. The remix exploits the space between texts and uses it to infuse the narrative of the cricket match with new dramatic meaning – South Africa are no longer just winning; they are vanquishing England with the delectation of a laughing Elmo toy – while at the same time undermining that very meaning with irony, viz the brutality and ruthlessness with which England is being defeated. Yet an even greater irony underpins that irony: that this is a cricket match and, all-important and all-consuming as it is with jobs and history and money and national pride at stake, it is only a cricket match, as inconsequential as a soft toy rolling around in laughter. Levels thus build upon levels: through a simple remix of media, the live blog becomes more than the reportage of an event, but also a commentary on it and its larger, more profound issues.

2. Re-mixing time-spaces

A key characteristic of the live blog is that it is a born-digital media artefact. An article in *The Guardian* "uncovers" the first "live blog" from 1923 in the "hour by hour" running commentary of the 1923 general election, "complete with chronological updates marked by timestamps" (Owen 2012). The genealogy of this media is tongue-in-cheek: a commentary published in a print newspaper to be delivered the following morning is not a live blog (albeit certainly a proto-example). By the time of reading, the event would have been long over. On the other hand, the live blog occupies an almost synchronous time with the event, with its publication usually minutes or even seconds within the occurrence of the event.

One live blogging strategy in covering real-time events is to re-produce the tweets of on-site correspondents, particularly in closed-room events such as court hearings.

The result is that the live blog runs as a continuous series of links rather than an amalgamation of media. An example is Andrew Sparrow's political live blog in *The Guardian* on the sentencing of disgraced Labour MP Chris Huhne and his ex-wife Vicky Pryce on 11 March 2013 after their trial for perverting the course of justice when the latter took speeding points for the former in 2003 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog/2013/mar/11/chris-huhne-vicky-pryce-sentencing>). The entire blog content from 1.52pm until 4pm (the hearing for the sentencing) consisted of 86 tweets (mostly from the newspaper's journalists in the court room, but also commentary from other MPs and commentators), 1 video of an earlier recorded interview, and the occasional sentence of text summarising the proceedings. In other words, much of the content in the live blog is merely the re-presentation of data from other sources, rather than an incorporation of different media elements constituting the central narrative.

3. The database ———> the “time-space” model

What remix strategy can there be for such a blogging approach? On reading such a document, two contiguous models come to mind. The first builds on the concept of the database, which, taking Lev Manovich's definition, “is defined as a structured collection of data” (2001).⁴ In that sense, the live blog is similar to the database as the blog holds its links or tweets as a collection of data, or an agglomeration of information. There are two keywords in the definition: “structured” and “collection”. The former drives the latter, and Manovich identifies different models of structures in organising data: “hierarchical”, “network”, “relational” and “object-oriented”. He also identifies a number of new media objects to fit “the database logic”: the CD-ROM, the DVD, and the Web page.⁵ Thus, a database cannot be remixed as by definition it is already a grouped depository of information, structured towards and designed for specific modalities, such as search, organisation, categorisation and so forth.

Yet the live blog also differs from the database in one crucial respect: narrative (see the first section of this article). Manovich points out that there is no narrative in the database:

Many new media objects do not tell stories; they don't have a beginning or end; in fact, they do not have any development, thematically, formally, or otherwise that would organize their elements into a sequence. Instead, they are

⁴ See also Kate Eichhorn, “Archival Genres: Gathering Texts and Reading Spaces”, *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, Issue 12, 2008, at https://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/Issue_12/eichhorn/#_edn2. My thanks to Nelleke Mose for bringing this reference to my attention.

⁵ To this list, I would also add a number of Web 2.0 media tools, such as photo-sharing databases (Flickr, Photobucket, Shutterfly), video-sharing databases (YouTube, Vimeo, Pirate Bay), search engines (Google, Bing, Baidu), and news collections (Yahoo News, Pulse, Zinio).

collections of individual items, with every item processing the same significance as any other.⁶ (ibid)

On the other hand, the live blog has a clear narrative in terms of tracing the progress of the event. The re-presented data in the blog on Huhne and Pryce's sentencing, for example, all display the clear stages of the trial: the appearance of the defendants, submissions from the prosecution, submissions from each defendant's counsel, and finally the retirement of the judge to consider sentencing. Each item of data is not a stand-alone element, but a connecting link to a larger story. Moreover – and this is the main argument of the article – the narrative lies not only in story, but also in temporality: the live blog engages *the same time-spaces* of reader, correspondent and event. This, too, (as explained above) is the difference between the live blog and the printed running commentary of the 1923 election.

The strategy for remix here is thus not in the collision of content or media, but in the *cross-connections of these time-spaces with each other*. Remix here is thus in the sense that spaces – there are at least five (the physical spaces of the reader, the blogging correspondent and the on-site correspondent, i-iii; and the text and image-constituted spaces of the tweets and the live blog itself, iv and v) – are separated and re-combined in the live blog through real-time postings. There is thus a mixing of heterogeneous domains from the physical to the digital, whose combinations can sometimes take the colliding or conflicting principles of remix. For example, the live blog on Huhne's and Pryce's sentencing, erstwhile concentrating on the spaces of the Southwark courtroom and the tweets from the Guardian's correspondent there, suddenly segues to a tweet (on the same topic) from Oxford. At 3.22pm, retweeting a tweet from Freddie Whittaker of the *Oxford Mail* live blog pointing out that "Huhne stood for the SDP in Oxford West in the 1987 general", the Guardian blog reads, "I'm all in favour of live blogs, but this must be the most tenuous excuse for one I've ever read". The Guardian live blog then returns to the happenings in the Southwark courtroom, only to have the conversation with Oxford resume at 3.40pm with the post "My Oxford Mail colleague tells me I'm being unfair," followed by posts of a reply tweet from @OxfordFreddie to @AndrewSparrow – "Our 'tenuous' link isn't the only reason we're running a blog, I just like to whip out the election trivia!" plus a couple more in conversation – before turning yet again to the Southwark court trial. These intersections through the blog of different spaces – Southwark, the Guardian office, the Oxford Mail office, all the while cross-connecting with the presumed space of the reader – is remix not of images but of spaces, where the intangible domains generated from algorithms (web and Twitter) and user interfaces collide against physical spaces, surprising the reader and taking her into (contextually) unexpected places (such as Oxford). To this extent, remix in live blogging is not only a

⁶ Having said that, Manovich's characterisation of "story" here is poor: narrative (particularly as I refer to it) is bound to the temporality of cause and effect and *not* necessarily to closure. This may be traced to E. M Forster's famous illustrative example of plot as distinguished from narrative: "The King died" (as plot) versus "The King died and then the Queen died of grief" (as narrative). Even if the queen was re-born, the narrative still holds. See also epics, folk tales, bardic progressions (see Murray 1998) as evidence of the potential openness of narrative.

strategy for the employment of media but also one in the navigation of digital space, here not thought of (as imagined in the 1990s) as something separate or discrete, such as cyberspace or virtual reality, but as technological imaginaries which are intrinsically linked with their physical spaces (where *Oxford Mail* tweets from Oxford and *The Guardian* from its London office). The dissolution of these spaces into our social media technologies (tweets and blogs) is, in turn, a reminder of their potential for contrast, contrariety, and remix.

4. Re-presentation and sociability ———> the social media model

The second model for remix strategy in re-presenting data in live blogs is what I call the “social media model”, with its basis in the Reddit paradigm. Coded as a social news and entertainment website, Reddit is a document constituting only of links or text posted by its registered users who then vote the post “up” or “down”, decisions which in turn determine the ranking of the post and its position on the site’s pages. The range of content in these posted entries is massive, although there are a few in series, such as the AMA “Ask Me Anything” series, where someone (usually a celebrity of some kind) challenges Reddit users to ask him/her/them – as the title suggests – anything.

The Reddit model is a depository of information (links and text from users) which is not live and does not function in real time; it also does not include media in any narrative form. In that sense, it contains the fundamental logic of the database: a collection of discrete information with no distinct narrative. In those respects, it may thus also be distinguished from the live blog, which operates as a real-time collection of data arranged around a specific narrative of an unfolding event. However, the Reddit model contains another mode of operation which we may apply to the live blog as a remix strategy. I identify this as the logic of social media: social presence created by connecting people together over a technologically-mediated interface (such as the Reddit website) into an identifiable community (Reddit users are called “redditors”; areas of interests are called “reddits”). The Reddit model is thus essentially a database – an organised collection of information items – with a crucial additional factor: the social glue which binds together the whole Reddit structure. When Reddit was sold to Condé Naste, Aaron Swartz, one of the owners of the parent company which had first developed the website (and a well-known Internet activist, writer and programmer), related the following anecdote on his blog on 1 November 2006:

Puzzled, [a book author] insisted I show him [Reddit] on his own computer, but he found it was just a [sic] simple as I described. (Simpler, even.) “So it’s just a list of links?” he said. “And you don’t even write them yourselves?” I nodded. “But there’s nothing to it!” he insisted. “Why is it so popular?” (2006, np)

Swartz is uneasy with his sense of authorship of the website: “looking at this guy, I realized I had no actual justification. It was just a list of links. And we didn’t even write

them ourselves.” (*ibid*) In one sense, he misses the point: Reddit is not so much about the structure of the database itself but the social glue which forms its entire appendage: the user-generated content whose place on the page is decided by readers’ votes. His search for “justification” centres on the issue of content creation: “*And we didn’t even write them ourselves.*” But what does it mean to write something yourself? In the analogue and Web 1.0 age, that might mean one person picking up a pen and scratching out some words on a piece of a paper, or punching out letters on a typewriter, or using a word processor on a computer. Without delving into the issue of originality – much literature, after all, is derivative – and barring outright plagiarism, the primary source of words or images forming any particular work can generally be said to be derived from a source of one person or partnership, even if it might have been repeated without attribution or realisation that they came from elsewhere.

However, Web 2.0 presents a different paradigm, one with a multitude of authors as primary sources. With the inter-connectedness of social media, information is consciously copied and pasted, uploaded and shared. It is a global dialogue of images, updates, 140-character texts, news stories and videos all taking place over the Internet, now a vortex not of technological connection but social connectivity (2 billion and counting, Schmidt 2013). Indeed, this shareability is the *raison d’être* of social media: the concept of being sociable on the Internet is to take part in this dialogue, to add your voice to the chatter, one aspect of which is the re-presentation of other people’s information, connecting to links and data for which Reddit is merely one hosting forum out of tens of thousands. This is evidenced by, for example, the notable “re-tweet” (or “modified tweet”) function of Twitter, where one re-presents respectively in whole or in part information produced by others. Popular blogging tool Tumblr has its corresponding “re-blog” feature. Live blogging, particularly in its frequent re-presentation of tweets and links from other sources, similarly reflects this model of “authorship”. Returning to Andrew Sparrow’s live blog on the Huhn and Pryce sentencing, the blog’s coverage of the event, lasting a little more than two hours, comprised wholly of tweets from other journalists and sources reporting on the same. Digital authorship today is thus no longer confined to producing one’s own creative work, but also includes re-presenting other people’s content.

What, then, does it mean to be such a re-presenting kind of author? The basis of that question lies in another: what is our criterion in discerning the value of authorship? The conventional terms of judgment – originality, quality and so on – have proved to be tricky concepts; re-presentation in live blogs and other social media push that question to an extreme and render it explicit: is a person who re-presents content an “author”? As such, I suggest considering “authorship” from another perspective: that it is about a voice projected in a space, rather than about a text produced from a source. Authorship here in terms of remix is about adding to a social glue that holds together a digital space in which a multitude of voices exist; it is about the combinations of mediated co-presences of vast numbers of people simultaneously engaged in all these intersecting social media networks. For example, the tweets that were reproduced in Sparrow’s live blog were also followed by a different community on Twitter (@peterwalker99, the

onsite journalist tweeting from the Southwark court, has 6,284 followers on Twitter) and any other social forums, such as Facebook, which might reproduce them. Re-presented media in live blogs are therefore not simply copy-and-paste jobs, but are the authoring and producing of integral paths of a more extensive global dialogue.

5. Conclusion

In thus re-thinking social media authorship, we may also re-consider the issue of value in its originality, or the order of its creation. Jaron Lanier (2011) distinguishes between them as first and second-order expression:

First-order expression is when someone presents a whole, a work that integrates its own worldview and aesthetic. It is something genuinely new in the world. Second-order expression is made of fragmentary reactions to first-order expression. A movie like *Blade Runner* is first-order expression, as was the novel that inspired it, but a mashup in which a scene from the movie is accompanied by the anonymous masher's favourite song is not in the same league. (32)

Lanier does not claim to “build a meter to detect precisely where the boundary between first- and second-order expression lies.” Yet we can still read three things in the distinction he makes. First, Lanier does not exclude the *prima facie* use of prior material to be second-order and thereby inferior expression. Both the movie *and* the book are cited as first-order expression. Second, he implicitly judges “heavy” work and “light” work within the two respective categories. “Heavy” work, such as filming and writing, constitutes original work; “light” work, such as copying and pasting (the music video), does not. Finally, he identifies two ends of a spectrum of originality in terms of the “genuinely new” versus “fragmentary reactions” and makes a judgement in clearly dismissing the latter: “It is astonishing how much of the chatter online is driven by fan responses to expression that was originally created within the sphere of old media and that is now being destroyed by the net” (*ibid*).

Lanier dismisses the reactionary expression – specifically of copying and pasting – because it does not present something new; it merely circulates old visual and audio material. Yet, as with Swartz's viewpoint, that again misses the point. This mode of content creation is not about originality (the definition of which is arguable anyway), or about how content is (or is not) taken, re-ordered, re-presented, stored, distributed, displayed, or re-visualised; it is precisely about the circulation of material. It is about the logic of social media and how that content takes part in a wider discourse, how it is remixed in the real-time dialogues and conversations and networks that dominate today's Internet use and how it crosses those spaces. The point of this debate is thus not what it is about but what it used for.

The live blog as a digital text connects users across space, time and online sociability, and in this article I have shown how the concepts of remix and combination

are central values in the authorship of live blogs, where users constantly devise new ways to distribute, store and create information. I outlined three remix strategies for live blogging: continuity and diversity, where media is incorporated into the blog for creative clashes and collisions; cross-connections of time and space, where a blog remixes the different digital and physical spaces occupied by its reader; and sociability, where remix makes use of the logic of social media and lies in circulating and re-presenting others' content. In the process, I also considered remix in the live blog both as an attempt to better understand the online live blog as a tool as well as in terms of the nature of digital authorship. As technologies develop, our concepts of authorship will surely continue to evolve in tandem, paving the way for more interesting ways of creating and producing content, and for more diverse ways in which voices can be heard and heeded.

Works Cited

- Auslander, Philip. 2008. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Borges, J.L. 2000. *This Craft of Verse*. Calin-Andrei Mihailescu (ed.), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Couldry, Nick. 2004. "Liveness, 'reality', and the mediated habitus from television to the mobile phone". *The Communication Review*, 7(4), Oct-Dec 2004:353-61.
- Cubitt, Sean. 1998. *Digital Aesthetics*. London. Sage publications.
- Diakopoulos, Nicholas, Kurt Luther, Yevgeniy Medynskiy, & Irfan Essa. 2007. "The Evolution of Authorship in a Remix Society". In HT '07: Proceedings of the 18th conference on Hypertext and Hypermedia, 133-136.
- Hayles, Katherine. 2005. *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jenkins, Henry. 2008. 2nd edition. *Convergence Culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Karimi, Hassan A., & Amin Hammad. 2004. *Telegeoinformatics: Location-Based Computing and Services*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Knobel, Michele, & Colin Lankshear. 2008. "Remix: The Art and Craft of Endless Hybridization". *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 52(1). September 2008: 22-33.
- Kumar, R., Novak, J., Raghaven, P., & Tomkins, A. 2003. "On the Bursty Evolution of Blogspace". In Proceedings of the twelfth international conference on the World Wide Web, Budapest, Hungary, May 20-24 2003, 568-576.
- Kumar, R. Novak, J. Raghavan, P. & Tomkins, A. 2004. "Structure and Evolution of Blogspace". *Communications of the ACM*, December 2004, 47(12), 35-39.
- Lanier, Jaron. 2011. *You Are Not A Gadget: A Manifesto*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Leonardi, Paul M. 2010. "Digital Materiality? How artifacts without matter, matter". *First Monday*, Vol 15(6). At <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3036>.

- Lessig, Lawrence. 2005. "Re:MixMe." Plenary address to the annual Network for IT-Research and Competence in Education (ITU) conference, Oslo, Norway, October 2005.
- Manovich, Lev. 2002. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Murray, Janet. 1998. *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ng, Jenna. 2013. "The Cut Between Us: Digital Remix and the Expression of Self." In *Humanities and the Digital*, David Theo Goldberg and Patrik Svensson (eds), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Owen, Paul. 2012. "When was the first live blog? 1923, it seems". *The Guardian*, 28 October 2012. At <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/shortcuts/2012/oct/28/when-first-live-blog-1923> (last accessed 3 May 2013).
- Schmidt, Eric. 2013. "The Next 5 Billion – Life in Our New Connected Age". Public lecture at CRASSH, University of Cambridge, 29 January 2013. At <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqfC0l3W0B4> (last accessed 3 May 2013).
- Swartz, Aaron. 2006. "The Aftermath". *Raw Thought* blog. At <http://www.aaronsw.com/weblog/theaftermath> (last accessed 3 May 2013).
- Thurman, Neil, & Anna Walters. 2013. "Live Blogging – Digital Journalism’s Pivotal Platform? A case study of the production, consumption, and form of Live Blogs at Guardian.co.uk", *Digital Journalism*, Vol. 1(1), 82-101.
- Walker, J. 2007. "Blog." In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, edited by D. Herman, M. Jahn, and M. Ryan. London: Routledge.
- Wells, Matt. "How live blogging has transformed journalism", *The Guardian*, 28 March 2011. At <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/mar/28/live-blogging-transforms-journalism> (last accessed 3 May 2013).
- Wortham, Jenna. 2007. "After 10 Years of Blogs, the Future’s Brighter Than Ever", *Wired*, 17 December 2007. At http://www.wired.com/entertainment/theweb/news/2007/12/blog_anniversary (last accessed 3 May 2013).