Beyond the 'usual suspects': #ROCUR social media accounts and voice, controversy and trolling

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Abstract

'Rotation curation' (#ROCUR) refers to the social media practice involving participants from stakeholder publics 'taking over' a relevant established account for a set period of time. Since @sweden appeared on Twitter in December 2011, at least 70 #ROCUR accounts have been developed. These accounts aim to provide an insider's view of countries (such as @ireland, @WeAreQatar and @WeAreAustralia), cities (such as @PeopleofLeeds and @beingTokyo), cultures (such as @IndigenousX and @IndigenousXca) and professions (such as @realscientists and @wespeechies). Guest curation involves tweeting about what is important to the curator as well as engaging others in conversation and being responsive, often for a period of a week. Importantly, guest curators are free to talk as themselves rather than on behalf of others. There have been occasions when the personal views of guest curators of the @sweden account have caused controversy and resulted in media coverage. Yet the offensive tweets did not repel followers; instead, guest curators involved in the controversies attracted more followers to the account and, in turn, the account holder's anti-censorship approach was celebrated. The tension that animates most of these controversies is that guest curators speak as themselves but also speak for a country, city, culture or profession. This is explored further to understand the practice of expressing 'authentic voice'. We examine the reflexive commentary produced by guest curators of various accounts and media reporting on controversies as a way of critically engaging with the tension between authenticity and professionalism, not only in the textual communications but also in the modes of engagement in terms of trolls and 'conversations'. By doing so, we aim to better understand the perceived value of 'authentic voice' in a more complex way as an interplay between persona and participatory conversations.

Keywords: organisational communication; publics; social media; trolling; voice

Introduction

A dominant method of addressing stakeholder publics through social media accounts is for communication practitioners to assume an organisational persona (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014). These archetypal personas are a way to maintain univocality and mitigate risks in practice (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010; Huang, Baptista & Galliers,

2013). There are other ways of absorbing risk into institutional social media engagement strategies, including an organisation-based social media account that involves participants from stakeholder publics through 'rotation curation' (#ROCUR). For an organisation, #ROCUR represents a long-term commitment to participatory practices, and is one way of inviting in the voices of external and internal stakeholders. A practice that shares some similarities with #ROCUR is a social media 'takeover'. 'Takeovers' are a short-lived marketing tactic however they could be a pathway to setting up a standalone #ROCUR account. A case in point is Britain's National Health Service (NHS), which initially participated in #takeoverday in the two years prior to trialling and then establishing @NHS (Evans, 2015) to complement its existing accounts @NHSEngland and @NHSChoices.

In December 2011, @sweden appeared on Twitter with the promise that each week there would be a guest curator as the voice of the nation. @sweden has since become a phenomenon known as rotation curation (#ROCUR) which has democratised the voice of 'Sweden' and been embraced by stakeholder publics and spread beyond Twitter to Instagram and SnapChat. At the time of writing there were more than 70 Twitter #ROCUR accounts worldwide. @sweden is still the best known #ROCUR account and, as an 'officially funded diplomatic activity' (VandenBroek, 2015, p. 41), among only a small number of accounts that are owned by an organisation. In 2016, there were two new additions to the #ROCUR community – @NHS and @parkinsons52 – which exemplify current practice. @NHS is an official Twitter account of Britain's NHS, which showcases its staff and patients 'through their own words' (About, 2017). In contrast, @parksinsons52 was started by an individual for people living with Parkinson's disease; the account is not affiliated with the @ParkinsonsUK charity, although the CEO was a guest curator (@ParkinsonsUK, 2016).

This article explores the challenge of including stakeholder voices in organisational communication. Couldry defines 'voice' as a person's capacity to provide an account of themselves and their place in the world and to 'give such an account means telling a story, providing a narrative' (Couldry, 2010, p. 7). Voice as a process is socially grounded, a form of reflexive agency and an embodied process, but voice as a value requires frameworks that support self-expression (2010, p. 3). Social media platforms can provide (or constrain) these dialogic structures and, through their ubiquity and utility, are contributing to a paradigm change in corporate communication with less controlled and more spontaneous conversation (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014). In an international study of organisation–public communication, however, Macnamara (2015) found that voice was still widely misunderstood and practised as speaking, with a dearth of listening. Macnamara (2015, p. 41) identifies a number of structural reasons for the dearticulation of voice, one of which is a culture that does not value some stakeholder voices, and is illustrated by an organisation that 'encourages employees to speak, but it provides a forum for their voices only when they echo the messages of the organization'. Christensen (2013, p. 44) levels similar criticism at @sweden for its careful selection of guest curators and guidelines to ensure that content is 'deliberately drained of the type of edgy politics and personal attacks that fuel a significant portion of Twitter'.

The digital era has fuelled stakeholder enthusiasm for participatory practices. Ordinary people have a voice, such as on the #ROCUR Twitter account @IndigenousX,

with user-driven content challenging dominant narratives in online spaces (Sweet, Pearson & Dudgeon, 2013). The offline notion of a day-long discussion was reimagined on Twitter with the 2014 Indigenous Health May Day event (#IHMayDay) connecting 346 individuals and 108 organisations as 'fluid digital networks of individuals involved in co-production and co-distribution' (Sweet et al., 2015, p. 638). Another gathering place for stakeholder voice is online comment threads. In her examination of online news websites, Barnes (2014a, p. 533) found that audiences valued the 'prospect of participation' and the 'immediate satisfaction' that come from their involvement. This enthusiasm for participatory practices is not being reciprocated, according to Yang and Kent (2014, p. 564), who found no mainstream organisational support for a 'truly relational approach to social media' and no return on investment for being responsive online: 'The dominant mode of social media use is still a one-way, sender to receiver model, or an asymmetrical "information provider" role that uses social media simply for sales or marketing purposes' (2014, p. 564). Valentini (2015) says stakeholders are becoming more sceptical about organisational social media practices and have a heightened awareness of these 'hidden messages'.

The parameters of what constitutes audience engagement in online spaces is contested and likely to be an ongoing source of frustration, debate and research. Expression of opinion, emotion and sharing trivial and personal matters are among the factors that drive online audience participation, so cannot be discounted as less meaningful forms of engagement (Barnes, 2014b). Barnes (2014a, 2014b) uses fan theory to explore the behaviour of audiences on online news sites, arguing that the opportunity to have a voice and engage with other voices through commenting on news stories is an integral part of the experience:

> It is important, then, to consider how the wide range of reactions from 'rational' to 'emotional' may operate as forms of deliberation and dialogue alongside such motivations as identity play, conflict and pleasure-seeking. (Barnes, 2014b, p. 134)

There is an omnipresent tension between professional voice and personal voice on social media platforms, where engagement is inherently social, personal and conversational. Lillqvist and Louhiala-Salminen (2014) acknowledge the complexities of acting and responding simultaneously as a company official and an individual. A traditional approach is for organisational representatives to talk as the company by aligning their online persona with the 'human traits' of an archetypal brand (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). In their examination of Facebook data, Lillqvist and Louhiala-Salminen (2014) categorised status updates that were unsigned and devoid of personalised features as examples of a single official voice. This has been common practice and a way of achieving uniformity, mitigating reputational risk and achieving organisational goals. Macnamara and Zerfass (2012, pp. 303–4) urge organisations not to colonise social media for 'traditional organization-centric forms of strategic communications'. The ongoing appeal of the 'one voice strategy' may be driven, in part, by factors such as globalisation, digital convergence, wanting to prevent 'mixed signals' across platforms and general risk aversion (Andrea Catellani et al., 2016).

Polyphony – particularly in online spaces – provides greater scope for authenticity and spontaneity. Huang, Baptista and Galliers (2013, p. 113) advocate the inclusion of multivocality in organisational communication strategies and challenge notions that it is a case of either–or: 'Maintaining both is traditionally viewed as not being viable because, once organizations allow multiple voices to be heard, they immediately lose control over the dominant discourse within the organization.' Another proponent of polyphony, Baskin (2008, p. 11), argues that organisations should welcome 'antenarrative input', as this feedback is necessary to challenge the dominant narratives that 'keep our behaviour congruent' and hinder new knowledge being generated. Similarly, Kent (2013) urges communication professionals to value their stakeholder publics as 'valued friends and colleagues who can help an organization move forward'.

Articulation of 'voice' is therefore a complex relationship between performance of an identity or persona through participatory practices and engagement enacted through deliberation and dialogue premised on listening and attention. Similarly, the question of authenticity has most often been framed in terms of 'identity' as a kind of 'performance' and whether individuals (often celebrities) either perform an authentic persona or, in more sophisticated accounts, treat authenticity itself as a mediated relation between privacy and publicity. 'Persona' in this context refers to the performance of 'publicness', which is often associated with celebrity but now can be found in everyday interactions whereby social media users perform 'publicness' with a reflexive awareness (Baym & boyd, 2012; Marshall, 2013; Marshall, Moore & Barbour, 2015; Stevens & Fuller, 2017). Being conscious of audience judgement 'implies an ongoing frontstage identity performance that balances the desire to maintain positive impressions with the need to seem true or authentic to others' (Marwick & boyd, 2010, p. 124). For example, Enli (2017, p. 58) examined political communication on Twitter during the 2016 presidential election campaign in the United States and found that 'markers of authenticity' were linked to 'backstage or passionate' forms of tweeting compared with more crafted, policy-focused tweets. Hopke and Simis (2017) have explored how authenticity is characterised in part by a discursive relation of sentiment. They examined contestations that form around 'hashtag publics' through participatory conversations. There is therefore a tension in participatory 'conversations' shaped by the affordances of platforms regarding the authenticity of the *conversation* as well as the authenticity of the *personae* engaging ('performing' or 'enacted') in the conversation. We want to explore this tension by way of two key research questions:

1   What is the character of authenticity performed through #ROCUR accounts on Twitter? Do #ROCUR accounts provide an opportunity for authentic voice?

2   What are the challenges of rotation curation for the guest curator and the account?

Researching the complexity of #ROCUR

The complexity of post-broadcast media assemblages means that isolating a research object in part requires isolating a correlating context; it is no longer viable to rely on normative understandings of certain kinds of media texts. An initial search was carried out through Google and platform-specific searches on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and

Instagram to create a list of all identifiable #ROCUR social media accounts. This search was exhaustive in the ways afforded by contemporary search engines. The hashtag #ROCUR in this situation is disarticulated from its original platform-centric functional context (functioning as metadata organising textual elements into an ad hoc collection) and circulates as a marker of reflexive commentary across social media accounts and other web-based forms of commentary (functioning, for example, as an indexical sign of 'participatory practice' and 'good digital citizenship'). We began with the tally of 77 #ROCUR accounts, listed on a now defunct web page, which was last updated on 13 January 2013 (Rotation Curation Chronology, 2013). We subsequently identified that some accounts, such as @PeopleOfCanada, had retired while others, such as @NHS, had commenced. #ROCUR accounts that belong to an organisation compared with a community, cultural or professional interest represent a small portion of the total.

The list of #ROCUR accounts was too large to critically engage with beyond computational methods. We drew on the commentary about #ROCUR accounts to guide our analysis and focused on those episodes of controversy. 'Controversy' has been analysed as a form of network analysis in terms of the interaction between various actors (Marres & Moats, 2015). We use it here as an instrument for better understanding the normative assumptions that underpin #ROCUR accounts and the limits of organisational participatory practice. We carried out searches for mentions of #ROCUR hashtags to identify episodes of controversy, which meant relying on implicit definitions of 'controversial' by media commentators. The following criteria was used to select the controversies: The #ROCUR account (a) is active (b) guest curators had written about their experience or been the subject of media coverage and (c) a negative experience had been encountered or reported. The guest curator's week of tweeting and resulting conversations were examined along with any resulting media coverage or blog posts about their time as curator.

A limitation of this approach is that most of the controversies are normative rearticulations of mainstream cultural values, so we did not focus on contested tweets or conversations that did not develop into episodes that could be written about by commentators and identified by us as 'controversy'. It is likely that we have missed examples of what we would otherwise consider to be controversies. What contestations become controversies in media commentary and what contestations do not would reveal much about the character of the public sphere broadly understood, but is beyond the scope of the current project. Some controversies related to areas of known friction, such as the tweets on @ireland about abortion, which is a topic congruent with Ireland (Henderson, 2014), or probable entanglement such as the @ireland guest curator who got drunk at the famous beer festival Oktoberfest (McGuiness, 2013). Other controversies related to follower opposition to choices for guest curators made by account administrators, including @i_amGermany's expat curator (Glazebrook, 2012), @TWkLGBTQ's heterosexual curator (Romeu, 2014) and @WeAreADL allowing an organisation to tweet (Deslandes, 2013). The two primary issues we identified in the media-driven controversies examined in this study were regarding who could speak and what they could speak about.

From this analysis of the #ROCUR commentary in post-curation surveys and blogs, we identified 'trolling' as an issue in the reflexive commentary by guest curators of the

@realscientists #ROCUR account. We focused on reports of trolling in the reflexive commentary of guest curators of the @realscientists #ROCUR account for two reasons. First, it is a very successful #ROCUR account that is celebrating its fourth anniversary in 2017 and regularly generates a large amount of engagement. Second, the field of science communication is characterised by a number of contestations over authority and expertise, particularly in those fields of science that trigger social debate (Jarreau, 2015). The post-#ROCUR commentary by the @realscientists guest curator is therefore indicating where the experiment in democratising stakeholder voice appears to reach its limits of effectiveness, as we explore below.

Stakeholder voice and controversies

In order to establish and understand the boundaries for social media use in organisations, Linke and Zerfass (2013, p. 276) argue that social media governance – which goes beyond social media guidelines – serves to 'enable and limit' communicative action. Macnamara and Zerfass (2012, p. 301; see also van den Berg & Verhoeven, 2017) discuss the blurring of the public–private divide and how the ubiquity of technology is challenging the very existence of the divide. Part of what gives #ROCUR its distinctive character, Oswell (2013) suggests, is that accounts 'throw up personalities that inform, entertain, provoke and educate'. Transparency is necessary around the structures and processes that shape the configuration of voice. Controversies, when they occur, highlight limitations for the democratisation of voice in organisational communication spaces. Such controversies cross normative boundaries and guest curators become entangled in the complexities of self-expression in official spaces.

We found two main forms of commentary about 'controversies' in fifteen of the approximately 100 texts in the broader corpus of material analysed. Much of the media commentary about #ROCUR focused on controversial statements by guest curators or controversial choices of guest curator, while the reflexive commentary produced by guest account holders after their respective stints often focused on the more personal dimensions of experience. The experience of being a guest curator is also a unique encounter, prompting curators to promote their impending appearance on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and to deconstruct their week in the hot seat. During his time as guest curator at @EduTweetOz, Aaron Davis discussed his expectations around engagement:

> Just as it is confusing as to what voice to use with the account, I was intrigued with the number of tweets shared with the account for no clear reason. I got the impression after a few days that there are some who use the account as something of a public noticeboard to amplify their own voice. (Davis, 2016)

Guest curator James Glazebrook generated controversy during his stint on @I_amGermany but believes that Twitter is a place for irreverence:

> Rotation curation shouldn't be subject to quotas or any selection criteria other than each applicant's merits as a tweeter. And each new voice should

challenge, rather than conform to, followers' perceptions of a particular country, region, city or group of the population. (Glazebrook, 2012)

@sweden has set a strong positive example and potentially become the 'norm' for the democratisation of voice through #ROCUR. While @sweden encourages guest curators to 'engage in your normal Twitter behavior' (Lyall, 2012), one curator described 'a need to go more bold' (McGuiness, 2013). In its early years, @sweden sent its share of controversial tweets, but overall the media accepted that the occasional transgression was less important than 'its unpredictability, its controversies, and its democratic reputation' (VandenBroek, 2015). Any outcry was short lived as freedom of voice was privileged and aligned with the #ROCUR brand that @sweden established (Arons, 2012). Unpredictability and controversies are considered part of the attraction of #rocur. While guest curators of @sweden were seen as 'the least controlled, predictable, variable', for the most part they 'bolstered the normative Swedish discourse' (VandenBroek 2015). Similarly, the self-declared 'low lights' of guest curators were issues of who could speak and what they could speak about.

In the reflexive commentary of guest curators, 'voice' is often discussed, including concerns over 'what voice to use' and whether authentic voice is 'appropriate', hinting at the sense of responsibility and obligation that comes with being the official voice for the account. In a blog post about her experience curating @EduTweetOz, Deborah Netolicky (2016) explains her consideration of voice:

> In my own Twitter account I am comfortable with my voice, the way I 'speak' and communicate. While I was absolutely comfortable with being myself during my @EduTweetOz week, I also felt a different sense of obligation to the account administrators. Is my authentic social media voice appropriate in an account administrated by others and on which I am a guest? Can I say exactly what I want in precisely the way I want? To what extent do I need to be tactful or restrained?

Enli (2017) suggests that there has been a general trend towards the professionalisation of social media communications – or at least a narrative of 'professionalisation' to distinguish personal social media accounts from organisational accounts – and she uses the example of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign as a negative example to disrupt this narrative. Similarly, #ROCUR accounts constitute a way of structuring the participation of stakeholders that can and does include forms of speech and engagement that exhibit what Enli calls 'authenticity markers'; these are signifiers of a personal account, rather than the professionalised organisational account. Enli (2015) defines seven characteristics of mediated authenticity in the current media ecology, and #ROCUR practice can be understood as exhibiting at least four or five. #ROCUR is now a *predictable* genre of social media-based communication. The character of social media is that it is *spontaneous* (or at least appears that way) and there is a closely related sense of *liveliness*. Lastly, #ROCUR guest account holders are often (but not always) *ordinary* citizens, and there is a degree of *imperfection* with minor flaws or mistakes. The authenticity of voice as articulated though #ROCUR accounts exists as a site of tension

between the professionalism expected with organisational communications and such characteristics of authenticity.

Trolling

The affordances of the Twitter platform encourage a robust form of conversation and engagement – instantaneous, direct and networked. Similar to the way 'friending' through social media platforms is a new social relation that is articulated through established concepts of 'friendship' (boyd, 2004), the 'conversation' enabled by Twitter is another kind of socio-technical relation that draws on some of the normative social conventions of established communication genres but articulates these in new ways. The ideals of the normative public sphere of rational debate and critical and reflexive commentary are subsumed by various practices collectively described as 'trolling'. 'Trolling' is often understood as an aberration, but the same socio-technical affordances that encourage sophisticated performances of 'mediated authenticity' also enable trolling practices (Fuller, McCrea & Wilson, 2013). Tiidenberg and Gomez Cruz (2015, p. 16) make a similar point, but in a socially 'positive' sense in the context of NSFW tumblr blogs, where they note that '[p]osting, submitting and reblogging body-selfies is often a way of saying "hello", paying a compliment, flirting or wishing happy birthday'. If #ROCUR accounts are a mechanism for enabling multiple stakeholder voices to greater or lesser degrees, then #ROCUR accounts gather adverse engagements from antagonists of all the stakeholders.

The post-curation surveys from @realscientists ask guest curators a series of questions, including whether there were any lowlights. One-third (nine of 27 survey responses) identified 'lowlights' as a part of their experience and 'trolling' was consistently mentioned. To better understand the context of this self-reported trolling, we generated sets of all tweets by and mentions of '@realscientists' for the respective time periods of the guest curators that mentioned trolling. Sets of tweets were created by scraping Twitter's native web search results using Outwit Hub to produce sets of all tweets. All mention the account, including replies (see Fuller, 2017 for further discussion). This enabled us to capture a sense of the exchanges between Twitters users albeit without the immersive experience of 'real time' engagement. This aspect of online relationality is very difficult to capture through the textual traces of the archive.

Except for spectacular examples ('spectacular' in the symbolic subcultural sense), 'trolling' is notoriously difficult to research because of the situated character of research practice (Jane, 2015) and the subjective dimension of the experience of being trolled or moderating for trolling (Samory & Peserico, 2017). In the context of the guest curator's post-curation reflexive blogs, 'trolling' was mostly characterised as a form of engagement that was either deemed worthy of ignoring – that is, a conversation of limited value – or, if the guest curator responded, the trolling was experienced as a disruption or pedantry – that is, the character of engagement from participants required too much investment of sentiment or time.

Table 1: *Nine guest curators of the @realscientists account who mentioned trolling in post-curation commentary*

Name	Survey date	Curation period	Trolling	Account tweets	All tweets (incl @replies)	Engage-ment (fav & RTs)
Sean Geoghegan	11 Feb 2016	8–15 Nov 2015	Disruptive engagement	591	917	1494
Tim Dreier	1 Mar 2016	22–29 Nov 2015	Disruptive engagement Alt-right	587	1032	2247
Rodrigo Bombardi	8 Mar 2016	15–22 Nov 2015	Disruptive engagement	252	1237	3874
Jehannine Austin	22 Mar 2016	4–10 Jan 2016	Disruptive engagement	250	632	1539
Shaun O'Boyle	4 Apr 2016	31 Jan– 6 Feb 2016	Hostility	332	1161	3969
Marion Leary	5 Jul 2016	9–15 May 2016	Disruptive engagement	638	1254	3402
Mayan Amiezer	23 Jul 2016	12–19 Jun 2016	Hostility Pedantic responses	130	590	1951
Karen Masters	9 Aug 2016	26 Jun–3 Jul 2016	Pedantic responses	345	646	2745
Dan Gillis	8 Mar-17	15–22 Jan 2017	Alt-Right	1425	2473	4710

Note: All tweets (including @replies) were scraped during the period and the trolling identified and coded. Counts of all 'retweets' and 'favourites' of the account's tweets during the period in last column.

In the existing research literature on trolling, the character and quality of 'authenticity' are ambiguous. Trolling and trolling-type practices are often framed as a mode of participatory engagement that is necessarily inauthentic for playing with the normative expectations of online identity or normative social categories (Higgin, 2013; Karppi, 2013, p. 283). It was the reflexive interplay of irony and sentiment that characterised the earnestly (post-)ironic participatory engagement of 'trolls' (Nagle, 2017). Trolls therefore produced an inauthentic persona that was performed through trolling practices.

In the case of reported @realscientists trolling, however, what seemed to be at stake was the authenticity of 'conversation' afforded by the platform and interaction of participants. The authenticity of social relations afforded by computer-mediated communications has long been a concern not only of social researchers, but also more broadly in form of moral panics played out in popular accounts of new technologies (Baym, 2015; Page Jeffery, 2017). In the context of participatory practices on social

media platforms, particularly their multi-modal character, 'conversation' becomes the site of political contestation (Milner, 2016). 'From this perspective, the @realscientists account becomes a platform or vector of contestation between antagonistic stakeholders; there were multiple examples of contestation and argument, but only on a few occasions did such contestation become the negative experience of 'trolling'.

Tweets about the social implication of scientific findings about climate change served as the single biggest trigger for generating waves of negative engagement. Social media serve as a potential leveller between those participating in a 'conversation'. Negative engagements extended the flattening of conversational hierarchy to imply there was also a flattening of hierarchies of scholarly or scientific expertise, or even more abstract notions of evidence and epistemology. The effect of these engagements was understood positively by Rodrigo Bombardi (third entry in Table 1) as a resource for further communication:

> In one of the days [the trolling] seemed like a massive coordinated attack. However, I think it backfired for them because their tweets made a lot of people engage in the conversation, which is what we need. We need people talking about these issues. In addition, their attacks made me tweet far more than I was anticipating. So even the lowlight was a highlight. (Bombardi, 2016)

Bombardi has a normative understanding of the goal of participating well in the public sphere to increase the number of people talking about a given issue. He anticipated being a 'troublemaker', as he explains further in his reflexive commentary:

> I didn't want my troublemaking to get in the way of simply communicating science. I thought it would be distracting. And there aren't many people out there talking about atmospheric sciences in general. Most of the voices out there are talking about climate change. Moreover, RS is not my personal account so I didn't think it was fair to talk about issues that might get people upset. Instead, I chose to give a clear message about atmospheric sciences and just a hint of troublemaking regarding climate change. (Bombardi, 2016)

McCosker and Johns (2013) have analysed various examples critically engaging with 'trolling' in the comment threads of YouTube videos. They isolate examples from the 2011 UK riots where social antagonisms (around class and race) become a resource for contested discursive positions and further engagement. Indeed, the trend in science communications more broadly has been to move away from a 'deficit' model – whereby the scientist has expertise that the public lacks – towards an 'engagement' model – where communication is premised on a series of 'conversations' (Smith, 2015). The problem for #ROCUR accounts, as for all social media users, is that the experience of negativity is not equal for all participants. The 'hostility' of engagement is another form of trolling that refers to the affective salience of the textual communication ('aggressive', 'dismissive', etc.) more than the network effects (such as the experience of being 'swamped') or personal action frames of reactionary critique. There is a stark gendered dimension to these exchanges (Cole, 2015; Lumsden & Morgan, 2017); an

illustrative example of this from the @realscientists cohort is that only women reported 'pedantic responses'. Pedantry in this context can be anything from pointing out minor errors through to demands for scholarly explanations of why certain forms of evidence are not sufficient (Hardaker, 2013). Male guest curators certainly received pedantic responses (particularly around questions of evidence), but only the two female guest curators had a sufficiently negative experience of pedantry to note it in the post-#ROCUR commentary.

Twitter (as a media organisation) has been critiqued extensively in journalistic accounts of trolling for not responding in an appropriate or sufficient way. Part of the reason for this is the normalisation of certain forms of reactionary and conservative political discourse. The table also captures a change in the way political speech and political engagement are understood on Twitter, and these changes are part of the reasons why Twitter is being taken to task. The last entry in the table describing his experience of guest curating in January 2017, Dan Gillis, uses the terminology of the 'alt-right' to describe antagonistic interlocutors on Twitter. The second entry in the table, Tim Dreier, discussing his experience in late 2015, is clearly describing tweeters who also fit the current definition of the 'alt-right', but the political discourse regarding the alt-right had not yet fully developed. Dreier received negative engagement for circulating explicitly 'political' discourse, while Gillis is describing a mode of engagement that characterises alt-right social media participation.

Conclusion

#ROCUR is a social media phenomenon that started in 2011 with the @sweden Twitter account and that continues to evolve as a location for participatory practices and the democratisation of voice. Predominantly embraced by stakeholder publics for community, cultural and professional interests, #ROCUR and related practices are evident in organisational communication strategies. This study of #ROCUR practices on Twitter, at both the reflexive commentary level and at the tweet level, has found evidence of self-expression, discussion and lively debate among stakeholder publics. Characteristics of mediated authenticity (Enli, 2015) were evident in the #ROCUR accounts examined. Furthermore, #ROCUR affords opportunities for guest curators to produce an authentic voice within the enabling, and at times limiting, features of the account and Twitter itself. Our examination of the textual performance of guest curators (Barnes, 2014a) has revealed opportunities for affect and identity formation, and delineated a possible threshold of effectiveness for #ROCUR accounts in episodes of trolling. In the case of 'trolling', the Twitter affordances that enable #ROCUR accounts – such as @realscientists – to be effective experiments in the democratisation of stakeholder voice are used to mitigate or exhaust these same affordances. The immediacy of posting becomes a burden of replying and engagement; direct communication becomes a confrontation lacking nuance or finicky demands for evidence; and the networked character of engagement becomes overwhelming interplay of tracking too many 'threads' in a 'conversation'.

From an organisational communication perspective, #ROCUR accounts invite polyphony and also provide an opportunity for counterbalancing traditional strategic

communication practices that can favour univocality, control and censorship. Factors that can support self-expression in official spaces and embed participatory practices – such as guest curators and multivocality – into organisational communication strategies include: a genuine invitation for voices to contribute alternative perspectives in owned spaces; transparency around processes that enable participation beyond the 'usual suspects'; support structures to enable engagement and authenticity; and responsiveness to the demands of dynamic dialogic spaces. For the most part, our study found that risks are self-mitigating and discourse is normative. These self-limiting features make #ROCUR an appealing brand proposition for organisations, strengthened by the meta-narrative – that is, what having a #ROCUR account says about an organisation. In this regard, authenticity provides a useful measure of the way in which a person (or organisation) expresses themselves or mediates their persona online. An 'authentic' style on social media, and being regarded as authentic as a result, are considered to be an effective strategy on Twitter and an antidote to professionalisation of the platform (Enli, 2017).

There is another important dimension regarding the authenticity of voice that we have identified. It relates to the 'authenticity' of #ROCUR-focused conversations. This identity-based understanding of authenticity is only one way to appreciate the relationship between authenticity and voice. In this context, 'authenticity' is generally regarded as good. However, if the context of 'voice' is understood to be the 'conversation' produced in part through practice and the specific affordances of a social media platform, then the category of 'authenticity' needs to be rethought as more than the expression of persona to include the social context of the conversation or engagement itself. At a minimum, #ROCUR participants should be forewarned of trolling and provided with a repertoire of tactics for enduring or dealing with flagrant examples. Indeed, perhaps the rotating character of #ROCUR provides a natural antidote to the energy-sapping post-ironic modes of 'conversation' evidenced in the example @realscientists. If #ROCUR presents a low-risk way of incorporating relatively risky voices into organisational communications strategies, then the positives and negatives of the resultant 'conversations' needs to be understood beyond notions such as 'engagement'.

References

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