

The Community Panel Facebook Group Method

Approaching social media as a collaborative
space for research, rather than a vessel of data

Dr Jerome Turner
Birmingham City University



My study and research question

How are citizens enabled to participate in their neighbourhoods using hyperlocal media, given the various power dynamics, roles and relationships inherent in such participatory platforms?

Secondary questions:

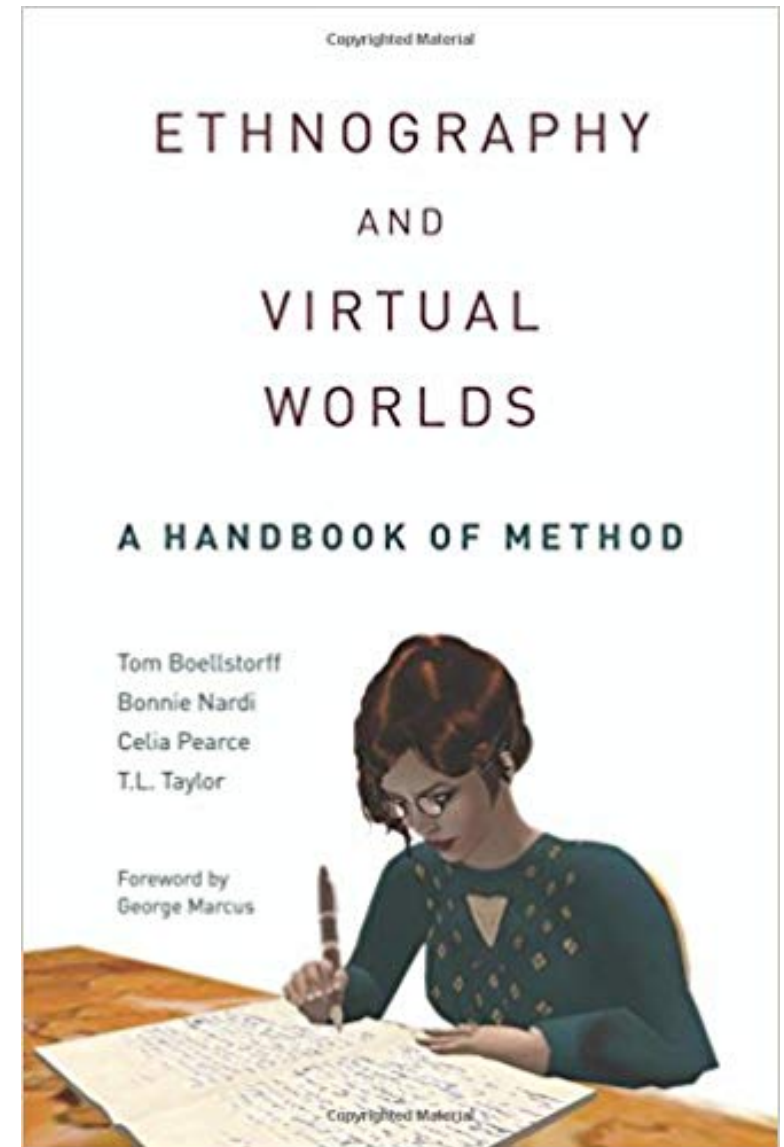
- What relationships do audiences maintain in hyperlocal media, with relation to each other and the editors?
- How are these relationships, expectations and norms of hyperlocal participatory practice defined, understood and controlled by the audience and editors?
- How do these online, definitional practices and relationships then also relate to the offline locality, with respect to civic engagement, local news media, and constructions of 'place'?

The challenges posed by online studies

- Ethical
- Observer effect (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982)
- Covert observation

Exploring the literature

- Social media as a vessel of data to study (Baron, 2010; Gershon, 2011; Kosinski et al., 2015).
- Emerging ethos of meeting people in their own places, in an ethnographic mode (Boellstorff et al., 2012).



An emerging method

- Participant observer approach (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007)
- Balancing my own presence with observer effect.
- The duality of being the "stranger" (Schuetz, 1944) and also "being native" (Kanuha, 2000) – insider/outsider



The Community Panel

- Most people wouldn't have worked with researchers before.
- Framing the Community Panel as something where they could have input and help practitioners (as well as helping someone's PhD).
- Emails, interviews in person or on the phone, etc

Do you use **B31**
Voices? *Connecting communities*

I'm doing research into how people read and use local websites as part of my study towards a PhD, and looking for people to talk to.

This could mean a chat in a café over a cup of tea and cake, or something as simple as a few emails, and can be totally led by you.



If you're interested please get in touch and I can give you more details.

Jerome Turner
Email: jerometurner77@gmail.com

The Community Panel Facebook Group

- Longitudinal focus group, online – combined with research diary.
- Losing control of the recruitment method, people introduced to me by the hyperlocal editors.
- Not self-selecting but recruited (performing for. The editors?).
- Later, others did self select.
- Around 50 members by the end, but still only a small core of participants.

How it worked (according to plan)

- I asked questions after/while doing my research diary.
- Of an evening (8pm) when I knew people to be active and reflective.
- Collaboratively research / discussing.
- Visual methods.

How it worked (in other, unexpected ways)

- The audience taking control
- Doing my research diary for me – what they self select from the hyperlocal Page
- Autonomy
- The things they say, and the way they say them

Posts like the one tonight about the girl being bullied in northfield make me feel good about the local community, not because it happened, but because of the support of the community for the victim and the willingness to name and shame the offender

 You, Dave Tubby and 2 others

6 comments Seen by everyone



Like




Comment



Jerome Turner Thanks. I'll look out for this when I do my research diary tonight. If anyone else wanted to look at how could do a research diary as part of the community panel, I could talk through it.

Like · Reply · 3y



Jerome Turner  **Joanne Elizabeth** I've watched the video r horrible stuff - even in trying to be unbiased here, I can't de that. I'm wondering how we might see this unfolding over the next few weeks, months? What might be the effects of that naming and shaming, in the offline world?

Like · Reply · 3y

I have asked B31 Voices to put some announcements out for the Friends of Cofton Park. We have an influx of travellers at the moment who are causing a lot of nuisance and they have pitched up where we hold our Tai Chi sessions. We have moved our Tai Chi class due to take place tomorrow up to the Beacon off Monument Lane. Today, I have notified B31 again to say that the Nordic Walking session planned for Wednesday has been cancelled due to the travellers.



Jerome Turner

10 comments Seen by everyone



Like



Comment

View 8 more comments



Jerome Turner I've always been intrigued by Nordic walking. light try and join you next time?

Like · Reply · 3y

Analysis

- Who 'holds' and controls Facebook Group data – the difficulty of 'getting it'.
- Finding a workaround to export, and turn this into a word document...
- To use in Nvivo, alongside all other textual materials (interviews, research diaries, etc).

Applying the method

- Ethnography
- Longitudinal work
- Co-creation work
- Organisational for staying in touch with participants, but also as part of the data.
- Is this applicable to all participants and subjects?

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