

**UNDERSTANDINGS OF CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, AND
TECHNOLOGY IN A DISTRIBUTED TEAM OF JOURNALISTS**

A Practitioner-centered Approach

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Abstract <p>The economic challenges media organizations have faced in the past decade have increased the field's need for creativity and innovation. In this research, creativity and innovation are seen as strategic resources through which an organization can acquire competitive advantage. The theoretical framework of this study draws from socio-constructive approaches to creativity, i.e. creativity as a phenomenon manifests in social interaction. Innovation, on the other hand, is looked at from both organizational and individual viewpoints. In addition, the ongoing changes in working life are also accounted for. Specifically, this study places its focus on remote work and distributed teams which have increased as communication technology is adopted in professional organizations.</p> <p>The aim of this study is to find out how journalists working in distributed teams understand creativity and innovation. The research problem was approached with qualitative methods. Data in this research comes from two distributed teams of journalists, both of which are a part of a large Finnish media organization. One of the teams produces feature journalism, the other daily news. In total, there are 14 journalists working in these teams. In-depth interviews were utilized as a data collection method and the topics of creativity, innovation, and technology were emphasized. Interview data were analyzed by utilizing qualitative content analysis.</p> <p>The findings of this study indicate that journalists approach the phenomena of creativity and innovation specifically from a practical point of view and in relation to their daily work. Based on the analysis, three typologies were developed in order to make sense of how journalists understood the phenomena under study. These typologies are <i>three ways to approach journalistic creativity</i>, <i>a typology of practice-oriented media innovation</i> and <i>meanings given to technology and its role in a distributed team of journalists</i>. The typologies can be separated from each other only theoretically. In practice, they weave heavily into each other to form the phenomenon of technology-mediated creative work.</p> <p>This study finds that journalists in these two teams conceptualized innovation and creativity in similar ways and based their understanding in their daily work. However, this tendency to define the two concepts in a similar fashion is understandable and even suitable especially in regard to media innovations. In fact, this study champions for a more practitioner-oriented approach to media innovation and its definition. Additionally, this study revealed the importance of a psychologically safe communication climate as a facilitator for creative work in a team of journalists.</p>	
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Tiivistelmä <p>Mediaorganisaatioiden taloudelliset haasteet viime vuosikymmenen aikana ovat kasvattaneet luovuuden ja innovaatioiden tarvetta media-alalla. Tässä tutkimuksessa luovuutta ja innovaatioita lähestytään mediaorganisaation strategisina resursseina, joiden avulla organisaation on mahdollista saavuttaa kilpailuetua markkinoilla. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen tausta nojaa luovuuden tutkimukseen ja luovuutta lähestytään sosio-konstruktivistisesta näkökulmasta (luovuus muodostuu vuorovaikutuksessa). Innovaatioita lähestytään toisaalta organisaation, toisaalta yksilön näkökulmasta. Oman lisänsä tutkimusasetelmaan tuovat työelämässä tapahtuvat muutokset, joista erityisesti viestintäteknologian yleistymisen myötä kasvanut etätyön ja hajautuneiden tiimien määrä ovat tässä tutkimuksessa keskeisessä roolissa.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää, miten hajautuneissa tiimeissä työskentelevät journalistit ymmärtävät luovuuden ja innovaatiot oman työnsä kontekstissa. Tutkimusaihetta lähestyttiin laadullisilla menetelmillä. Tutkimuskohteena on kaksi hajautunutta journalistista tiimiä, jotka toimivat osana isoa suomalaista mediaorganisaatiota. Toinen tiimeistä tuottaa feature-journalismia ja toinen päivittäisiä uutisia. Yhteensä jäseniä tiimeissä on 14. Aineistonkeruumenetelmänä toimi teemahaastattelu, jossa pureuduttiin innovaatioihin, luovuuteen ja teknologiaan. Haastatteluaineisto analysoitiin laadullisen sisällönanalyysin keinoin, mutta kuitenkin teoriaan ja aiempaan tutkimukseen nojaten.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulosten mukaan toimittajat jäsentävät sekä luovuuden että innovaation ilmiöitä vahvasti omasta päivittäistyöstään käsin. Analyysin perusteella muodostettiin kolme typologiaa kuvaamaan journalistien käsityksiä tutkittavista ilmiöistä. Typologiat ovat <i>kolme tapaa ymmärtää journalistista luovuutta, käytäntöön perustuva typologia mediainnovaatioista</i> sekä <i>journalistien käsityksiä teknologiasta ja sen roolista tiimityössä</i>. Typologiat eivät ole toisistaan erillisiä, vaan ne kietoutuvat tiukasti yhteen muodostaen yhdessä teknologiavälitteisen luovan työn ilmiön. Käsitteellisesti typologiat voidaan irrottaa toisistaan, mutta käytännössä se ei ole mahdollista, eikä siihen tässä tutkimuksessa pyritä.</p> <p>Tuloksissa korostuvat erityisesti toimittajien tapa käsitteellistää innovaatioita ja luovuutta yhteneväisellä tavalla heidän omasta työstään käsin. Käytännönläheinen lähestymistapa on ymmärrettävä ja perusteltu varsinkin mediainnovaation käsitteen kohdalla. Tämä tutkimus korostaakin mediainnovaation määrittelemistä journalistien lähtökohdista käsin ja puolustaa mediainnovaation käsittämistä aiempaa tutkimusta ihmislähtöisemmin. Lisäksi teknologian, luovuuden ja innovaatioiden yhteispisteessä korostuu tiimiin teknologian välityksellä muodostuva turvallinen viestintäilmapiiiri, joka toimii journalistien luovan työn mahdollistajana.</p>	
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In Jyväskylä, March 15, 2019.

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1. Introduction

The words ‘traditional media’ and ‘crisis’ have been linked tightly together for the better part of a decade – if not two. Traditional media organizations, meaning newspapers, television, and radio, have seen their loyal audiences abandon them, their advertising revenues collapse, and the new digital giants rise. It is a vicious cycle: audiences spend an increasing amount of time on social networking sites and one-on-one messaging apps on their mobile devices which decreases the time spent with traditional media products (Newman 2016, 7). Decreasing audience attention, in turn, leads to advertisers abandoning traditional media outlets as their advertising partners and instead favoring social media for targeting specific audiences (see e.g. Kantar TNS 2019, 1). These developments, observed specifically in the past ten years, amount to devastating results: as media organizations have fewer resources, fewer journalists remain employed, and ultimately the amount and quality of journalism decreases. To put it bluntly, traditional media is fighting for its survival and (re)negotiating its place in modern society.

Suggestions on how to fix traditional media have been varied. Many have tried to hold on to traditional journalistic production techniques while others have raced to embrace new technologies and especially what social media has to offer. In the past year, the frenzy surrounding social media, though, has lessened as multiple outlets, especially in Europe, have toned down the sharing of news via social media and aggregators (Newman 2018). Another suggestion, besides gallivanting in social media, relates to content. It is, to date, the only part of the journalistic production process social media companies have not taken over even if they have succeeded in building powerful positions for distribution and sales (Küng 2017, 197). These companies still need media organizations to produce content their users can like, share, and comment. Quite aptly, Küng (2017, 197) calls content the last ace in traditional media’s sleeve. Furthermore, blame has also been thrown around in discussions surrounding social media and news organizations. Traditional media has been quick to accuse the “new digital giants”, i.e. Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple, for fracturing audiences and thus contributing to media’s hardships.

Despite who is to blame, traditional media is in trouble and in desperate need of new ideas. Media organizations need fresh views on how to attract audiences, how to lure advertisers back in and ultimately, how to define themselves and their journalism in the digital age. This enormous task requires creativity and innovation from the individuals working in media or as Küng (2017, 105) puts it, there is a bigger need for creativity in media than ever before. Innovation, then, becomes the saving grace of media organizations and journalism. According

to Gibson and Gibbs (2006, 451), innovation supports diversification and facilitates an organization's adaptation to a fluctuating market and technology environments which then helps the organization gain competitive advantage. In slightly other words, organizations need innovations to grow, adapt, and compete (Küng 2017, 127).

Research on creativity and innovation comprise a large part of this master's thesis theoretical background. The leading thought throughout this study is that media organizations need to be able to harvest the skills of their employees better and more efficiently, foster creativity enhancing atmosphere and, in this way, contribute to the development of innovations in newsrooms. In this study, creativity is seen as a socially constructed phenomenon which emerges in the interaction between team members. By definition, creativity is the production of novel and useful ideas. It is a combination of individual characteristics, cognitive abilities, and the social environment (Amabile 1983). Additionally, innovation is defined as the implementation of creative and novel ideas within an organization (Amabile et al. 1996, 1155). However, as Küng (2017, 111) notes, in the media business creativity and innovation can be hard to set apart from each other. Therefore, both phenomena are included in this research.

The other leg of this research's theoretical background draws from communication research, especially research on team communication as well as technology-mediated communication and work. To develop innovations, media organizations rely heavily on the skills of their employees (Mierzejewska & Hollifield 2006, 52). These employees, including reporters, photographers, videographers, graphic designers, coders and so on, find themselves working increasingly in teams and utilizing communication technology as primary means of communication between team members. It seems quite ironic, then, that as social media are accused of destroying traditional media's revenue models, social media tools have, in fact, created more opportunities for journalists to work together. Teams, where team members do not physically work together but rather communicate mainly via technology, are often labeled virtual teams or distributed teams (Connaughton 2015, 1). These types of teams are becoming more prevalent as organizations continue to adopt information and communication technologies that enable employees to communicate and work together despite temporal and/or spatial dispersion (Ellison, Gibbs & Weber 2015, 104). Furthermore, social media tools utilized in a work context are often referred to as enterprise social media (ESM) or online collaborative software (OCS) and include tools such as *Slack*, *Google Apps for Work*, *Yammer*, and *Facebook Workspace*. ESM tools have been found to increase knowledge sharing and reduce hierarchies (Gibbs, Eisenberg, Rozaidi & Gryaznova 2015), as well as

facilitate information dissemination and idea generation (Razmerita, Kirchner & Nabeth 2014; Turban, Bolloju & Liang 2011) – all important factors in creative work as well as innovation.

Merging the themes outlined above together brings us to the topic of this research: creativity and innovation in technology-mediated journalistic work. These topics, i.e. creativity, innovation, journalistic work, and technology-mediated work, have not been previously studied extensively in the same project. There is, however, already some knowledge on the creative process in virtual teams (see e.g. Nemiro 2001; Nemiro 2002; Gibson & Gibbs 2006; Alahuhta, Nordbäck, Sivunen & Surakka 2014) as well as technology-mediated journalistic work (see e.g. Bunce, Wright & Scott 2017; Hendrickson 2009). Combining these avenues of research in a single study seems to be a novel approach.

Thus, the objective of this research is to find out and describe how journalists working via technology in geographically distributed teams understand creativity and innovation. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 14 journalists from two different teams operating in a Finnish media organization. One team produces a feature-style weekend section for its customers while the other produces daily, “hard” news. Both teams utilize the group communication software *Slack* for chat-based communication and *Google Hangouts* for videoconferencing. Qualitative content analysis was utilized in the analysis of the interview data. An iterative analysis was applied, as it alternates between emergent readings of the data and the use of existing models and theories (Tracy 2013, 184). The results of this study, outlined further in the Findings section, can help produce new outlooks on creative work and innovation development in media organizations. The results could also possibly help media organizations and journalists improve their creative processes and in part help resolve the crisis of traditional media.

This master’s thesis will progress as follows: The next part will first give an overview of relevant research regarding creativity and especially creativity in media organizations. Then it will dive into the specifics of innovation and discuss the characteristics of media innovations. In the third part, a definition for distributed teams and more information on technology-mediated work is provided. This part is followed with a brief discussion on creative work in distributed teams. Part four outlines the study’s research question as well as data collection and analysis. The following section presents the results of the qualitative coding and section six discusses the findings further. Finally, the study is evaluated and avenues for future research are outlined.

2. Creativity and innovations in (journalistic) work

The next four sections will give an overview of relevant research related to creativity and innovations. First, we will take a look at creativity research in general, why understanding creativity is necessary and how creativity is defined. The second part will take you through creativity research in media organizations and discuss the specifics of researching creativity in the context of media. The third chapter is all about innovations, influential innovation scholars and the challenges the continuous need for innovation poses to organizations. And finally, the fourth chapter focuses on the specifics of media innovation, the problems plaguing its definitions and the ingredients of successful media innovation.

2.1 What is creativity and why do we need to understand it?

I will answer the questions posed in the title above in reverse order. First, let's look at why understanding creativity is essential and then dive into the various definitions and research made of the phenomena. Firstly, research has identified creativity as one of the main competitive resources modern organizations have (Küng 2017; Malmelin & Poutanen 2017; Banks, Calvey, Owen & Russell 2012). Thus, there is a need to discover how creativity functions in a workplace context. Understanding the processes behind creative work as well as identifying views and attitudes underlying creative action is key to helping organizations perform better. Secondly, understanding creativity is also highly important since many industries are changing at a rapid pace due to, for example, digitalization. In turbulent conditions, organizations need to be able to renew themselves and develop new ways of working in order to survive and thrive (Malmelin & Poutanen 2017, 133; Küng 2017, 127). Consequently, understanding creativity has become a rather essential question for organizations aspiring to succeed now and in the future.

The term "creativity" has been defined multiple times in the past one hundred years and those definitions differ whether the phenomenon is treated as a process or an outcome (Amabile 1983, 18-19) or as an individual feature or a team feature. Notable definitions include that of Amabile's (1983, 31) which states that "creativity can be regarded as the quality of products or responses judged to be creative by appropriate observers, and it can also be regarded as the process by which something so judged is produced." Sternberg and Lubart (1999, 3) define creativity as "the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e. original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e. useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)." However, the standard definition of creativity was developed in the 1950s when Stein (1953, as cited in Runco &

Jaeger 2012) defined creativity as “a novel work that is accepted as tenable or useful or satisfying by a group in some point in time” (p. 94). Runco and Jaeger (2012, 95) note that Stein was the first to offer the standard definition of creativity in an entirely unambiguous way, speaking specifically about creativity (and not, for example, genius or originality as previous writers had done). Runco and Jaeger argue that Stein is to this day still heavily quoted because his ideas of creativity have remained relevant. These include ideas about the usefulness aspect of creativity for a certain group and thus the need for social judgement as well as separating personal from historical creativity.

A large part of modern creativity research, however, draws from research made in the 1980s by Teresa Amabile and colleagues. In her influential book *The Social Psychology of Creativity* (1983) Amabile states that “a product or response will be judged as creative to the extent that (a) it is both novel and appropriate, useful, correct, or valuable response to the task at hand and (b) the task is heuristic rather than algorithmic.” She conceptualizes creativity as behavior resulting from personal characteristics, cognitive abilities, and one’s social environment. Additionally, Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby and Herron (1996) identify three components of creativity: creative thinking skills, industry knowledge/expertise and motivation. Firstly, creativity requires the skills to think “outside the box” and find alternative solutions to problems. Secondly, creativity necessitates expertise to work successfully in the field concerned. And finally, creativity is best utilized when an individual is motivated and appreciates the work they are doing. Amabile’s work reflects a socio-constructivist view of creativity where creativity is understood as a social process rather than an individual psychological phenomenon (Küng 2011, 47).

Amabile and colleagues’ definitions and conceptualizations are echoed throughout later creativity literature. Kampylis and Valtanen (2010) reviewed 42 explicit definitions and 120 collocations of creativity and found that researchers and theorists seem to have approached what could be termed an agreement in understanding creativity. The researchers discovered that most of the definitions and collocations share four key components. These components are (1) the understanding of creativity as a key ability of individuals, (2) an aspect of intentionality in creative action, (3) the influence context yields over the creative process (environment), and (4) the generation of tangible or intangible products that are novel (original, unconventional) and appropriate (valuable, useful) to some extent, at least for the creative individual. In their own commentary, Kampylis and Valtanen (2010, 204) also argue that ethical dimensions of creativity should be explicitly stated in its definitions. The pair wish for a “fourth era of conscientious creativity in which we all knowledgeable humans are

considered able and wise enough to create something ethical and constructive for all” (p. 209).

In addition to attempts at defining creativity, the phenomenon has naturally attracted wide interest from researchers in a variety of fields. Initially, creativity was thought of as an individual trait and most of research was keen to identify the aspects of the creative individual or a “creative genius”. This kind of research was often done in the area of psychology. Gradually, though, the attention shifted to small groups and teams, and in recent years, to the creative organization. The creativity of groups specifically has been looked at from two viewpoints: by analyzing the effects of group dynamics in relation to creativity and by looking at the group as a complex social structure. (Malmelin & Poutanen 2017, 81.) Blomberg, Kallio and Pohjanpää (2017) identify four main themes regarding research on creativity on the group level: 1) group diversity, 2) group management, 3) communication climate, and 4) creativity-enhancing techniques in groups. However, despite the researchers being able to identify these somewhat overarching themes in recent research, inquiries into the creativity of groups have yielded a lot of conflicting results. Some studies indicate that small groups are more productive in producing new ideas compared to individuals (see e.g. Kristensson & Norlander 2003) whereas others have shown individuals coming up with more relevant ideas than groups tasked with solving the same problem (for a detailed discussion, see Paulus & Nijstad 2003). Additionally, research has shown that too much criticism in a group is bad for trust among group members whereas too much like-mindedness can also lead to negative results. Ideally, then, groups should allow a multitude of opinions and voices to be heard but aim for vibrant discussions and critical thinking (Malmelin & Poutanen 2017, 89; Leeuwis & Aarts 2011).

Lately, research into the creativity of organizations has increased. Organizational creativity can be defined as “the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure, or process by individuals working together in a complex social system” (Woodman et al. 1993, 293). The concept of organizational creativity thus emphasizes aspects like organizational structures and procedures, leadership and the working environment, which support the creative actions of individuals (Lowe & Virta 2015, 104). According to Malmelin and Poutanen (2017, 93), more research should focus on the creative organization since creativity is still rather poorly understood in the context of work life.

Finally, not every researcher views creativity as fundamentally positive. Klausen (2010), for example, raises multiple questions about the definitions of creativity. He writes that a problematic feature of the definition of creativity is the fact that creative action must always

result is something successful and then goes on to argue that it should be possible to engage in a creative process that for one reason or another fails to produce something concrete in the end. In his commentary, Klausen points out what Malmelin and Poutanen (2017, 48) also note: creativity research is often concerned with measurable outcomes of creativity even if the phenomenon is in its core highly abstract. This creates specific problems in researching creativity in the media industry, which we will take a look at in the next section.

2.2 Creativity in media organizations and journalism

Creativity in media organizations and in the field of journalism is an undertheorized research subject. Malmelin (2015, 64—65) lists three main reasons why this is: First, creativity has been deemed an abstract (and a rather mystified) phenomenon which has been thought to be outside of the scope of scholarly research. Secondly, there are multiple different discourses when talking about creativity (see e.g. Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2011) which leads to the fact that the whole concept has become mundane and a cliché. And finally, Malmelin argues that the results of creativity research in the field of media and journalism studies haven't been particularly interesting or easy to adopt in practice. Researching creativity in media organizations and in journalism, however, is increasingly important since as Mierzejewska and Hollifield (2006, 52) and Küng (2017, 106) note, the quality of media products is mostly dependent on the knowledge, skills, and creativity of the people who design and produce them. Moreover, creativity and thus being able to produce original content that the audience can't consume anywhere else is an immense strategic advantage for media organizations (Nylund 2013, 208).

Research into creativity in journalism is varied in its approaches. Studies conducted in Finland have often taken place in organizations producing magazine journalism (Malmelin & Virta 2016; Malmelin & Virta 2017; Malmelin & Nivari-Lindström 2017; Nivari-Lindström 2014; Malmelin 2015) whereas research on creativity in news organizations is almost nonexistent (Nylund 2013; Hujanen 2013). Outside the Finnish context, creativity has been often looked at through different topical areas of journalism (e.g. climate reporting, hard news; Fulton & McIntyre 2013; Berglez 2011) entrepreneurial journalism (Casero-Ripollés, Izquierdo-Castillo & Domenez-Fabregat 2016; Hunter & Nel 2011; Nee 2013) and, curiously enough, students of journalism (Bjørnsen, Hovden & Ottosen 2007; Grenby, Kasinger, Patching & Pearson 2009; Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016).

Creativity has not been extensively studied in the context of Finnish media organizations. Moreover, there is especially a lack of research regarding creativity in the news media. Most of the Finnish research has been done in organizations producing magazine journalism. In this context, Malmelin and Virta (2016) looked at a development team tasked with the creation of a multi-platform media service and its content. The team studied was a part of a large international media organization which has multiple operations in Finland. Using diary entries as data, the researchers discovered that creating new things, practices, and processes inspired and motivated the journalists. This kind of action was considered an integral part of media work. However, multitasking and working on different jobs at the same time made it harder for the journalists participating in the project to concentrate on creative work. Thus, project management and organizing were considered extremely important in projects where the participants work on something creative alongside their regular jobs.

Again, making use of diary entries as data, Malmelin and Virta (2017) also studied how media organizations manage serendipitous events (i.e. surprising events that have positive outcomes). They argue that an organization is better off producing serendipitous events if its management consciously works to promote and support creativity and creativity-enhancing culture in the workplace. Team members need to feel safe and supported when seizing serendipitous events as these events are often uncertain and risky in nature. Finally, Malmelin and Nivari-Lindström (2017) researched journalists' implicit theories of creativity and compared them to existing academic theorizations of creativity utilizing survey data. The survey was sent to 330 magazine professionals and 76 answers were acquired. The results show that the implicit theories of creativity held by journalists were practical and multidimensional. For the professionals, producing novel ideas was not a daily activity. Instead, they focused on refining, elaborating and developing existing ideas. Additionally, some magazine professionals felt that the increased focus on the business side of journalism can restrict journalistic creativity. Overall, their results reflected the traditions of the journalistic profession as well as the challenges the industry is currently facing.

One of the few studies on creativity in Finnish news media organizations is Nylund's ethnography *Toward Creativity Management: Idea Generation and Newsroom Meetings* (2013) conducted in the Hufvudstadsbladet. Nylund observed the newsroom's morning meetings, internal social media, and handbook for editorial decisions. He also interviewed some of the managers and staff. His results showed that the ultimate news criterion was the appearance of a piece of news in another media outlet indicating that the journalists were more preoccupied with the things they thought they were supposed to be reporting rather than

generating new ideas. Nylund also observed that when a new idea was presented in a morning meeting, the two most common responses were silence or indicating that the subject had already been covered. However, the liveliest discussion about new ideas went on in the newsroom's electronic discussion board. Nylund does not reveal in his study what kind of discussion this was but argues that on the electronic discussion board it was possible for journalists to be critical without having to encounter the other person physically, i.e. there were significant differences in how conflict was handled in different forms of communication. In addition, the study also reports that usually ideas were generated outside the workplace setting and idea generation meetings lead by the editor-in-chief were not perceived to be productive.

Finally, there is one study that should not be left out even if it does not specifically study creativity per se. Hujanen (2013) studied the use of development dialogues in learning and changing journalism practice. In her longitudinal study, she worked with four newspaper journalists on a development task they had each come up for themselves. Applying cultural-history activity theory to her data, Hujanen concluded that better innovation practices should be sought by developing tools and organizational practices that foster dialogue and reflection. She emphasizes that in the light of recent research, news organizations need to develop innovation practices that take into account every individual's theoretical and practical knowledge. Additionally, she calls for practices that encourage journalists to engage in creative and democratic innovation.

In a study conducted in Australia, Fulton and McIntyre (2013) asked how print journalists interact with social, cultural and individual influences in the production of their work. They pose that the idea of creative freedom in journalism has been romanticized where, in fact, it is the structures of media and journalism which enable creative work. Their results indicate that in order to produce work that is creative, a journalist needs to understand the procedures, rules, techniques, practices, and processes of quality journalism. Moreover, journalists interviewed in the study agreed that a journalist can be creative and that, in fact, journalists need to be creative in order to hold the audience's interest to the end of the story.

In the case of entrepreneurial journalism, Casero-Ripollés et al. (2016, 294-295) found that journalism students often associate entrepreneurship with innovation and creativity. Creativity was the second most needed skill in entrepreneurial journalists whereas the most needed quality was deemed to be expertise in the use of digital technologies. Looking at these skills together, one can see that they are connected to the creative side of entrepreneurship and thus entrepreneurial journalism is directly associated with creativity and innovation. Additionally,

Hunter and Nel (2011, 18-19) list creativity and innovation as one of the top five competencies needed in entrepreneurial journalism (the remaining four being business skills, content creation, technical skills, and writing skills for different types of media). Moreover, Bjørnsen et al. (2007) discovered that creativity was a strong motivator for journalism students to choose journalism as a career and Grenby et al. (2009) found that teenage girls were more likely to perceive journalism as a creative career option compared to boys of the same age.

Finally, as with creativity in general, some researchers do not quite agree with the mass of scholars depicting creativity as a positive phenomenon in media organizations and journalism. Markham (2012, 190) argues that there is no reason to accept that creativity is a good thing and goes on to write that the word “creative” has become a rhetorical cover for job insecurity in the media industry. Additionally, Markham argues that while any innovation may be called creative, the extent to which they would be labeled so outside the professional domain of journalism is “moot.” He writes not wanting to compare an idealized version of creativity against a corporate one but rather point out that creativity means nothing more than what those working in the media or journalism say it means. In writing so, though, Markham inadvertently repeats one of the core definitions of a creative product: that it needs to be judged creative by the field to which it belongs (see e.g. Ford & Gioia 2000). In the next part, we will dive more deeply into the concept of innovation.

2.3 Innovations are the products of creativity

To thrive in their fields, modern organizations depend on innovations (Lowe & Virta 2015, 108). Achieving competitive advantage through innovation is possible since innovation supports diversification and eases the organization’s adaptation to the evolving market and technology environments (Gibson & Gibbs 2006, 451). Importantly, media organizations are in a desperate need of new ideas as their print revenues are dropping and advertisers are switching to mostly digital options. Essentially, innovations are the foundation for the success and growth of media organizations (Küng 2017, 127; Pavlik 2013, 183). In this part I will first offer a definition of innovation, go over some of the most influential ideas presented in innovation research, briefly cover organizational ambidexterity, and finally move on to the specifics of media innovation in the next part.

Most definitions of innovation include the aspects of creating something new and then transforming that idea into marketable objects such as new or improved products, services or

processes (see e.g. Fagerberg 2005; O’Sullivan & Dooley 2008; Baregheh et al. 2009; Rujirawanich et al. 2011). These definitions convey the idea that an innovation is the result of creative action. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of innovation developed in recent years is that of Crossan and Apaydin (2010). They define innovation as

production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets; development of new methods of production; and establishment of new management systems. It is both a process and an outcome. (p. 1155)

The definition does not take into account the diffusion of innovations since, according to the researchers, it is a process that takes place after innovation. It is important to note that Crossan and Apaydin’s definition does not require an innovation to be completely novel since it can also be adopted or assimilated from other fields if it adds some kind of value to the sphere it is introduced to. Additionally, an innovation can also be renewing or enlarging already existing products, services, etc. on the condition of providing value. This definition resonates with the perspective of this master’s thesis since it approaches innovation as a process that generates value for the organization and thus makes it more capable of competing against other organizations.

Historically, the concept of innovation was first coined by Joseph Schumpeter in 1934. Schumpeter was interested in long-term economic change and after some research stated that changes in the economy are fueled not by competition between companies but rather innovations and new technologies that give the companies new competitive advantages. Schumpeter created the term *creative destruction* which refers to the process in which the power balance on a field is destroyed and a new one is created. (Schumpeter 1934 as cited in Storsul & Krumsvik 2013, 15.) In Schumpeter’s footsteps, there have been many more researchers developing new ways to understand innovation. Possibly the most famous of them is Professor Clayton M. Christensen from Harvard University. Christensen (1997) is the father of the *disruptive innovation theory* which describes a process “by which a product or service initially takes root in simple applications at the bottom of a market—typically by being less expensive and more accessible—and then relentlessly moves upmarket, eventually displacing established competitors” (Christensen, Raynor & McDonald 2015, 4). In the media market, Netflix can be considered a disruptor. The company started out in 1997 at its core the business of sending DVD’s via mail to its customers. Over the years it chose to develop its web service aggressively and now it is one of the largest existing streaming services. (Christensen, Raynor & McDonald, 6-7.)

Both Schumpeter and Christensen view innovation as something a company spins out, something that they keep doing separately from the rest of the organization since it is fundamentally different from the day-to-day activities of the company. Professor Michael Tushman (1997), also from Harvard University, presents a compelling view against such thinking with his theory of *managing streams of innovation*. Tushman argues that successful companies remain able to compete over time by managing innovation streams: processes for incremental, architectural, and radical innovations. According to him, by managing continuous streams of different types of innovation, companies are able to enter new markets with their existing products and introduce substitute products that can create new markets and change industry sales. Tushman describes this process as juggling a set of balls which refers to the concept of organizational ambidexterity, i.e. an organization must do two fundamentally different things at once: it has to simultaneously maintain consistency in its day-to-day activities as well as create new offerings and respond to radical shifts in the business environment. (Tushman 1997, 14-17.)

In the context of the media industry, organizational ambidexterity is a useful concept to visit briefly. As stated before, media organizations are in a desperate need of new ideas if they are going to survive in the long run. Simultaneously, though, these organizations need to keep up with their daily news work which often makes creativity and innovation rather difficult (see e.g. Steensen 2009; Järventie-Thessleff, Moisander & Villi 2014). Ambidextrous organizations are able to balance these two different activities and combine exploitation (i.e. keep doing the work they are doing now) with exploration which means developing new products and services as well as responding to changes in their business environment (O'Reilly & Tushman 2013, 324). Virta and Malmelin (2017, 55) note that in planning for media innovation, it is important for media managers to anticipate the ambidextrous tensions rising during the innovation process and consciously focus on balancing them out. But what, then, is a media innovation? We will take a look at that in the next section.

2.4 The problematic nature of media innovations

In the media industry and especially in research, the definition of media innovation has been contested for a long while. There are multiple definitions, typologies, and conceptualizations about the term, as well as a whole research journal dedicated to specifically media innovations (*The Journal of Media Innovations*). In this part, I will briefly present the most substantive

definitions of media innovation, discuss the problems related to defining the concept, and finally, outline what constitutes a successful media innovation.

Following O'Sullivan and Dooley's (2008) general definition of innovation and an extensive literature review, García-Avilés, Carvajal-Prieto, Lara-González and Arias-Robles (2018) define media innovation as

the capacity to react to changes in both products, processes and services through the use of creative skills that allow a problem or need to be identified, and to solve it through a solution that results in the introduction of something new that adds value to the customers and to the media organization. (p. 3)

As with Crossan and Apaydin's (2010) definition of innovation in general, this definition of media innovation places its focus on generating value for the customer/audience as well as the media organization. Added value can be achieved through creative action which is aimed at identifying and solving specific problems related to changes in products, processes, and services. The definition is well in line with the leading thought in this master's thesis: innovation is the key to success in the media industry.

Storsul and Krumsvik (2013, 16-17) approach media innovation through a typology of four P's and an S. The four P's include product, process, position, and paradigmatic innovation. The final S refers to social innovation. Product innovation relates to changes in products and services offered by an organization whereas process innovation includes changes in ways in which those products and services are created and delivered to customers. Position innovation relates to changes in how products and services are framed within particular contexts and paradigmatic innovation takes the thinking to a new level: it refers to changes in the organization's mindset, values, and business model. Finally, social innovation is defined as innovation that meets society's needs and improves people's lives, e.g. using media services for social ends. Storsul and Krumsvik (2013, 14) argue that innovation does not need to limit itself to a product, technology or new content, but can base itself on a novel combination of previously existing ideas, processes, and resources.

Dogrueel (2014), on the other hand, approaches the concept from a slightly different angle. Looking at the characteristics of media innovations, she divided the key attributes into two categories: media innovations as research objects and media innovations as processes. According to her categorizations, media innovations have four characteristics as objects of research: (1) they have a continuous need for newness, (2) they are high-risk products and processes, (3) there's interaction between intangible (creative) and technological or organizational aspects of innovation, and (4) they overlap as both product as well as process

innovations. The characteristics of media innovations as processes include (1) the interconnection of the innovation and the diffusion/appropriation phase, (2) the long period of time they take to be developed, (3) their close interaction with established media, and (4) their contribution to social and economic change processes.

Media innovation has a problematic relationship especially with newness which can be seen in most attempts to define the phenomenon. So, what can be considered new or innovative in the media business where the key to success is being ahead of everyone else and “breaking the news”? According to Dogruel (2014), media innovations need to be distinguished from routinely produced media products. The focus should be on those new products or services that include “considerable changes with respect to design, functions and use modes” (p. 55). Moreover, most definitions of media innovation do not consider new content as an innovation in itself (Bleyen, Lindmark, Ranaivoson & Ballon 2014, 31). Westlund and Lewis (2014, 11) mark that content shouldn’t count as true media innovation since innovation should involve something more than the repetitive cycle of everyday news production. Instead, the pair suggests that a more integrative framework of media innovation should be considered, one which takes into account all aspects of the innovation process (journalists, their audience, and technology). Similarly, Trappel (2015, 14) argues that new ideas and solutions that do not solve relevant problems should not be called innovations but rather just change. What is interesting, though, is that the views of scholars and practitioners are somewhat out of alignment when talking about innovation and content. Evans (2018), researching innovation in public service radio in the United States, has developed the concept of storytelling innovation. In her research, she found a strong discourse for seeing innovation as novel means for storytelling. This kind of innovation combined product and process innovation frames in a unique way, i.e. stories could be viewed both as products or outputs of a media organization.

Studies looking at innovation processes in media organizations have often deemed change a hard thing to grasp, especially in traditional media. Ess (2014) writes rather curtly that the primary brakes on innovation are the media professionals from various backgrounds who have difficulty seeing and understanding each other’s point of views. The same thought comes up in Boyles’ (2016) research on intrapreneurial units in media organizations: organizational hierarchy often acts to constrain innovative work in newsrooms. Media professionals unwilling to cooperate with each other on innovation are inherently affected by the unspoken norms and rules of journalistic culture. They are bound together by production routines which are learned through professional socialization in journalistic workplaces. Newsrooms have tended to foster a decentralized organizational culture, and journalistic

culture, specifically, is branded by high levels of everyday autonomy and significant resistance to change (Deuze 2007, 163). Moreover, business operations and journalism have traditionally been separated in media organizations. As a result of this separation, journalists have generally thought of their journalistic work as public goods rather than marketable commodities (Willis 1988 as cited in Boyles 2016).

What, then, defines successful digital innovation in the media industry? How can companies like BuzzFeed, Vice and even The New York Times stay alive and thrive in the turbulent media business environment? Küng (2015, 106), looking at these exact companies and a handful of others, recognized a pattern underneath successful digital innovation. Her studies indicate that digital news companies that succeed all share a set of common elements which are (1) a clear vision, (2) a clear strategy to execute the vision, (3) strong leadership, (4) enough digital talent, (5) culture that sees digital as an opportunity and embraces technology, and (6) an organization that is able to innovate and adapt.

As we already discussed previously, innovation in the media and technology are inextricably linked. As an industry, media tends to define itself through content rather than technology even if it is quite intimately involved with tech – Küng (2011, 43), in fact, argues that it is a technology industry as much as it is a cultural one these days. The ascendancy of technology into media and journalism, however, has been causing various problems in the media industry as of late. Järventie-Thesleff, Moisander and Villi (2014, 134—135), for example, discovered that the management of two large media organizations in Finland had recognized the need and the challenges of going digital but were unsure of how to go about the change in practice. Furthermore, these organizations rather than coming up with new ideas and practices were repeating old models of behavior that had previously led to success. This kind of behavior is usually detrimental for a business as it stops renewing itself (Küng 2017, 96-97; see also Naldi & Picard 2012). Moreover, Steensen (2009, 833), researching innovation in online newsrooms, listed attitudes towards new technology as one of the five key factors predicting successful innovation (the other four being autonomy, work culture, management, and innovative individuals). Mastering technological change and becoming a forerunner in experimenting in it (i.e. innovative behavior with technology in mind), then, seems to be the answer to successful innovation in the media industry.

The past four sections have outlined the central findings of creativity research in organizations in general as well as in media organizations. We then took a look at innovation research, the challenges organizations face with ambidexterity and dove into the difficulties of defining media innovations. Finally, we constructed what makes media innovation successful and

arrived at the juncture of media and technology. From here we will continue to journalistic work, teams and creativity and innovation in the context of distributed teams and journalism.

3. Creativity, innovation and technology-mediated work

3.1 Distributed teams and technology-mediated work

Organizations are swiftly adopting new types of information and communication technologies (Ellison, Gibbs & Weber 2015, 104) which allow team members to communicate and work with each other despite geographical and/or temporal dispersion. In research, teams like these have multiple names, such as virtual teams, distributed teams, or dispersed teams. Each label focuses on a different aspect of the distribution of the team. The concept of *virtual team* places its focus on the technology connecting the employees to each other and can be defined as “a group of people who work interdependently with a shared purpose across space, time, and organization boundaries using technology” (Lipnack & Stamps 2000, 18).

Connaughton (2015, 2) notes that virtual teams are often defined by some degree of distribution of team members across temporal and geographical distance, with technology being the primary means of communication. However, the term virtual has been deemed somewhat problematic as it infers that such teams are not real or tangible (see e.g. Sivunen 2007, 24—25). The term distributed team, on the other hand, takes a more neutral approach to the subject. It does not specify how exactly the team is distributed, rather the dispersion has been constructed by utilizing different dimensions. Distributed teams can, thus, be dispersed regarding geographical location, temporality, culture, and organizational aspects. (Gibson & Gibbs, 453.) In this master’s thesis, I will be using the term distributed team as opposed to virtual team for the reasons outlined above.

The communication technologies connecting team members working in distributed teams also have multiple labels. Most used is possibly the concept of enterprise social media (ESM) which can be defined as “web-based platforms that allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organization; (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners; (3) post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and (4) view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organization at any time of their choosing.” (Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield 2013, 2.) ESM tools are very similar to the more generally oriented social media platforms, such as Facebook, in that they have profiles for users and users can articulate who they are connected to (Leonardi et al. 2013, 2-3, see also Treem & Leonardi 2012). However, access to ESM is often limited to an organization’s employees, which allows them to share information that could not be shared publicly (Ellison et al. 2015, 104).

Lighter versions of ESM tools are also being adopted. These tools are often referred to as Online Collaborative Software (OCS) (see e.g. Bunce, Wright & Scott 2017) and include chat-based tools such as *Slack* and video conferencing tools like *Google Hangouts*. These tools include some of the aspects that Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) outline in their definition of ESM but not all – hence, the term OCS. In this study, Slack and Google Hangouts are of special interest as the teams studied utilized both applications. More information on these applications is provided in the section on methods.

Researching enterprise social media and online collaborative software is important since research on ESM is relatively new, and studies have only recently started to accumulate (see e.g. Leonardi & Treem 2012; Leonardi et al. 2013; Ellison et al. 2015; Gibbs et al. 2015). Leonardi and Treem (2013) argue that studying ESM use can raise awareness and develop insights into employees' behavior, activities, organizational knowledge, information quality, and how they connect with each other. Furthermore, ESM use has not been extensively researched in the context of media organizations. This is especially true for Finnish media organizations. Additionally, the notion of studying creativity in ESM and OSC use is quite novel and warrants further investigation.

In addition to the gap in recent research, studying ESM and OCS use can help boost media organizations' innovation activities. Recent research indicates that even though social media are usually associated with leisure rather than work and are often seen as time wasters and productivity traps in a professional setting (Moqbel, Nevo & Kock 2013), ESM has potential to increase knowledge sharing and reduce hierarchies (Gibbs et al. 2015) as well as facilitate information dissemination and idea generation (Razmerita et al. 2014; Turban et al. 2011). In the next part, I will outline relevant research related to creative work conducted via technology and take a look at research on technology-mediated work in media organizations.

3.2 Technology-mediated creativity and innovation

Research on technology-mediated creativity and innovation has thus far been contradictory. Some researchers have found that face-to-face communication is more fruitful in terms of creative action compared to electronic communication methods (see e.g. Kristensson & Norlander 2003) whereas others have discovered that communication technology specifically has the ability to facilitate cooperation and innovation (Turban et al. 2011) as well as enable knowledge and idea sharing (Razmerita et al. 2014). Some have even argued that technology can, in fact, increase creative action by giving team members the ability to contemplate and

reflect on others' ideas – in cases like these, the “pressure to be creative” in the moment is lessened (Nemiro 2002, 76).

Nemiro (2002) divides the creative process of virtual teams into four stages: idea generation, development, finalization/closure, and evaluation. In her qualitative study, she found that idea generation was most often done face-to-face whereas the development phase where ideas were developed further was almost entirely done electronically. In some cases, evaluation was also accomplished in face-to-face situations. In her study, Nemiro also found that the network structure of the team had an effect on what level the team was creative. If team members communicated directly with others, creativity took mainly place on the team level. On the contrary, if team members mainly communicated with a supervisor and did not establish communication between other members, creativity took place on the individual level. Thus, Nemiro (2002, 80) suggests that teams that have face-to-face meetings or use technology that simulates face-to-face meetings are more likely to create on the team level. However, the context of Nemiro's research should not be forgotten: She compared technology-mediated, text-based communication to face-to-face interaction. Since 2002, technologies enabling video-conferencing have improved and it is also possible to build a lateral network structure using, for example, chat-based group communication software.

Going deeper into the creative process in teams, Gibson and Gibbs (2006) have theorized the effects of virtuality on team innovation processes. They distinguish between four different aspects of virtuality that can potentially hamper team innovation: geographic dispersion, electronic dependence, dynamic structure, and national diversity. Geographic dispersion can create obstacles for building trust between team members since members often have different backgrounds and contexts for their work. Electronic dependence, on the other hand, describes how much the team is dependent on technology in their daily interaction. The term is a continuum rather than an either/or situation, i.e. a team can depend largely on technology as a facilitator for interaction or only a minor part of team interaction can take place through technology and face-to-face meetings are preferred or anything between these two options. Dynamic structure refers to new members being added to the team and old ones leaving and the frequency of this action, which can also have an effect on trust. And finally, national diversity can also act as a barrier to innovative action as team members from different cultures might have different ways and ethics of working. Gibson and Gibbs (2006, 455) argue that these four aspects of virtuality and their effects on innovation can be turned into assets promoting creative action with the help of a psychologically safe communication climate. A

psychologically safe communication climate is defined here as an atmosphere within a team characterized by open, supportive communication, speaking up and risk taking.

Technology-mediated creative processes, or technology-mediated communication, in media organizations have not been extensively studied. One of the earlier works on the subject is Hendrickson's (2009) study on the women's online magazine Jezebel whose journalists communicated with each other through instant messaging (IM). In her study, Hendrickson discovered that IM increased lateral, egalitarian decision making at Jezebel. However, she also notes that the editor of the site continued to wield significant control over news processes and organizational culture. Furthermore, as Bunce, Wright and Scott (2017) note, it is unclear whether these kinds of results apply to ESM or OCS tools which are group communication tools rather than one on one messaging.

In one of the few studies interested in OCS use in media organizations, Bunce, Wright and Scott (2017) looked at a global news organization as it went through significant changes in its organizational processes as well as funding. One of these changes was the implementation of Slack as a communication tool between journalists located all over the world. Slack is a web-based group communication tool that utilizes channels and instant messaging. In their research, Bunce, Wright and Scott (2017) identified multiple positive effects Slack had on the team of journalists under study. Slack was seen to support extensive collaboration between geographically dispersed team members as well as mediate the relationship between the journalists and the manager. The application provided a permanent platform for storing information and sharing it with team members as well as new recruits. New additions to the team were able to use the platform as a place for "learning the ropes". The study also found that Slack created opportunities for managers to give public praise to their journalists and thus contribute to group culture and practice. Finally, the app was also perceived to be a form of surveillance and a source of stress by some of the journalists.

4. Data and method

In this chapter, the study's research questions are presented, a description of the studied teams and the technologies they use is provided and the data collection method is unpacked. The following parts provide information also on the analysis method and display examples of qualitative coding in this study.

4.1. Research goal and approach

This research is interested in how journalists working via technology in distributed teams understand creativity and innovation. The research focuses on the views and experiences of the studied journalists. Thus, the research question is as follows:

RQ: How do journalists working in distributed teams understand creative work and innovation?

The research question draws the attention to the thoughts, views, and experiences of individual journalists regarding creative work and innovation in the context of their own work as well as the team's shared understanding of the studied phenomena. The research goal, thus, warrants a hermeneutic approach to the topic of the research. A hermeneutic approach assumes that knowledge about an issue is culturally embedded, local to the interaction between the knower and known, between those understanding and that which is being understood. In this sense, cultural and social understanding is maintained and challenged in communication. (Boerboom 2017, 648-650.) Hence, this study approaches creativity and innovation as phenomena that are socially constructed. This view is also echoed throughout the study in the data collection, analysis, findings and in discussing the results.

4.2. Teams under study and the technologies they use

This study looks at two teams of journalists. Both teams are a part of a large Finnish media corporation that has operations in Southern and Central Finland. The corporation owns newspapers, online news sites, and radio stations. The two teams have two different purposes: one team produces a feature-style weekend section for its newspaper clients once a week and the other produces daily national news for print and online. The feature team consists of an editor, a graphic designer, and four journalists. The news team consists of an editor and seven journalists. In both teams, work is done in a geographically distributed setting as journalists are located in different parts of Finland. The degree of dispersion varies, though, since the

feature team is more centered in one office with only two members working remotely permanently and some members working from home sporadically, and in the news team members are spread throughout the country more evenly with a maximum of two team members in the same physical location.

Both teams utilize the group communication software Slack for chat-based communication and Google Hangouts for videoconferencing. Bunce, Wright and Scott (2017, 3382) describe Slack's architecture as echoing social media and the informal, collaborative norms of digital culture. The application's dashboard is organized around channels (chatrooms) which users can customize and name with a hashtag (e.g. #general, #random, #social, #humor). Inside these channels, users can text, tag each other, share links, documents and photos and so on. Reactions to Slack mirror the overall discussion about ESM in an organizational context: early adopters of the application have been enthusiastic about its ability to increase productivity, horizontal collaboration and organizational transparency (Owen 2015, Perkel 2017) while some believe it will impact productivity negatively (Jeffries 2016). In January 2019, Slack (the company) was valued at roughly \$7 billion (Clark 2019) and its clients in the field of media included BuzzFeed, Vox, Medium, The Atlantic, The Guardian, and Slate, to name a few.

Google Hangouts, on the other hand, is a video conferencing software provided by Google both in its G Suite, which offers Google applications for work purposes, as well as in its basic user package. Hangouts allows team members to communicate with each other via video, sound, and chat messages, and it can be incorporated into Slack as an integrated application. In January 2019, Google announced it would be retiring Hangouts come October and move on to Hangouts Chat and Hangouts Meet (Hollister 2019). Unsurprisingly, the new versions of Hangouts, integrated into the G Suite, operate a lot like Slack (Bohn 2017).

The two teams utilize these tools in different ways. The feature team has a videoconference two times a week: on Monday mornings to mainly hand out tasks and go over the next few weeks and on Thursday, to check up on the current week's stories. The news team, on the other hand, has a morning meeting via video every morning on weekdays. The meeting is led by the editor and everyone's current stories are discussed and future story ideas are brought to the table. In Slack, the feature team has created channels according to the journalists in the team and each channel is used to discuss the stories of a certain journalist. The team also uses a general channel for both work and non-work-related discussions. The news team has a slightly different way of organizing: they use one general channel for discussion among team members and several other channels to communicate with clients.

4.3. Data collection

The journalists interviewed in this study were recognized through the researcher's previous association with the organization under study. As this master's thesis is a part of the SOMEDIA research project in the Department of Language and Communication Studies at the University of Jyväskylä, the organization under study was contacted several months before the research could begin. Firstly, the team leaders were contacted via email and asked about their team's willingness to participate in the study. Both teams eventually agreed, the feature team straight away and the news team after some consideration. Several months passed between the first contact and the beginning of the research but the team leaders were "kept in the loop" as financing was secured for the larger research project.

As the project began, the team leaders were contacted again, and they were briefed on the schedule of the project. Then, individual journalists were approached via email. In the email, they were informed of the study and asked whether they could be interviewed or not. The email outlined the purposes of the study, research themes, the time it would take to complete the interview, a note about recording the interview and the storing of research data as well as suggestions for possible dates and times for the interview to be conducted. The interviewees were provided with as much information as possible early on so that they could make an informed decision whether to participate or not (see e.g. Ranta & Kuula-Luumi 2017, 415). After the first contact had been established and the date and time set, the research project's privacy policy was sent to the interviewees and they were asked to familiarize themselves with it. Each interviewee had to sign a consent form in keeping with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulations. Interviewees we met with personally signed the form at the beginning of the interview and those we contacted via technology were sent the form in advance and they mailed or emailed the copy back to the research team. There were also duplicate copies of the form: one to remain with the interviewee, one to remain with the project.

A total of 14 interviews were conducted between the start of October and the first week of November. The journalists located physically close to the researcher were interviewed first. This included five journalists in total. The rest were interviewed through technology by using Google Hangouts which is a videoconferencing tool the studied teams already used, and the interviewees were familiar with. One interview was conducted via telephone due to technological difficulties. Six of the interviewees were male and eight females. The age range was between 35 and 61 years, with experience in the field of journalism from five to 35 years. All interviewees had a higher education degree (examples of areas include journalism,

history, and business studies). The interviews ranged from 40 to 100 minutes in length and they were recorded and later transcribed to text by a research assistant and a company specializing in transcribing services.

Semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection method in this study. Interviews were chosen as an appropriate data collection method since the goal of this research is to determine how journalists working via technology understand creativity and innovation and interviews are valuable and handy for gathering information on the interviewees' views and experiences (Kvale 2007). In the heart of the research question is the focus on the views and understandings of individuals, i.e. trying to understand how they understand certain aspects of their work. This calls for a data collection method that allows the researcher to collect data where the subjects talk about the topic of the research (Alasuutari 2011, 83). Alasuutari (2011, 83) also notes that when trying to uncover individual views, data collection should be open, and the interviewees should not have to choose their answers from predetermined options.

Interview questions were developed based on relevant literature regarding the aims of the larger research project, which is why the guide also covers topics beyond the scope of this study. The guide (see Appendix I & II) covers five themes: work as a journalist, creativity in journalistic work, innovations in journalistic work, technology-mediated work, and boundary-management in journalistic work. This study draws from especially the second, third and fourth themes. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data collection method since they allow for flexibility in interviewing by giving the interviewer a chance to ask additional questions not mentioned in the interview guide. Additionally, allowing the interview to flow as it will also makes it possible for the interviewee to discuss aspects of the research topic she feels are important as well as provide additional information on certain aspects of the interview (Tracy 2013, 139).

The interview guide was tested once before the actual interviews and the practice interview was timed and deemed of appropriate length. However, the guide was used only as that – a guide. For example, after two actual research interviews, the guide was revised in relation to the questions pertaining to innovation and its relationship to creativity. The interviewees were having a hard time jumping from creativity to innovation without first defining innovation, so in the subsequent 12 interviews, the interviewees were asked to define innovation first and then move on to analyzing its relationship to creativity. Additionally, as the interviews went on, we began to anticipate the parts where most participants had difficulties in answering and made our questions clearer, or if they started talking about technology in the middle of the

section on creativity, we went along with them. We hoped to make the interview more like a conversation than just questions being rattled off in a rigid order (Pratt & Kim 2012, 19).

Before each interview, the interviewee was provided with background information on the research project (e.g. research interests, length of the project, data storing, anonymity) and asked permission to record the interview. In every interview, there were two interviewers present. One focused on interviewing and the other made notes by hand to ensure there was a record of the interview in case of technological difficulties. The first theme was designed to warm up the interviewees and it included grand-tour questions (Pratt & Kim 2012, 19) such as describing their typical workday. The second, third and fourth parts were centered around the themes of creativity, innovation, and technology-mediated work. The interviewees were asked to, for example, define both creativity and innovation, describe how they were creative in their everyday work and talk about how they went about their work using communication technology. We asked for many descriptions of how the interviewees work, how their team works and how certain things (e.g. communication climate) are visible in team communication. These kinds of questions help the researcher peer behind the institutionalized (abstract) speech of the interviewee and open up how the interviewee conceptualizes the research topic in her daily work context (Huttunen & Homanen 2017, 146).

Finally, in a qualitative study, where interviewees' statements from a private discussion setting may be published in public reports, precautions need to be taken to protect the interviewees' privacy (Kvale 2007, 30). All interviewees were thus promised anonymity to ensure that they would have the opportunity to speak in an open manner during the research interview. This also demanded attention to how data examples are used in the Findings section of this study. In the next section, a description of data analysis is provided.

4.4 Data analysis

In this research, I decided to utilize qualitative content analysis, and more specifically, thematic analysis, to sort through the data. Qualitative content analysis is a good fit to analyzing interview material since it is a systematic and flexible method, and with it, a researcher can try to understand the meaning of the qualitative material (Schreier 2012, 1, 5). I applied an iterative approach to the interview transcripts where the analysis alternates between emergent readings of the data and the use of existing models, explanations and theories (Tracy 2013, 184). So rather than basing the analysis solely on the data itself, I read through and analyzed the data in the light of the literature review provided in this study as

well as my personal interests and priorities. This approach is similar to what Sristava and Hopwood (2009, 77) describe when they write about iteration: it is not a mechanical task but rather a reflexive process where the researcher visits and revisits the data and connects them to emerging insights and refines her analysis.

I started by reading through of all interview transcripts which there are in total of 150 pages (the font being 8pt Verdana with a line-space of 1.0) and collecting the passages that were most important to the research question in this study. (Since data collection was done as a part of a larger research project, there is much more data available than what was used in this study. However, the passages chosen for this study were deemed relevant in relation to the research question presented in section 4.1.) This focusing resulted in 50 pages of interview material which I then coded with the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti. In the first round of coding, also termed primary-cycle coding (Tracy 2013, 189), I focused on “what” was present in the data and created descriptive codes to represent the content of the interviews. At this point, I also discussed my emerging analysis with another researcher working in the same project and reflected on my thoughts especially relating to the categories on creativity. Talking about data with others, rather than finishing the analysis and only then presenting the results, can aid in sensemaking and in considering a variety of interpretations (Tracy 2013, 188). Discussing my findings with a researcher who had been present for the data collection did, indeed, make my thoughts clearer.

On the first round of primary-cycle coding, I read through all the data and assigned descriptive codes to three different aspects of the data: creativity, innovation, and technology. First, I coded passages related to innovation and creativity. Once I had progressed about half-way through this initial phase, I realized I also needed to code what the interviewees were saying about the technology they used. I went back to the larger data, collected the relevant passages related to technology use and re-coded the first few interviews also in relation to technology after which I finished coding the rest of the data. Adjusting my analysis in the middle of it is a distinct part of qualitative research as it is quite natural for the analysis to develop as it progresses. In fact, it can be quite hard to predict where the analysis is going beforehand since qualitative research is, in its nature, a process (Kiviniemi 2010, 70). This adjusting of the coding can also be called the constant comparative method where the researcher compares data applicable to each code and actively modifies the definitions of codes to fit the emerging data. As an approach, the constant comparative method is circular, iterative and reflexive (Tracy 2013, 190).

After primary-cycle coding, I had formed a total of 51 descriptive codes of which 22 related to creativity, 17 to innovation and 12 to technology. Over 50 descriptive codes may sound like much, but I opted to fracture rather than lump my data in the initial phase. Fracturing is the process of splitting up your data into smaller pieces and assigning them to categories with narrower definitions whereas lumping means you create larger buckets with broader definitions. Both approaches have their advantages and utilizing one over the other is a matter of degree and personal style (Tracy 2013, 190; Richards 2015, 120). Those who first lump, usually later fracture and the other way around. In secondary-cycle coding, I ended up lumping together a large part of my categories as I realized many categories were actually describing two ends of a continuum (e.g. journalism is not creative/everything about journalism is creative). The lumping was done in order to form more analytical second-level categories from the primary codes.

After finishing primary-cycle coding, I printed out the whole data set. At that point, the data was organized according to the codes I had created. I then moved on to secondary-cycle coding in which the researcher critically examines her codes and begins to organize, synthesize and categorize them into interpretive codes (Tracy 2013, 194). I went through the data in sections, first tackling the codes related to innovation, then creativity and finally technology. I underlined relevant passages, made copious notes in the margins of the printed papers and utilized Post-it notes as a place to outline the commonalities I found in the data. I also had a notebook at hand where I could “dump my brain” as I read and re-read the data. After each section, I stopped to ponder over what I had found, read through my notes and developed a synthesis of my findings. In these moments, I developed the typologies presented in the Findings section. These include the typology of practice-oriented media innovation, how journalists conceptualize creativity in distributed teams and ways journalists working in distributed teams talk of technology.

In secondary-cycle coding, I utilized axial coding which is the process of reassembling data after they've been fractured (Strauss & Corbin 1998 as cited in Tracy 2013, 195). Tracy (2013, 195) relates this process to hierarchical codes where the researcher systematically groups together various codes under a hierarchical “umbrella” category that makes conceptual sense. Usually, in qualitative coding, this process is repeated until every bit of data fit neatly into a category. However, this practice has a tendency to “flatten” data and separate the researcher from the multiplicity and contextuality of her data (Salo 2015, 178). Additionally, Jackson and Mazzei (2012, 12) write that coding takes the researcher back to what is known not only from the participants' point of views but also from the researcher's perspective. It

does not allow the researcher to ponder over her data from multiple viewpoints which hampers the production of new knowledge. And the production of new knowledge and fresh insights is, after all, what research is about (Ruusuvuori et al. 2010, 16).

Forcing data into neat categories is a notion that bothered me even before I decided to use qualitative content analysis on the data and, also why I also decided to implement some countermeasures in order to at least somewhat preserve the complexity and contextual nature of the research interviews. In both cycles of coding, I decided to actively seek out deviant data, i.e. data that does not seem to quite fit the emerging analysis (Tracy 2013, 196) and question if I needed to change my emerging analysis framework somehow or if I should treat this bit of data separately and figure out what it means to the rest of the data. In addition to playing devil's advocate for myself, I also utilized parts of Jackson and Mazzei's (2012; also Salo 2015) method of thinking with theory. In thinking with theory, the researcher "plugs in" a theory she is using and reads her data over and over from different viewpoints in order to gain a new understanding of the phenomenon she is researching. In most cases, the theory utilized in these kinds of readings is a philosophical theory, for example, from Derrida or Foucault. In my project, I did not jump fully into the concept of "plugging in" but rather kept in mind the previous research and the views it offered in relation to my data. With these measures, I hoped to preserve the inherently complex nature of my data and provide a rich description of what the phenomena of creativity and innovation entail in a journalistic context.

Finally, I will present here a short description of how coding progressed and discuss the language choice in this study. Below is an excerpt of data where a journalist from the feature team is discussing her view on how innovation is defined. This is a short excerpt from a longer passage. The interviewee describes innovation as follows:

I probably think of innovation as something forming from long thought processes, something that is huge. I think of innovation like its something big, when it can also be... But I'm not a tech savvy person at all, but I put innovation and technology in the same category partly. [H2]

In this example, the interviewee is describing how she understands innovation as something big that develops over time, "forming from long thought processes", but also starting a thought (though not finishing it) where she articulates innovation could be something smaller too. The first part of the excerpt, then, is coded as *innovation as process*. In the latter part, she briefly mentions how she ties technology and innovation together. This frame is echoed in the rest of the interview with her (and others) and gets the code *innovation as technology*. She continues to talk about her understanding of innovation:

So, I think that in a way creativity and innovation go hand in hand, the process, it's kind of a 'heureka' moment all the time. It's like noticing and understanding that you have come up with something like 'ah, right, yeah'... [H2]

In this example, the interviewee first links innovation and creativity together, as if they are different parts of the same process and then goes on to describe how innovation is kind of a Heureka moment as one realizes that one has actually come up with something new. In sum, she seems to think that a journalist can be creative and innovative but the value of creating something comes from the realization that there is something new and valuable here. The first part of the excerpt, "creativity and innovation go hand in hand, the process", gets the *innovation as process* -code. The latter part, where she talks about Heureka moments and realizing your innovative behavior get coded *innovation as invention*. In secondary-cycle coding, the quotations coded *innovation as invention* are moved under the conceptual category of *innovation as practice* along with other codes described more in-depth in the next section. The *innovation as process* and *innovation as technology* -codes are treated as their own categories, but their contents are further fractured in the analysis. The next section will present the results of the qualitative content analysis.

Finally, it should be noted that data collection and analysis in this study were done in Finnish even though data excerpts are presented here and in the following section in English. The initial language choice was hard (data was available in Finnish, other materials in English) but English was preferred because of the study's relation to the larger research project. In translating the excerpts, however, I aimed at preserving as much of the interviewees' personal style of talking as I could. Thus, many of the sentences in the excerpts are incomplete or grammatically incorrect as well as missing proper punctuation. I aspired to treat my interviewees and their quotations respectfully which meant paying attention to even the smallest details in the translation process. After all, the decisions a researcher makes during transcribing and translating affect how a reader sees the interviewees and makes sense of their talk (Nikander 2010).

5. Findings

In this section, the results of the qualitative content analysis are presented in the following order: First, we will go through analysis results related to creativity, then innovation and finally, technology. Each section provides a typology of how journalists in the sample understand the phenomenon. Based on the analysis of interview materials, the following three typologies were developed: three ways to understand journalistic creativity, a typology of practice-oriented media innovation, and meanings given to technology and its role in a distributed team of journalists. Table 1 summarizes the main level categories and subcategories developed in the analysis and presents data examples of each theme.

5.1. Three ways to understand journalistic creativity

The qualitative content analysis resulted in three distinct ways of understanding journalistic creativity. The journalists in this study had a practical way of talking about creativity and often they discussed the phenomenon specifically in relation to their daily work. This was also a conscious choice in the data collection phase as the journalists were asked to, for example, describe how creativity was a part of their work day and in what kind of situations they felt they were doing creative work. The three ways of understanding journalistic creativity are:

- a. creativity as action,
- b. attributes given to creativity, and
- c. creativity and the social environment

Each aspect of the typology is discussed with data examples in the following three sections.

5.1.1 *Journalistic creativity as action*

The *creativity as action* -category includes all parts of the journalistic production process. The journalists interviewed in this study found creativity in idea generation, idea development, finding sources, writing, editing, and developing visuals for stories. This finding illustrates the fact that journalism is fundamentally creative and creating journalistic products cannot be done without some type of creative action (see Küng 2017, 106; Fulton & McIntyre 2013). Idea generation and idea development were the parts of the production process that most journalists in the sample described as creative. The following examples also illustrate the tendency the journalists had as describing idea generation and development as the most creative

Themes	Main-level categories	Subcategories	Data examples
Creativity	Action	Idea generation	[Creativity is] Of course, in its most practical form, that we have to come up with story ideas. -- We need to have stories that are something else than straight up news like 'this happened today and we'll tell it again tomorrow'. [H1]
		Idea development	It [creativity] is visible in most parts of the work process, like when you are generating story ideas, you need creativity to do that, finding angles, developing angles. [H6]
		Finding sources	I try to use my creativity to find people, those people I need to get a comment from and I'll try to think where they could be and then hunt them down there, -- or where they could be going and like that. [H8]
		Writing and editing	Creativity is also about the ability to write things in an interesting way. [To be able to] package it in a way that it fits the reader. [H3] Also my work includes a lot like finishing up touches on stories since we have quite the heavy editing process compared to a regular newspaper – And all that, headings, lead paragraphs, how you give the story out to the reader, thinking about that is something I use quite a lot of time on. [H1]
		Visuals	Our visual are controlled by a graphic designer and well I'm not an expert in them... She chooses what pictures to use but also asks if we can use this and that and so on. [H1]
	Attribute	Boundaries	I think creativity needs to flow without boundaries so you can get the best stuff, the best stuff is often quite crazy, like grownups don't do that stuff [laughs], but we do it anyway. It's kinda like playing. [H4] Often the topic of the story can come from someone else, your boss tells you to do it or something, so you don't have that much control over it. If I start work on that topic then it's kind of regulated [what you can do], I make calls, get information, and well, we write news and news are done with a certain format. Of course you can use some of your creativity when you write but mostly its just routine. [H13]
		Problem solving	I see creativity in my work as the ability to solve problems. Like we have a new kind of or an old kind of situation to which we need to develop a solution that fixes it in the best possible way and that solution takes into account all the things related to the production processes of the [news team], all its journalists, my life or all our client papers and their needs which might sometimes even be conflicting. [H11]
		Fresh angles and new design strategies	I think creativity is the ability to produce something new and surprising, something fresh – Maybe it is the ability to approach things from a new angle, yeah let's say that. [H9]
	Social environment	Individual	It [creativity] can be seen in that we come up with our story ideas. Rarely comes a situation where we get the topic from someone else. Tomorrow is Tax Day so that's an exception where I have a topic I know I'll be covering and it wasn't my own idea, but normally all our topics come from ourselves, at least 80-90 percent of them. [H10]
		Team	In Slack you can see that even if it is text-based communication, good discussions can form there and they can boost others' creativity and those [discussions] are often quite humorous but they create that 'hey, we could actually report on that and use that' and... everyone can share their experiences and then the team kind of feeds on that. [H6]
Physical/virtual		I think it [communication technology] supports it [creativity] but it is of course easier face-to-face in that four-member crew of ours that's in this office, of course it is easier to generate ideas face-to-face and in lunch conversations and so on, but those things are also possible for our remote workers through Slack. [H5]	
Innovation	Content	Stories as innovations	If we think about clever journalistic stories, then generally speaking they are not innovations, I think. [H1] Well not how in general language and in the public sphere, but they [journalistic stories] are innovations in the [news] ecosystem. [H11]
		New angles	[In the story] I felt that I kind of covered a topic that had already been covered through and through but I managed to find a lot of new angles and then the visual just were on point. [H6]

		New ways to tell a story	Innovation can be -- journalistic concepts or a certain way of doing something, a different way of doing something visually and making an interview with someone. Like that. If it works well and it's new and no one has done it before then it can be innovation. [H4]
	Practices	Invention	Innovation, it is a new invention I guess, new invention can be a new way to work, for example in work, well, what that would be, it is hard to say -- Innovation, I would say, is an invention. [H10]
		Borrowing	[Our outlet] was one of the firsts to implement a paywall, and that was not our idea but we took it and developed it further like we put more local stuff behind the wall and experimented with different payment systems and stuff like that, it's kind of like coming up with small developments to existing innovations, we don't invent them ourselves. [H1]
		Organizing	I would say that maybe [the news team] is in itself an innovation, it is doing things in new ways, or I think we journalists are supposed to do this kind of basic news reporting, but the composition of the team might be an innovation. [H9]
	Process	Innovation is the product of creativity	Of course they are related in that those innovations can't form if you don't have creativity. You need to see things differently or invent something. [H13] Innovation sounds to me like it is concrete creativity in some way like from creativity an innovation can be born, it is more like the outcome of a process this innovation when creativity is much more abstract. When you add hard work to a creative idea then an innovation can pop up as a result. [H12]
	Technology	Innovation as related to technology	Innovation is this way of doing something that you can copy multiple times. Innovation can be technology or it can be some simple way of doing things. [H7]
Technology making work easier		Let's say, well, this Slack we use, it has been an innovation at some point, a new way of working, and if we didn't have it we wouldn't be able to work together. It is creating new platforms for work whether it is technology... well, in this case it is technology. [H8]	
Technology	Journalistic teamwork	Facilitates communication	With this modern equipment you can just throw your thoughts into the chat like I've thought of this and this and this... [H1] I don't know how it enables creative work but it simply allows us to communicate. [H14]
		Information sharing	Sometimes you can use the team to help you find the right people if you are not sure where to start looking for them or who to ask certain stuff, you can ask in Slack like 'hey, who should I talk to' or in the morning meeting you can ask how to approach the topic. [H10]
		Idea development	The way I see it is that when you have multiple people throwing around thoughts and ideas about a certain topic, that is what I think creativity is, when a lot of people put their heads together and throw around their thoughts about a topic and how to approach it and who to talk to and interview and where to get information. [H8]
	Distraction/uncertainty	Disruption	I don't think it is a distraction but it can make it hard to concentrate. You could always turn the notifications off and that might be wise to do -- but when you get a Slack message or an email, then you pay attention to it. [H14]
		Uncertainty	Text-based communication can more easily create schisms [in the team] and build on [misunderstandings], you can see it because some people write long messages and some short and some don't really think about what they write. [H11]
	Team existence/sense of belonging	Prerequisite for team existence	Well, it is important in a way that if we didn't have communication technology then we wouldn't be able to work like this. We'd need to be in the same place because otherwise we wouldn't be able to communicate with each other. [H14]
Creates a sense of belonging		I don't know if it affects creative work but of course when we work remotely it does have meaning when it comes to creating a sense of belonging like every morning, we say good morning in Slack and say goodbye when we leave for the night. [H13]	

Table 1. Summary of analysis results.

parts of the production process even when they thought other parts could be creative too.

[Creativity is] Of course, in its most practical form, that we have to come up with story ideas. -- We need to have stories that are something else than straight up news like 'this happened today and we'll tell it again tomorrow'. We need to have something else too, weird angles and so on. -- That's the obvious part of creativity. [H1]

It [creativity] is visible in most parts of the work process, like when you are generating story ideas, you need creativity to do that, finding angles, developing angles. [H6]

So, I think idea generation is the most creative part. It's also creative when you build on an idea but the idea is the base for everything. Sometimes there are no ideas or they're no good and then you just need to do something [else]. [H4]

In relation to idea generation and idea development, the journalists often described finding and coming up with ideas as an individual activity whereas idea development took place more often on the team level. We will return to this point when discussing creativity and the social environment. With idea generation and development, there were not many differences between the two teams in how the journalists talked. However, when talking about finding sources to stories more distinct differences can be observed. In the news team, multiple journalists thought finding relevant interviewees and commentators to news stories was a vital part of creativity and creativity had to be used in order to avoid the solution that is most obvious regarding a story on a certain topic. Especially journalists who had to report on political issues felt that finding new people to interview was important.

I think it [creativity] can be seen in, like, idea generation, in that of course, and also in finding sources that are proper news sources. [H3]

I try to use my creativity to find people, those people I need to get a comment from and I'll try to think where they could be and then hunt them down there, -- or where they could be going and like that. [H8]

It [creativity] can be seen in how you choose your sources, like we don't get any instructions from our superiors to interview this and this, if you can't figure out who to interview then you can use the team to help you find people -- [H10]

Surprisingly, writing as a creative activity did not come up in all interviews and additionally, the news team journalists brought it up more often than the feature team. However, those journalists that talked of writing as a creative outlet emphasized its effect on how much they enjoyed their work and how creative writing in a journalistic sense is meant to serve the audience. In the following examples, journalists talk about writing, style, and word choices as manifestations of creativity in their own work.

Creativity is also about the ability to write things in an interesting way. [To be able to] package it in a way that it fits the reader. [H3]

Creativity is everywhere but I want to emphasize that for me creativity can even be about word choices, like that manifestation of creativity, and I think it is always possible to write text that is not creative or make choices that are kinda basic where you can't see creativity that much. [H5]

Then there's the writing phase. How I make style choices, do I want to bring something from the atmosphere of the swamp to the story, what causes that, and then the producer and our editor will be exasperated when I'm trying to be a novelist or a poet instead of a journalist [laughs]. [H7]

Maybe it's [creativity] in the, like, you can somewhat choose how you write, where you get information, how you do things – [H13]

Another manifestation of creativity on the text level relates to editing. In both teams, all journalists read through others' stories and commented on as well as corrected them. In the feature team, especially, headings and first sentences went through meticulous editing processes.

Also my work includes a lot like finishing up touches on stories since we have quite the heavy editing process compared to a regular newspaper – And all that, headings, lead paragraphs, how you give the story out to the reader, thinking about that is something I use quite a lot of time on. [H1]

Finally, a part of the journalists also found creativity in choosing and making the visuals of a story. It seemed to be related to individual preference, whether the journalist enjoyed working more on her own or with a strong partner with expertise in visuals (e.g. photographer, graphic designer). In some cases, a strong partner was seen as making creative action more difficult whereas in other situations a knowledgeable partner was seen to boost the journalist's creativity.

How is creativity visible in my work? I think it is in that I generate ideas and I'm free to execute them as I want and think about who to talk to and *where to get the visuals* and how to write the story. [H14, emphasis added.]

Our visuals are controlled by a graphic designer and well I'm not an expert in them... She chooses what pictures to use but also asks if we can use this and that and so on. [H1]

These findings wrap up the category of *creativity as action*. Next, we will move on to *attributes given to creativity*.

5.1.2 Attributes given to creativity by journalists

If the previous category was very practice-oriented, this second category is more abstract in nature. The category includes all the different labels journalists put on creativity as they discussed it. These labels include *boundaries*, *problem-solving*, *fresh angles*, and *new design strategies*. The boundaries -category describes how journalists conceptualized creativity as a continuum where the other end is a place where a journalist can quite freely be creative without any boundaries and in the other end there are a set of boundaries restricting creative action. A part of the journalists described their work as fundamentally creative, as in every

aspect of their work contained something creative and they were free to act on their creative impulses. This kind of thinking manifested in their talk when they described creativity as playfulness, excitement, or daring. In the other end of the continuum, journalists described their work being controlled by the norms of journalism which were seen to set limits to the creativity of individual journalists. Additionally, in this end, journalists felt they could not be creative in the artistic sense but rather their creativity had to be meaningful to their audience. Similar results were found in a study looking at Australian journalists and their understandings of creativity as a part of their work (Fulton & McIntyre 2013). The following examples illustrate these attitudes and depending on the situation, one journalist can be placed on a variety of points on this continuum (see excerpts from H2). The first two examples illustrate the freedom end and the latter two the restrictive end.

And as a writer you have the guts to say... to write your craziest thoughts. Kind of like being off-center... yeah. I think creativity is related to excitement. You let yourself get excited and go on with the flow and like... [H2]

I think creativity needs to flow without boundaries so you can get the best stuff, the best stuff is often quite crazy, like grownups don't do that stuff [laughs], but we do it anyway. It's kinda like playing. [H4]

Often the topic of the story can come from someone else, your boss tells you to do it or something, so you don't have that much control over it. If I start work on that topic then it's kind of regulated [what you can do], I make calls, get information, and well, we write news and news are done with a certain format. Of course you can use some of your creativity when you write but mostly its just routine. [H13]

On some level journalists can feel like they are artists but then you have to realize that the story is not a picture of you but rather meant for the audience to understand. In this profession it is important that the creativity does not take away readability. [H2]

Another frame associated with creativity was that of problem-solving. Especially the team leaders, but also some of the journalists, described their creativity manifesting as the ability to solve practical issues that arise in the daily work. This practical approach is also employed in Amabile's (1983) definition of creativity as the ability to solve problems. With the managers, the challenges were often related to management issues whereas with journalists often dealt with writing or finding interviewees. In the following examples, creativity is conceptualized as problem-solving both on the managerial level and the employee level.

I see creativity in my work as the ability to solve problems. Like we have a new kind of or an old kind of situation to which we need to develop a solution that fixes it in the best possible way and that solution takes into account all the things related to the production processes of the [news team], all its journalists, my life or all our client papers and their needs which might sometimes even be conflicting. [H11]

Maybe it is kinda like going beyond patterns and routines like when you hit a wall you will be able to find new ways to go forward. [H13]

The two final categories, *fresh angles* and *new design strategies*, merge together in the journalists' talk of creativity in journalism. All journalists described creativity as the journalist's ability to find a new angle on a topic or the journalist's ability to present information in a new, interesting way. Essentially these two are different ways of conceptualizing creativity in journalism as they relate to different parts of the journalistic process: finding a new angle on a topic is related to idea generation/development whereas presenting information in a new and engaging way relates to the journalistic process and its output (story). In the interviews, however, journalists often talked of these practices in connection with each other. An example of this was provided by one of the news team journalists who covered a story on carbon sinks. She decided to tackle the somewhat difficult topic with the Q&A format which she thought presented the information more clearly to the reader than a regular story would have done. She also described how she covers a lot of issues related to global warming and how she tries to find ways to provide the reader with complex information from interesting viewpoints. The next few examples also illustrate how journalists understand creativity as finding new angles and new ways to bring the story to the readers.

I think creativity is the ability to produce something new and surprising, something fresh – Maybe it is the ability to approach things from a new angle, yeah let's say that. [H9]

I think it [creativity] is the ability to create or produce something new, now we're again talking about story topics but anyway [it is] something new which has not been covered before or then it can be the ability to develop a story idea which has already been covered but you can bring something new, a new angle, to it. [H12]

A similar way to describe innovation rather than creativity as new ways to tell a story and finding new angles to topics manifests in the typology of practice-oriented media innovation regarding content. These similarities are discussed and problematized further in the Discussion section of this study. Finally, these findings wrap up the category of *attributes given to creativity*. Next, we will move on to creativity and the social environment.

5.1.3 Journalistic creativity and the social environment

Throughout the data, the interviewees talk a lot about the influence of the team on their creativity. In both teams, other team members are perceived as a strength in regard to creative action. Journalists talk about bouncing ideas between team members, asking for tips on interview questions, and helping others find relevant sources. All in all, other members are perceived as boosters of creative action. In this category, journalists often talk of idea development as a team activity, whereas idea generation takes place on the individual level. In

the following excerpts, the journalists describe creativity, and more specifically, idea development, as a team activity.

In Slack you can see that even if it is text-based communication, good discussions can form there and they can boost others' creativity and those [discussions] are often quite humorous but they create that 'hey, we could actually report on that and use that' and... everyone can share their experiences and then the team kind of feeds on that. [H6]

Often it is actually in those team meetings where the creativity is at its most creative because there someone catches something from someone's sentence and has an idea and then we develop it further. And that must be it, ideas just start to form there among the team. [H14]

Creativity was also described as an individual activity when it came to idea generation. There was a distinct discourse when the journalists talked of forming ideas as individual action whereas idea development was more often done with team members. These findings are in line with what Nemiro (2002) described in her research on creativity in virtual teams: ideas are produced individually and developed in the team. In the following examples, journalists describe coming up with new ideas by themselves.

It [creativity] can be seen in that we come up with our story ideas. Rarely comes a situation where we get the topic from someone else. Tomorrow is Tax Day so that's an exception where I have a topic I know I'll be covering and it wasn't my own idea, but normally all our topics come from ourselves, at least 80-90 percent of them. [H10]

If we're talking about [the news team], then here the whole production process is based on the fact that journalists produce stories from their own ideas and topics, in here we don't have, we don't do news based on an agenda like today we have to do this and this and this. In this team, it is a given that the topics we cover come from us journalists and they are then developed further among the crew. [H12]

Furthermore, it doesn't seem to matter where the teams' creative action takes place whether it is on Slack or in the breakroom at the office. In the feature team, where the degree of geographical dispersion was smaller, the journalists reported often discussing ideas during coffee breaks or at lunch. In the news team, where the degree of dispersion was much higher, the same kind of conversations took place through technology. In the next examples, two members of the feature team describe how being in the same physical location is better for creativity.

I think it [communication technology] supports it [creativity] but it is of course easier face-to-face in that four-member crew of ours that's in this office, of course it is easier to generate ideas face-to-face and in lunch conversations and so on, but those things are also possible for our remote workers through Slack. [H5]

It is definitely a strength that people are here physically -- of course it [creativity] is at its most productive when we are physically in the same location. Then the [journalistic] process can feel fair to everyone when we're physically in the same place. [H2]

These findings wrap up the category of creativity and the social environment as well as the three ways of understanding journalistic creativity. The next section tackles the topic of innovation.

5.2 A typology of practice-oriented media innovation

Based on the views of the journalists in the sample, it was possible to develop a typology for practice-oriented media innovation. This typology describes how journalists understand media innovation in their daily work in a very “hands-on” way rather than looking at media innovation from the organization’s or the media field’s point of view. In other words, the typology is situated at the practical (micro) level of media innovation. Journalists in this study understand media innovation as

- a. content
- b. practices
- c. process
- d. technology

In the following four sections, each aspect of the typology is unpacked, and data examples are provided. A deeper discussion related specifically to the content level is provided in section 6.1.

5.2.1 Media innovation as innovative content

In the research interviews, journalists often discussed innovation through *innovative content*. Content was approached by discussing *whether a journalistic story is an innovation, finding new angles to a topic* and *finding new ways to tell a story*. In regard to whether a journalistic story (a piece of news, a feature story) is an innovation, there were two kinds of opinions: Most journalists in the sample decided that a story is not an innovation. However, there were also journalists who came to the conclusion that a story can be an innovation, specifically in the media ecosystem. Additionally, the journalists who thought that a simple story is not an innovation clarified that while text cannot be innovative, other parts of the story, like visuals or layout, can be considered innovative. (Note that in the creative content category, text was considered creative but here cannot be categorized as innovative.) These opinions form a type of continuum, again, where on the other end journalists conceptualize a story as innovation

and in the other, they don't. In the following examples, we hear from the journalists who do not think a story in itself is an innovation.

If we think about journalistic work, then I wouldn't at least very easily call a text an innovation. [H5]

If we think about clever journalistic stories, then generally speaking they are not innovations, I think. [H1]

A news story as an innovation sounds a bit like... it's not like... it is not innovation the way I see it. It is not so sharp, or so fully developed. [H2]

Opposite to these opinions, there were journalists who did count stories as innovations. They often linked their views to the context in which the stories were born which is that of the news ecosystem. In the news ecosystem, stories are the products of creative work and thus they can be regarded as innovations.

Well not how in general language and in the public sphere, but they [journalistic stories] are innovations in the [news] ecosystem. [H11]

We need to produce material every day so sure in this sense, our superiors and employer in general and everyone expects [us to innovate] so that process creates innovations which are stories in the paper -- every day. [H12]

Additionally, regarding innovative content, the journalists thought that finding *new ways to tell a story*, whether it is a print layout or a new way to take photographs or finding *a new angle to a topic* can be considered innovation. This relates to the category on creativity where a similar pattern was noticeable: journalists reported that finding new angles and new design strategies can be considered creative. Defining both creative content and innovative content in the same way can be indicative of the journalists' limited understanding of the theoretical differences between the concepts of innovation and creativity. Moreover, as Küng (2017, 111) notes, there is a fine line between innovation and creativity in the field of media and it can be hard to separate one from the other. It should be noted, though, that in this case journalistic products, i.e. stories, can also be regarded as products the media organizations produce, and developments/improvements in them can be considered innovative. Here, then, the journalists combine Storsul and Krumsvik's (2013) product and process innovation frames even if they don't categorize single stories as media innovations. Similar results were reported by Evans (2018) when she researched media innovation in US public radio stations. Evans named this combination of product and process innovation frames as storytelling innovation. In the following excerpts, journalists give examples of content that they label as innovative.

Innovation can be -- journalistic concepts or a certain way of doing something, a different way of doing something visually and making an interview with someone. Like that. If it works well and it's new and no one has done it before then it can be innovation. [H4]

Last summer we had this series of stories. It was a new way to interview experts and bring that type of interesting stories which don't have hard news in them to the news pages. [H9]

In sum, the innovative content category holds expressions related to the nature of a journalistic story as innovation (i.e. a story is an innovation/a story is not an innovation) as well as new angles as innovations, and new ways to tell a story as innovation. Next, we will move on to media innovation as practices.

5.2.2 *Media innovation as practices*

The journalists also conceptualized media innovation through the practices they use to develop media innovations in their daily work. These practices include *inventing*, *borrowing*, and *organizing*. In the *inventing* subcategory, journalists talked of media innovation as invention, i.e. coming up with completely novel ideas for anything related to their daily work. This includes new story ideas, ways to work more efficiently, or even the little things like what time to send out agendas to client papers in the morning. In the heart of the category is the journalists understanding of media innovation as something that has not been thought of or seen before in their organization. In the following examples, the journalists use the context of *inventing* to discuss media innovation.

Well, I guess an innovation is an invention, so... in this job they are so close to each other, so basically coming up with a topic for a piece of news is an innovation. [H3]

Innovation, it is a new invention I guess, new invention can be a new way to work, for example in work, well, what that would be, it is hard to say -- Innovation, I would say, is an invention. [H10]

In the *borrowing* subcategory, journalists in the sample talked of borrowing ideas from other areas of life as well as other media organizations and introducing those ideas to their own newsrooms. Necessarily, then, an innovation does not have to be a completely novel thought or an idea, but rather it has to be new to the context it is presented to. (This is quite in line with the definition of media innovation by García-Avilés et al. 2018.) In this category, journalists talked of borrowing ways of working (e.g. introducing technology as an avenue for team communication), business models (e.g. one interviewee talked of experiments he had done as an online journalist before his current position) and innovative ways to present content to audiences (e.g. one of the news team journalists talked of Finland's largest daily Helsingin Sanomat doing theatre based on news). In the next excerpts, journalists discuss media innovation as borrowing ideas from others.

[Our outlet] was one of the firsts to implement a paywall, and that was not our idea but we took it and developed it further like we put more local stuff behind the wall and experimented with

different payment systems and stuff like that, it's kind of like coming up with small developments to existing innovations, we don't invent them ourselves. [H1]

For example, Hesari's [Helsingin Sanomat] *Musta laatikko* -thingy [journalistic theatre], it is not an innovation by Hesari, they copied it, but I think that could be a journalistic innovation. [H14]

Finally, in addition to inventing and borrowing, multiple journalists talked of the organizing of their work as innovation. The feature team has been working as a distributed team for the past 20 years and its journalists come in and leave in two to three-year cycles from the client papers. Most of the feature team journalists described the organizing of the team as a journalistic innovation. The news team is much newer: it has existed only for the past two years. However, in both teams, the organizing of remote work through technology as well as the concept of an in-house unit working for multiple clients in the corporation were seen as innovative. In the next examples, both a news team member as well as a feature team member discuss their teams as forms of innovation.

I would say that maybe [the news team] is in itself an innovation, it is doing things in new ways, or I think we journalists are supposed to do this kind of basic news reporting, but the composition of the team might be an innovation. [H9]

When you think about what innovation is, then I think that, for example, [the feature team] as it was created into a world where these kinds of teams were not common and no newspaper had a feature or a weekend section concept [like this], then I think this [feature team] is a hugely beneficial innovation. [H4]

These findings wrap up the main category of media innovation as practices which contains the subcategories of inventing, borrowing, and organizing. In the next section, we will move on to media innovation as a process.

5.2.3 Media innovation as a process

The most prevalent sub-category in the practices -category is that of media innovation as a *process*. In the interviews, journalists were asked to describe how they thought creativity and innovation are related to each other. They were also asked to discuss situations where they had done innovative or creative work with their team through technology. These questions specifically yielded answers that comprise the sub-category of media innovation as a process. All journalists in the sample linked innovation and creativity together in one distinct way: there can be no innovations without creativity. Most journalists left their pondering at that; however, some went on to include chance or randomness as also producing innovations. In the following quotations, journalists discuss the relationship between creativity and innovation.

Creativity breeds innovation, this is not technology related – I think that because my thoughts are my creativity then people have different ways of making innovations visible. [H2]

At its best, an innovation is the product of creativity. All creativity does not lead to innovations, but all innovations are products of some degree of creativity, except that are they? Innovation can also be born from chance. So, in other words, innovations need to be recognized. [H7]

I guess innovations aren't really born without any kind of creativity but are accidents creativity that I don't know because a lot of innovations are born from accidents. Of course it requires creativity to realize how to make use of that accident. [H11]

Of course they are related in that those innovations can't form if you don't have creativity. You need to see things differently or invent something. [H13]

You need to be creative to innovate. Because you need to look kind of outside the box because otherwise you can't come up with anything new. [H14]

In addition to linking creativity and innovation together, the journalists also explicitly described innovation as a process or implicitly revealed their processual thinking when describing their innovative projects. Multiple journalists from the feature team described coming up with ideas for recurring sections and trying out those ideas with poor results. These descriptions were answers to the question of media innovations gone wrong. The editor of the team described a project from ten years ago when they had tried to get celebrities to make status updates for the paper. (At the time Facebook was still new and mainly used for communicating with friends and family.) The editor told that eventually making the section took too much time and effort compared to how much space it filled in the print paper. Another journalist in the team described an effort to engage readers more with a fictional story the team would start, and the readers could send in their ideas on how to continue it. The project was terminated after a couple of weeks when there were no submissions coming from the readers and the journalists had to keep inventing more of the story to fill the space in the print paper. In addition to these stories, journalists also explicitly described innovation as a process. These descriptions can be seen in the excerpts below.

Innovation sounds to me like it is concrete creativity in some way like from creativity an innovation can be born, it is more like the outcome of a process this innovation when creativity is much more abstract. When you add hard work to a creative idea then an innovation can pop up as a result. [H12]

I probably think of innovation as something forming from long thought processes, something that is huge. I think of innovation like its something big, when it can also be... But I'm not a tech savvy person at all, but I put innovation and technology in the same category partly. [H2]

These results wrap up the category of innovation as a process. Next, we will move on to the last part of the typology of practice-oriented media innovation which is, of course, technology.

5.2.4 *Media innovation and technology*

Journalists interviewed in this study linked innovations and technology together often. They did it in two different ways: 1) they talked of innovation as a phenomenon they intrinsically associated with technology or new technologies, and 2) they talked of technology as means to improve their work and their team's work processes. In the first frame, journalists often associated innovation and technology with the corporate world rather than content production or journalism. This could be indicative of how journalists might situate technology and innovation outside of their daily work. This is quite descriptive of what Küng (2011, 43) describes when she writes that journalists have become used to defining themselves and their field through content rather than technology even if nowadays media and journalism are tightly related to technology. In the following examples journalists intrinsically associate innovation with technology.

Innovation is this way of doing something that you can copy multiple times. Innovation can be technology or it can be some simple way of doing things. [H7]

I think of innovation as something big and related to technology. Of course you can think that 'heureka, that was a fun invention' or then it can be -- [H2]

I never call my work innovation. It sounds more like some kind of technical corporate thing, that innovation. [H4]

Often the two ways of talking about innovations and technology (innovations' intrinsic association with technology and technology improving work processes) blended together when the journalists described their own team and how communication technology had helped them work better. In the following examples, journalists talk of innovation and technology in the context of their own team.

Let's say, well, this Slack we use, it has been an innovation at some point, a new way of working, and if we didn't have it we wouldn't be able to work together. It is creating new platforms for work whether it is technology... well, in this case it is technology. [H8]

I connect it [innovation] more to this kind of technology thing rather than text, so I think of some kind of inventions, either technical equipment but also and foremost what is closest to our job are these it-software or their features. [H5]

In both examples, there is the notion of technology as an innovation that makes teamwork either possible or makes work easier. These aspects of innovation and technology-mediated work are highlighted in the next section which deals with the journalists' understanding of technology.

5.3 Meanings given to technology and its role in a distributed team of journalists

The last leg of the analysis was to find out how journalists think of technology and what kind of meanings and roles they give to it in their daily work. Based on the analysis of the interview material, journalists in the sample approach technology from three different viewpoints. They understand technology as

- a. a facilitator for journalistic teamwork
- b. a distraction and a source of uncertainty
- c. a prerequisite for team existence and creating a sense of belonging

As with previous categories, the next three sections will go through the different parts of the typology outlined above and provide data examples of all viewpoints.

5.3.1 Technology facilitates teamwork among journalists

When discussing technology, the journalists repeatedly talked of all the things communication technology facilitates in the team. These things include discussion between team members, information sharing and idea development. In most cases, the journalists described their daily or weekly meetings which are organized via Google Hangouts or the Slack messaging they do throughout the day. Technology was mainly seen as a facilitator for discussion among team members. Especially in the news team, where a maximum of two team members are located in the same physical office, the role of technology as simply an avenue for discussion was highlighted. A news team member told that she feels like she is more connected to and interacts more with her team members in the distributed team than with the people who work in the same office building as she does. In addition to casual chatting, most journalists recognized communication technology's role as a facilitator for work-related information sharing. In the next examples, journalists describe how they share information on good sources and help each other find people to interview.

Like this morning, a journalist had done an interview during the weekend and now she needed another person to interview and this morning the four of us tried to figure out together who could be a good interviewee to the story -- so maybe it is not anything big like innovation or creativity but rather something mundane. [H9]

Sometimes you can use the team to help you find the right people if you are not sure where to start looking for them or who to ask certain stuff, you can ask in Slack like 'hey, who should I talk to' or in the morning meeting you can ask how to approach the topic. [H10]

I think it [Slack] is more suitable for like quick innovations like who should I call, can you think of anyone, or practical things like that. Then if we need to discuss something more in-depth, I think video conferencing is better for that. [H11]

In addition to facilitating general discussions and information sharing, technology was also seen to facilitate idea development. Most journalists talked of idea development in relation to the technological devices they used to convey their personal ideas to others and how then on those platforms the ideas came to life as the team took over the development process and started to bounce around ideas and information related to the topic of the story. Again, this technology-mediated idea development phase was more pronounced in the news team where the degree of geographical dispersion is higher whereas in the feature team, being in the same office and discussing ideas at lunch or in the breakroom were considered more beneficial to creativity. In the next excerpts, news team members reflect on how they develop story ideas in a technology-mediated environment, specifically in morning meetings conducted via video.

The way I see it is that when you have multiple people throwing around thoughts and ideas about a certain topic, that is what I think creativity is, when a lot of people put their heads together and throw around their thoughts about a topic and how to approach it and who to talk to and interview and where to get information. [H8]

I think it is very important that everyone in the team can be a part of the development of every story idea if they want to. Otherwise it wouldn't be possible, or you can talk about your story with the editor over the phone or something, but this particular technology makes it possible for us to develop those ideas as a group. [H12]

In sum, technology was seen to facilitate discussion among team members, and it was especially well suited for idea development as well as sharing information on ongoing projects.

5.3.2 Technology as a distraction and a source of uncertainty

Most of the uses of technology mentioned so far in this study have been positive in nature. However, technology use among journalists has its downsides too as some of the journalists in the sample felt it could cause distractions from work as well as produce feelings of uncertainty. These feelings can rise from writing as a form of communication and competence using technology. Three of the fourteen journalists explicitly mentioned technology and especially notifications from Slack as disrupting their work and hampering their concentration. Some also had qualms with the nature of their morning or weekly meetings deeming the meetings either too short and strict or too long and uncontrolled. In these next examples, journalists discuss how technology can disrupt their work.

For me it can be a disruption too because I think the creative phase requires me to concentrate heavily on my work and during that time I really don't pay attention to Slack but if I were extra sensitive to notifications and I'd have to check every message then the concentration would always be disrupted and I would have to find it again. I feel like every time that happens, I have to start over in order to get to that deeply focused state and in those moments it [technology] can also be a distraction. [H4]

I don't think it is a distraction but it can make it hard to concentrate. You could always turn the notifications off and that might be wise to do – but when you get a Slack message or an email, then you pay attention to it. [H14]

In addition to causing distraction from work, technology also caused feelings of uncertainty for journalists. These feelings usually stemmed from using writing as a mean to communicate as well as lack of competence using technology. In chat-based applications like Slack, communication is based on written words, which, in turn, leaves out the nonverbal cues like facial expressions and tone of voice. This lack of context caused stress to some of the journalists who reported being more careful in their technology-mediated communication than they would be in a face-to-face situation. A feature team journalist, for example, told she could give harsh-sounding critical feedback to her colleagues on their stories when she could soften her message with smiles and obvious sarcasm. These tools are not available in technology-mediated situations, like on Slack, where she felt she needed to pay more attention to how she formulated her feedback. Text-based communication is also more prone to misunderstandings between team members, the journalists felt. The interpretation of the message was always in the receiver's hands rather than the one who had sent the original message.

Text-based communication can more easily create schisms [in the team] and build on [misunderstandings], you can see it because some people write long messages and some short and some don't really think about what they write. [H11]

A written message is always a written message, like it can always be understood differently from the way you have meant it when you don't have that interaction where you see other people's facial expressions and 'oh he took it that way' and then you can soften the things you said. [H13]

Some journalists also reported that their competence using communication technology affects the way they utilize the tools. A news team journalist described how using technology doesn't come to him naturally and attributed this to his increasing age. In the same passage, though, he goes on to thank his younger co-workers for always lending him a helping hand in challenging situations.

5.3.3 Technology as a prerequisite for team existence and creating a sense of belonging

Finally, in both teams, technology was understood to be essential in relation to the team existing in the first place as well as creating a sense of belonging among the team members. As with some of the previous categories, technology's role in the existence of the team was more pronounced in the more dispersed news team compared to the feature team. However, in the feature team, technology was accredited for creating a sense of belonging among team

members and especially the remote workers in that team felt technology was vital for their work. In the following examples, news team members discuss the importance of technology for their team.

If this kind of innovation [Slack] had not been made, then our team would not exist either. [H8]

If we'd all be in different places and did not have anything but carrier pigeons to use then we really wouldn't be able to work as a team, so our strength has definitely been that we are able to work tightly as a team and without this level of technology and maybe in the future even more developed technology, this would not be possible. [H11]

Well, it is important in a way that if we didn't have communication technology then we wouldn't be able to work like this. We'd need to be in the same place because otherwise we wouldn't be able to communicate with each other. [H14]

Essentially, the news team members feel that their team would not exist without communication technology. Equally important is the notion of how technology can create a sense of belonging among team members. This could be seen in both teams; however, it was again more pronounced in the news team. In the following two examples, news team members describe how Slack, particularly, enables them to connect with team members and feel like they are a part of the team.

I don't know if it affects creative work but of course when we work remotely it does have meaning when it comes to creating a sense of belonging like every morning, we say good morning in Slack and say goodbye when we leave for the night. [H13]

[It allows us to] discuss other things which is of course important for creating team spirit and a sense of belonging to the team, it is important that you're able to talk about also other than work-related things with the members of the team because otherwise [as news team members] we are kind of alone. [H12]

These two aspects, team existence and sense of belonging, are essential when it comes to creative work in a distributed team (e.g. Gibson & Gibbs 2006). We will take a look at this as well as a multitude of other aspects in the Discussion section of this study. However, next, the analysis results are contrasted with previous research and a synthesis of them is provided.

6. Discussion

In this section, I will first provide a synthesis of the analysis results and tie them more tightly to previous research. In addition, I will deepen the study's take on media innovations by critiquing existing theories and defending a practitioner-centered approach to the phenomenon. Finally, I will discuss the role of the modern journalist in relation to creativity and innovation – are journalists meant to be innovators and, importantly, *can* journalists be innovators?

6.1 The crossroads: Creativity, innovation, and technology

This study has aimed to understand how journalists working in distributed teams conceptualize creativity and innovation in their daily work. An overall hermeneutic approach was utilized in studying the topic of the research. The research problem was approached via in-depth interviews and the interview material was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. In the analysis, three main aspects of the research question were used as guiding principles: expressions regarding creativity, innovation, and technology were coded from the material. In this section, I will provide a summary of the findings regarding each theme as well as discuss some of the most relevant or controversial aspects of them. At the end of this section, a final synthesis of the phenomenon of creativity and innovation in technology-mediated journalistic work is also provided. Table 2 summarizes the key findings.

Summary of Key Findings
Journalists in this study approached creativity and innovation practically and through their daily work. They emphasized making incremental improvements in their work rather than developing new ideas constantly or engaging in radical innovation. Discovering new angles to topics, finding new ways to tell stories and improving one's own work processes are examples of such improvements.
A psychologically safe communication climate was found to be an important factor in technology-mediated journalistic teamwork. A safe communication climate enabled the journalists to introduce their own ideas and develop those ideas among the team. Presenting new ideas freely and developing ideas further is key to producing solid journalism as new ideas can lead to scoops whereas reacting to what other outlets publish doesn't.
Journalists conceptualized both innovation and creativity on the content level with minor differences between the concepts. Regarding innovation, journalists combined product and process innovation frames as they talked of innovative content as the outputs of their media organization (see also Evans 2018). Thus, this study argues that the content level should not be ignored in conceptualizations of media innovation.
Technology's role in creative work and innovative action in journalistic teams is essential : It functions as a fundamental enabler; it is a prerequisite for team existence, through it,

members can create group culture as well as share information. Essentially, it allows the team to function better.

Table 2. Summary of key findings.

Firstly, let's look at how journalists in this study understood creativity. In the previous section, a typology of three ways to understand creativity in journalism was presented. These three ways are a) creativity as action, b) attributes given to creativity, and c) creativity and the social environment. The journalists approached creativity from a very practical point of view, describing stories and practices they thought were creative and how the process of being creative was visible in their daily work. This particular viewpoint is the direct result of how the journalists were asked of their experiences – as a researcher, I wanted to peer behind the institutional jargon and really understand the process of creativity both in feature as well as news journalism. Thus, I asked for multiple descriptions and examples of their work. (The researcher's influence on how the interviewees talk of the research subject is problematized more in section 7.1.)

It is worth a note, though, that these journalists, working in the newspaper business in Finland, conceptualized creativity in a similar fashion as did the magazine journalists in Malmelin and Nivari-Lindström's (2017) study. In the current study, creating new things constantly was not in the journalists' interests, rather they were more interested in making creative decisions regarding their daily work and the processes they went through. Malmelin and Nivari-Lindström (2017) presented similar results based on a study on the implicit theories magazine journalists hold about creativity. The journalists in their study approached creativity practically (as did the journalists in this study) and did not think creating new things every day was an important part of their work. Instead, developing existing ideas was the key to creativity in their work. Also, a part of Fulton and McIntyre's (2013) results were echoed in the results of this study. The Australian journalists interviewed in their study thought that journalists need to be creative to hold audience attention, but creativity needs to follow the norms and rules of the journalistic field. In the current study, a part of the journalists felt they needed to adhere to the rules imposed on them by the field whereas some of the journalists felt they were free to go about their job as they wished – as long as their work remained understandable to the reader.

The journalists' understandings of creativity also somewhat line up with previous definitions of creativity presented in research. Amabile et al. (1996) defined creativity as the combination

of creative thinking skills, industry knowledge, and motivation. These aspects of creativity come up in the journalists' way of talking of creative work: They needed to think outside the box to form new angles on topics and new ways to tell stories as well as to find relevant sources. Expertise, and more importantly, the shared knowledge the team members had through each other's expertise can be characterized as Amabile's industry knowledge. And finally, the motivational aspect is also detected in the way journalists talked of creativity being an important feature regarding their wellbeing and job satisfaction.

What is interesting in the journalists' understandings of creativity, however, is the social aspect. In previous research, the results on whether creative work can be effectively done via technology or if face-to-face meetings should be preferred, have been varied. There are about as many different kinds of advice as there are researchers. Nemiro (2002), in her study on creativity in virtual teams, found that idea generation was mostly done face-to-face, and idea development was done electronically. Kristensson and Norlander (2003), on the other hand, would have teams in the same physical location if creative work was necessary, whereas Turban et al. (2011) argue that communication technology can facilitate cooperation and innovation. In a similar sense, Gibson and Gibbs (2006) argue that every aspect of the creative process can be done in a virtual environment if there is a psychologically safe communication climate in the virtual team. Here psychologically safe communication climate is defined as team atmosphere characterized by open, supportive communication, risk-taking, and speaking up (Gibson & Gibbs 2006, 455). Importantly, the current study shows that it does not matter where team communication takes place, whether it is in the office or via technology, if communication is supportive and team members are able to freely and without fear bounce their creative ideas around with each other. Consequently, even if this study did not specifically place its focus on the psychologically safe communication climate Gibson and Gibbs (2006) emphasize as an important precursor for team innovation, communication climate can be seen to have an impact on creative work in journalistic teams. This is also visible in the lack of cynicism in the data as journalists often reported developing story ideas among the team. A reverse situation was found in Nylund's (2013) study in a regular newsroom where ideas were often shot down with silence or indicating that the topic had already been covered.

Moving on to innovations, in this study, journalists approached the concept of innovation through four different avenues: a) innovation as content, b) innovation as practice, c) innovation as a process, and d) innovation as technology. The first part of the typology, innovation as content, might be its most contested bit. In this subcategory, journalists

described innovation as new angles to stories as well as new ways to tell stories. In addition, the journalists often discussed whether a piece of news or a feature story can be considered an innovation. Majority of the journalists did not count stories as innovations. However, there was a small minority that conceptualized stories as innovations inside the news ecosystem. Interestingly, previous research quite unanimously states that a single story cannot be counted as a media innovation (Dogruel 2014; Bleyen et al. 2014; Westlund & Lewis 2014; also, Trappel 2015). Previous research, however, has a gap in researching journalists' views of innovation and thus the aforementioned studies, while relevant when looking at media innovations as objects, do not quite fit the current study and its findings.

In order to make sense of the innovation as content category, Storsul and Krumsvik's (2013) typology of media innovation and Evans' (2018) findings on the same topic in an American context come in handy. Evans found that public service radio workers in the United States conceptualized media innovation by combining process and product innovation frames in a unique way. Storsul and Krumsvik (2013, 16-17) define product innovation as the changes in products and services offered by an organization and process innovation as changes in which those products and services are created and delivered to customers. Evans (2018, 20) names this combination of frames *storytelling innovation* where stories can be viewed as the products or outputs of media organizations. In her research, stories could be viewed as the outcome of managerial and technological innovation processes, but they were not framed as a type of innovation.

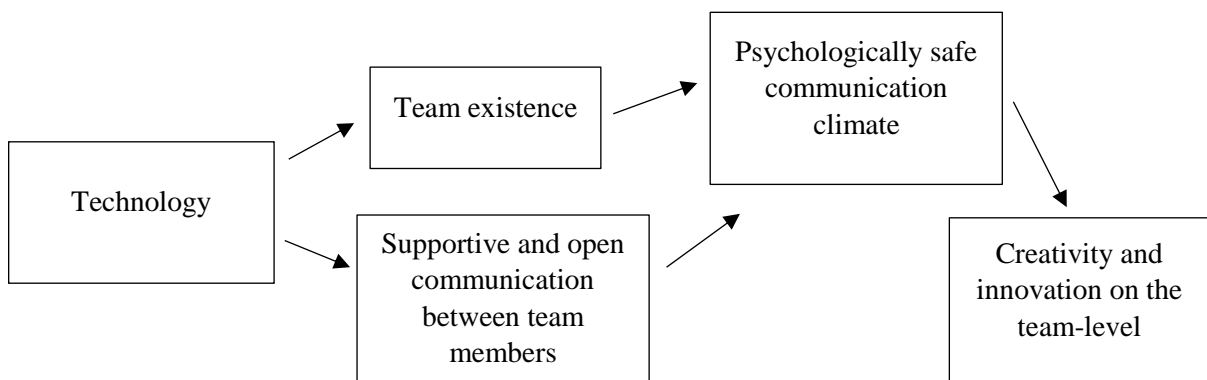
Similar type of thinking was evident in the current study: journalists were hesitant to name stories as innovations, but they did name new angles and new ways to tell stories as innovation on the content level. New angles could, thus, be considered product innovation (e.g. finding a fresh angle to serving the same recipe of a traditional Christmas meal to the reader, as one of the feature team journalists described it) and new ways to tell a story process innovation (e.g. writing scienc-y stories on climate change for the news pages but packaging the information to the Q&A format so the story is easy to read, as a news team reporter described this). Finally, it seems important to note here that in the light of this research, single stories should not count as media innovations. However, content-level innovation or storytelling innovation, whatever the label, should not be ignored when researching understandings of innovations in the journalistic context. More thoughts on why those few journalists did think stories are innovations are presented in section 7.1 and a critique of macro-level innovation theories (e.g. those of Christensen and Tushman presented in the literature review) and their relation to the results of this study are discussed in section 6.2.

The final leg of the findings of this study consists of journalists' understandings of technology and its relation to creative work and innovation. Journalists viewed technology from three perspectives which are a) technology as a facilitator of teamwork, b) technology as a distraction and a source of uncertainty, as well as c) technology as a prerequisite for team existence and a sense of belonging. Since ESM or OCS use has not been extensively studied in a journalistic context, these findings have only a limited amount of research to mirror them to. However, there are multiple parallels to be found with Bunce et al.'s (2017) study on Slack use in a global journalistic organization. In that study, the researchers found that Slack, the OSC tool utilized both in the team they studied as well as the teams in the current study, supported extensive collaboration between team members, mediated the relationship between management and the journalists, provided a place to store information and an avenue to give feedback, as well as an opportunity to build group culture. In addition, the app was perceived to be a form of surveillance and a source of stress by some of the journalists. In the current study, parts of these findings are echoed even if the context of journalistic work is quite different. In Bunce et al.'s (2017) study, the team operated globally and covered mostly humanitarian issues. In this study, the teams operate on a national scale and cover a variety of topics. Importantly, however, the notions about Slack facilitating information sharing, collaboration, and a place to build group culture can be found in both studies. Also, the negative effects of technology are similar in both studies (experiencing notifications as a disruption from work).

Reaching outside the scope of journalistic organizations, Gibbs et al. (2015) suggest that ESM has the potential to increase knowledge sharing, and Razmerita et al. (2014) and Turban et al. (2011) argue that ESM tools can facilitate information dissemination as well as idea generation. In this study, knowledge sharing, and information dissemination could be detected as part of the technology as facilitator for journalistic teamwork subcategory. However, idea generation was often placed outside of teamwork and journalists often described coming up with ideas by themselves rather than with teammates. In relation, though, ideas were often developed among team members via technology, which was the case also in Nemiro's (2002) research on creativity on virtual teams.

Finally, it is time to arrive at the junction of creativity, innovation, and technology. It should be noted that all the categories, even if they are treated separately in the Findings section, are inextricably linked and cannot be separated from each other. Innovation and creativity are concepts that are separate from each other by definition, but as this study and previous research (Küng 2017) have shown, on a practical level, the concepts are hard to fully isolate

from each other. This manifests especially when the journalists described creative and innovative projects in the same terms which might be illustrative of incomplete understandings of the differences of the theoretical terms. Technology brings its own touch into the mix as a facilitator for both creative work and innovation development. Technology's role is best described as a mediator which allows the journalistic teams in this study to connect and communicate with each other. Technology enables the forming of a psychologically safe communication climate, which could be found in both studied teams as they described the technology as enabling team existence and creating a sense of belonging. Psychologically safe communication climate, in turn, decreases the negative effects of the distribution of the team and allows the team to perform creative work as well as innovate. It should be noted, though, that even if a team uses ESM or OCS tools, technology in itself does not guarantee a supportive team atmosphere and does not by itself lead to a situation where creativity and innovation become possible on a team level. Picture 1 visualizes the relationships the concepts of this study have.



Picture 1. Concepts and their relationships in this study. *In technology-mediated creative work and innovation, technology acts as the facilitator/base upon which the phenomenon is built on. It enables team existence and supportive communication in a team, which can lead to a psychologically safe communication climate. A safe communication climate then eases creative work and innovation.*

6.2 The theoretical gap where practice-oriented media innovation should be

In the process of doing the analysis and writing up the results for this study, there was a moment of clarity where I realized I had made a mistake. It is a mistake common in research and student work: the theoretical framework I had chosen did not meet the empirical parts of my study. After reading through my theoretical framework on innovations and the results I had from the content analysis, I cursed and then I spent the following afternoon reading and writing and sighing – until I came to the conclusion that this mistake cannot be mended by

changing my framework since there is a limited amount of research on how journalists' specifically conceptualize media innovations. Researcher's opinions, typologies, and categorizations of *media innovations as objects* are abundant (e.g. Dogruel 2014; Bleyen et al. 2014; Storsul & Krumsvik 2013) but empirical research on how practicing journalists understand innovation is scarce (Evans 2018; also, Westlund & Lewis 2014).

In the theoretical framework of this study, I presented the thoughts of Michael Tushman (1997) and Clayton Christensen (1998) and outlined how these scholars theorize innovation. The idea was to take an organization level concept, like disrupting innovations or sustaining innovations, and approach it from the individual level. Evans (2018), for example, utilizes Christensen's thoughts on disrupting innovations in her study and develops the term autodisruption where organizations attempt to disrupt themselves. Specifically, her concepts are derived from qualitative interviews, i.e. individual understandings of the research topic. A similar approach was utilized in Gibson and Gibbs' (2006) study on innovation in distributed teams, where the researchers state that both innovation and psychologically safe communication climate are team-level concepts, but they approached these phenomena through interviews and survey material.

The central idea here is that individual understandings make up the team and organizational levels. How individual journalists conceptualize innovation ultimately reflects to how an organization views and acts on innovation. In the current study, journalists approached innovation in their work from a practical viewpoint and described innovative action in relation to their daily activities. Furthermore, what was notably absent in the data, were descriptions of long-term development projects with clear innovation-related goals and results. The emphasis the journalists placed on incremental innovation, i.e. developing their work processes, offering new angles and ways to tell stories to the readers, reveals the larger, organizational situation with innovation work: there are no resources for developing radical, game-changing journalistic innovations, at least not in the organization studied in this project.

Consequently, organization-level innovation theories cannot be applied to the results presented here. In order to either disrupt, like Christensen (1997) posits, or sustain, like Tushman (1997) suggests, an organization should be able to do both exploitation (excel in the current market situation) and exploration (find ways to make profit in the future). Thus, organizational ambidexterity is nowhere to be found in organizations whose journalists only have the possibility to focus on incremental innovation in their daily work. In order to gain competitive advantage or even to decide whether to follow some specific advice from innovation scholars, organizations should first be able to achieve a situation where both daily

news work and long-term innovation projects are possible. The sad truth here is that in the shadow of the digital giants and the distress the market situation is causing to media organizations, this task is extremely difficult.

This leads to my first argument regarding theory on (media) innovations: The phenomenon is far too often conceptualized from an organization's point of view and the human conditions affecting it are ignored. Too little attention has been dedicated to researching how individuals in media organizations perform innovation tasks that eventually count as the whole organization's innovative behavior. In connection, I argue that media innovations are too often conceptualized as objects without the human context in which they are born, i.e. the thoughts, attitudes, and situations of the journalists responsible for the development of said innovations. Similarly, Westlund and Lewis (2014, 12) point out that there is a relative lack of studies in media management that incorporate sociotechnical perspectives in researching media innovation. This perspective involves studying the roles of human actors and audiences as well as those played by technology and its actants. Furthermore, the pair also argue that by considering all parts of the innovation process (i.e. applying sociotechnical and holistic perspectives) researchers may get better answers in relation to how media organizations should innovate in order to perform better in the market.

In sum, I argue that in future research, media innovation should be approached more holistically and if possible, human understandings, as well as the social context in which innovations are born, should be accounted for in research settings. By utilizing a broader approach to media innovation, more useful answers and information can be coined through research – and this information can potentially help media organizations perform better in the future.

6.3 Are journalists innovators?

The results of this study raise some fundamental questions about the role of the modern journalist. Traditionally, journalists have been defined through their background, schooling, and possibly salary. Their tasks have included observing relevant facts and asking questions from the right people, understanding their observations and the answers in context, and explaining their findings to the audience. (Van der Haak, Parks & Castells 2012, 2925). In short, they have been mediators and interpreters of information. However, the digital age has brought with it changes to the way journalists work and also to the things that are expected of them in a professional sense. Van der Haak et al. (2012, 2926), for example, argue that

previously the distribution of content was left to the publisher but in the digital era (and especially in the era of social media) getting content out to the audience is also the journalist's responsibility.

The same type of expansion of the role of the journalist can be observed in relation to creativity and innovation. Traditionally, journalists have not been required to innovate as a part of their work. Innovation has been dedicated to the engineering departments of media organizations; it has been the domain of the "tech people", not the content producers. This view could be detected in the sample of journalists in this study and I would like to argue that it is also present in many other Finnish media organizations. Content production and technological development/engineering are kept apart and moreover, professionals in these departments rarely share a language, i.e. professional lingo so that they could, even in theory, be able to develop innovations together. Here the fences between departments become visible and professionals unwilling to cooperate hamper innovation before it can even start (Ess 2014). However, in journalism, technology and content should not be separated from each other anymore –journalism is nowadays defined as much by technology as it is by content (Küng 2011, 43).

Even if journalists have not been required to innovate before, the tide seems to be turning. Most of the journalists in this study expressed that someone above them in the organizational hierarchy expected them to innovate at least from time to time. With the team leaders, the need for innovative action was even more pronounced. It should be noted, however, that the opportunities journalists have to innovate are affected by the profession's norms and rules as well as pressures and expectations coming from outside journalism. Firstly, a journalist is never separate from society and its influences that surround her (Hemánus 1983, 192). Here, those influences manifest in the form of economic pressure, i.e. budget cuts have forced newsrooms to produce more news with less staff. Secondly, the journalistic profession is known for its continuous drive to pursue and reveal the next big scoop. However, it has often been noted that rather than practicing critical thinking and chasing original stories, journalists tend to evaluate their performance based on what other outlets publish (see e.g. Nylund 2013). As a consequence, norms and rules combined with economic pressures create a vicious cycle where the journalism a single journalist produces becomes reactive and not creative (if you excuse the wordplay). In short, possibilities to do ambitious journalism might have become scarcer than before.

Throwing the gloomy outlook aside, however, I argue that every journalist has the possibility of changing their own work and actively developing it to a direction where creativity is

cherished and celebrated. Journalists might not be able to pursue radical, industry-shaking innovations in tandem with their daily news work, but they can develop incremental innovations in how they work and what kind of processes take place in their respective media organizations. Furthermore, I argue that this work should be continuous rather than sporadic, and journalists should be encouraged to make changes, try new things, and also fail in their attempts to make the profession better. In this sense, every journalist is an innovator – no matter the scale of the innovation.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Evaluating this research

In qualitative research, it is important to evaluate a study's starting points, progression, and results (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). Therefore, in this section, I will be going over and reflecting on the choices I made during the research process and how those choices might have affected the results that I have presented. I will mainly utilize Tracy's (2010) eight "big-tent" criteria for evaluating qualitative research but add in also points from other researchers. According to Tracy (2010), qualitative research can be evaluated using the following eight criteria: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, meaningful coherence, and ethics. In the following text, I will utilize especially the categories of worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, significant contribution, ethical considerations, and meaningful coherence.

According to Tracy (2010, 840), good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative. In this sense, worthy topics often arise from disciplinary priorities and are theoretically or conceptually compelling. In this study, the research topic was, indeed, developed as a response to a shift I as a researcher observed on the field while working as a journalist – which answers to the call of timely research. Journalism practice is changing because of turbulent times in the media business and the overall work-life landscape is in turmoil too: work is done increasingly in distributed teams with lessening resources in media organizations. In addition to the topic being timely in relation to changes taking place in journalism, it is also significant in terms of research. Research on technology use at work, innovation and creativity in media organizations as well as distributed teams is needed as communication technology adoption increases. Additionally, this research combines views from communication and journalism research to provide a deeper understanding of the research topic. This is due to the study's association with the SOMEDIA research project and its goals.

Being a part of a large research project brought its ups and downs to conducting this study. Help and additional viewpoints were always at hand and I was lucky to have a research partner who was intimately familiar with our data and the research process. Bouncing around ideas and notions of the data was immensely eye-opening and helped me through the worst loops I was able to conjure up in my own head. During the research process, I strived to keep a self-reflexive attitude towards this study and the work I was doing, keep track of the process and write as well and understandably as I could. This relates to Tracy's (2010, 841) notion on sincerity which she defines as the researcher's attitude as being vulnerable, honest and

transparent. I adhered to both Tracy's (2013, 196) and McQueen, Guest and Namey's (2014, 93-94) advice on keeping an audit trail of what I was doing at which point. This practice came in especially handy during the analysis phase of the research where I meticulously wrote down everything I did and later, while writing up the results, referred to as I wrote.

Aspiring to be transparent and open about my work also led to some changes in the style of writing in this research. In parts where I thought my subjective views were important, I consciously chose to write in first person and to emphasize the fact that these are my thoughts, views, and interpretations about the phenomenon I am studying. This is evident if you compare, for example, the theoretical background of this research to the description of analysis activities. I summarize and describe previous research from afar and not with much commentary, whereas in the analysis sections of this study I eagerly express how *I* see things. In choosing to write subjectively, I hope to also write clearly and transparently, in a way the possible readers of this study can also evaluate the choices I have made and hopefully also enjoy the reading experience. As Badley (2018) argues, there is no need to be a stinky (academic) writer.

As I decided how much data to include in this study, I had to make some difficult decisions. The original data set collected from the two teams in this study is vast and allows for multiple viewpoints. Originally, I played with the idea of including observational data in addition to interviews but eventually deemed it too much for a master's thesis. As I had narrowed the data down to just interviews, I had to decide whether to include both teams or just the other. Eventually including both teams allowed for some comparisons between the teams and afforded a richer description of the phenomena of creativity and innovation in technology-mediated journalistic work. 14 interviewees from two teams of journalists count, in my view, as a big enough of a sample. According to Tracy (2010, 840), rich rigor in a qualitative study can be recognized by the study's use of sufficient, abundant, and complex theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, sample, and data analysis processes. I strived to provide as relevant as possible review of previous research as I could and choose both relevant data collection and analysis methods. However, even if I did all this the best I could, the data collection method could (and should) still be problematized.

One of the most relevant questions regarding the reliability of this study and its results concerns the researcher's impact on how the interviewed journalists chose to talk of innovation and creativity. Especially regarding creative content and innovative content, the journalists' confusion regarding the differences between the two terms is telling. The fact that some interviewees answered the questions of "how would you define innovation" and "how

would you define creativity” in similar ways might indicate that in reality, the journalists did not have a clear understanding of the difference between the two terms and instead, chose to answer with the terms I as a researcher used. However, as unfortunate as this is, the situation could not be avoided. The interview material used in this study was collected for the purposes of the larger research project that focuses more on technology and especially enterprise social media. The interview guide was developed so that the journalists were free to describe their experiences with technology and we were especially careful not to name or define the technologies they used while conducting the interviews. If the guide had been developed specifically to inquire about definitions given to innovation and creativity and the differences between the terms, then aspects in the interview guide would have naturally been emphasized differently.

Whether the guide focused on technology or innovation/creativity, it should be noted that the interviewer is, in any case, an inevitable part of the research interview (Lillrank 2012, 281). Interviews are always bound to the context where they take place and some of that context is lost when a mutually built conversation is transcribed to text and analyzed. It has been well-documented that even a slight rewording of a question may influence the answer (Kvale 2007, 88-89) – in this case, the definitions and descriptions journalists gave when asked about creativity and innovations. Kvale (2007, 89), however, argues that leading questions may have been disparaged unnecessarily in qualitative interviewing. He writes that behind the idea of avoiding leading questions in interviews might be the view of social reality as something the researcher can objectively observe and report, like “a miner finds buried metals or a botanist collects plants in nature” (p. 89). In this research, though, the view on reality is that it is socially constructed and, in this view, an interview is a conversation where knowledge is constructed through an interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Ultimately, the question then is not whether questions lead or not, but *where* they lead. According to Kvale, they should lead to new, trustworthy and worthwhile knowledge.

This brings us to ethical considerations, significant contribution and meaningful coherence (Tracy 2010). Even if this research’s findings about innovation and creativity specifically regarding content can be contested, new knowledge on how journalists conceptualize journalistic innovations was produced. I have tried to approach these findings and my own work critically and from different angles. In my opinion, the typology of practice-oriented media innovation contributes to the understanding of media innovations as a complex phenomenon and gives it more depth. In addition, this research has strived to produce relevant

information about innovations and creativity specifically in the context of Finnish media – to which I feel like I have succeeded in making a contribution.

Ethical considerations were made throughout the research process. The teams studied here have been described only in terms of general traits (team size, only cursory information on the corporation they belong to) and I have to my best knowledge tried to also conserve the anonymity of the interviewees in presenting data examples in the Findings section. Every interviewee signed a research permit before the interviews, and interview tapes were held on a secure server guaranteeing data protection. These are aspects of procedural ethics, where the goal is to safeguard participants from undue exposure and ensure their privacy (Tracy 2010, 847).

Finally, it is time to consider the meaningful coherence of this research. Tracy (2010, 848) defines meaningfully coherent research as studies that achieve their stated purpose, accomplish what they aim to do, use methods and representation practices that go well together with espoused theories and paradigms and attentively connect literature with research foci, methods, and findings. She clarifies that meaningfully coherent studies can also be messy, disturbing or unexpected – as long as they are in line with what they promise to be. In this sense, I feel the study I have presented here is meaningfully coherent in relation to topic choice, theoretical framework, data collection and analysis methods, as well as findings. At the beginning of this study I set out to find out how journalists in distributed teams understand creativity and innovation. There is an implicit assumption already in the research question that these phenomena are socially constructed which then guided the compiling of previous research. I approached creativity and innovation as processes manifesting in interaction between people and tied it to theory that looked at the phenomena the same way.

Research interviews are in this study treated as “contextual stories” of innovation and creativity – they are tied to a time and a place as well as the people present for the interview. The analysis I have presented did not aspire to present one complete understanding of creativity and innovation in technology-mediated journalistic work, but rather I approached the interviews from different viewpoints and asked the data multiple questions. This can be seen in the typologies I presented in the Findings section: They should not be treated as separate understandings of separate phenomena but rather as interconnected conceptualizations that weave into each other and cannot be split apart without losing information.

7.2 Avenues for future research

In the process of making this research, multiple new questions have arisen and tempted my mind. I argue, for example, that more attention should be paid to the human side of media innovation and researchers should continue to explore the thoughts, views, and attitudes of journalists and media workers regarding innovation. Producing new, scientific knowledge about these aspects is crucial in helping media organizations succeed in the future (Malmelin & Poutanen 2017). An interesting set up would be to interview managers as well as regular journalists and compare their views on media innovation. Equally thrilling would be to conduct this research in an organization where there is an actual budget for innovation activities and specific employees are tasked with creating innovations.

Furthermore, in contact with the human side of innovation, looking specifically at innovative individuals and how their actions affect newsrooms could possibly yield new information especially on innovation activities and practices. This information could, in turn, be used to figure out the best possible ways to organize innovation activities in newsrooms and more generally in media organizations. It should also be noted that these studies could produce different kinds of results whether they were carried out in public service media organizations or commercial media organizations. Especially public service media organizations could be interesting since they have traditionally been outside the scope of innovation since they rarely need to actively innovate in order to seek profit (Evans 2018; Donders et al. 2012). Paradoxically, though, at least in Finland the Public Broadcasting Company might be in the best place to innovate in regard to funding and other resources.

Stepping outside of journalism research for a minute, I argue that the effects of a psychologically safe communication climate should also be researched more thoroughly in media organizations. The need for creativity in media organizations has grown tremendously in recent years (Küng 2017, 105) which, in light of previous research (e.g. Gibson & Gibbs 2006) also means that the need for more supportive communication and trust among media workers is needed. Finding out how teams of journalists create group culture and atmosphere that is beneficial for creativity and innovation seems essential in the contemporary media landscape (both in terms of practitioners as well as research). In relation to technology use in organizations, this study approached technology in a rather positive sense. However, an opposing view should also be offered, i.e. how technology might be making creative work and innovation more difficult and how increased technology adoption is affecting media workers.

Finally, in relation to the thoughts presented in the discussion of this study, researching journalistic freedom in the digital age seems like a valid topic. Media content is increasingly produced according to strict production plans and the demands of the 24-hour news cycle, which can have shape how journalists perceive the freedom they have in their work (see Koljonen, 2014). This begs the question of whether a journalist is free to act on her creative impulses in today's newsrooms. What kind of enablers or constraints do the digital age and its sometimes-hectic rhythm set on journalistic creativity? And essentially, how do these changes impact journalism at large?

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Appendix I. Interview Guide in English

This is a free translation of the interview guide used in this research. The original interviews were done in Finnish. The original Finnish-language guide can be found in Appendix II.

Background information

- Name, age
- Title/position
- Education
- Where do you work (physically)
- How much working experience do you have from journalism
- How long have you worked in this team

First section

- Describe your usual day at work; what kind of routines do you have?
- How do you start your day? What kind of routines do you have in the morning?
 - In what kind of shifts do you work (day, evening, night)?
 - If the interviewee mentions emails or Slack – do you check your messages / use communication applications before the beginning of your shift? Why?
- Who do you mainly work with? How many members are there in your team?
- How does your workday end? Do you work from home after you're done at work? What do you do and how?

Second section: Creativity

- Let's move on to creativity and specifically creativity in your work. How is creativity visible in your work?
 - Could you give an example of how you are creative in your work?
 - Could you describe how creativity is visible in your team's meetings?
- What kinds of things support creativity in your work?
 - (If the interviewee mentions their boss/colleague or team atmosphere, we will ask more)
 - What aspects of the team's atmosphere support creativity? What aspects of your boss'/colleague's actions support creativity?
 - How is (the interviewee's answer) visible in your communication (face-to-face or e.g. Slack messages)?
- What kinds of aspects set boundaries for creativity in your work?
- You have now talked of creativity in your own work. Could you define for us what you think creativity means?

Third section: Innovations

- You have talked about creativity both in your own work as well as your team's work. Could you now tell us how you define innovation?
- In what way do you think creativity and innovation are linked together?
- Are you expected to innovate in your work?
- Could you give an example of a successful innovation you have developed in your team?
 - Why was this specific example innovative?
- Could you give an example of an innovation that was not a success?

Fourth section: Technology

Let's discuss your work as a team.

- What kind of technologies do you use to work as a team?
 - Do you ever work face-to-face?
- How does technology affect creative work/innovation work in your team?
 - In what degree do you think technology supports creative/innovation work?
 - In what degree do you think technology hampers creative/innovation work?
- Could you give an example of a situation where you have been innovative/creative as a team via technology?

Fifth section: Journalistic work and boundary management

We have now discussed your work in relation to creativity, innovations, and technology. In some way, these themes also weave into the next section which aims at collecting information about the ways journalistic work is done and how boundaries are managed between work and life.

- Could you describe how using Slack has changed the way you work?
 - Could you compare a time you weren't using Slack to a time you use Slack for work – what has changed?
 - What kind of instructions your employer has given in regard to technology use outside of work?
 - What do you think about availability on Slack – how soon are you required to answer/react to new messages? Are you required to always be available through Slack?
- In what ways do you think communication technology has changed the relationship between your work and other areas of life?
- Do you feel that your work and life are separate from each other or do they weave into each other?
 - Could you give an example where this is visible?
- How much do you talk about your work outside of work?
 - Whom do you talk to and how do they react?
- Do your colleagues know people from other areas of your life, e.g. spouse, children, friends?

Conclusions

- If we were to make this interview again in five years, how do you think we would be discussing the central themes (creativity, innovation, technology)?
- Is there anything you would like to add or talk about more?
- Do you want to ask us something?

Appendix II. Interview Guide in Finnish

Taustatiedot

- Nimi, ikä
- Asema/titteli
- Koulutus
- Missä teet pääsääntöisesti (fyysisesti) töitä
- Kuinka pitkä työkokemus sinulla on
- Kuinka kauan olet ollut tässä tiimissä

Ensimmäinen osio

- Kuvaile omaa työpäivääsi; millainen on tavallinen päiväsi?
- Miten aloitat työpäiväsi; millaisia rutiineja työpäiväsi aloittamiseen liittyy?
 - Millaisissa vuoroissa teet työtä?
 - Jos mainitsee sähköpostin tai Slackin, nettiselailun tms. – katsotko viestejä / käytätkö työsovelluksia jo ennen työvuoron alkua? Miksi?
- Kenen kanssa teet pääasiassa töitä? Montako jäsentä tiimissäsi on?
- Entä miten työpäiväsi päättyy? Teetkö kotoa käsin vielä töitä? Mitä ja miten?

Toinen osio: Luovuus

- Siirrytään seuraavaksi puhumaan luovuudesta ja erityisesti luovuudesta juuri sinun työssäsi. Millä tavalla luovuus näkyy sinun työssäsi?
 - Kertoisitko esimerkin siitä, millä tavalla olet luova työssäsi.
 - Kertoisitko, miten luovuus näkyy tiimisi tapaamisissa.
- Minkälaiset asiat mielestäsi tukevat luovuutta työssäsi?
 - (Jos mainitset esimiehen/työkaverin tai tiimin ilmapiirin, kysymme lisää)
 - Mitkä tekijät tiimin ilmapiirissä tukevat luovuutta? Mikä esimiehen / työkavereiden toiminnassa edistää luovuutta?
 - Miten (kuvattu asia) näkyy teidän vuorovaikutuksessa (kasvokkain tai esim. Slack-viesteissä)?
- Minkälaiset asiat mielestäsi rajoittavat luovuutta työssäsi?
- Olet nyt kertonut luovuudesta omassa työssäsi, määritteletkö vielä, mitä luovuus omasta mielestäsi tarkoittaa.

Kolmas osio: Innovaatiot

- Olet kertonut luovuudesta omassa työssäsi ja tiimin työskentelyssä. Kertoisitko nyt omin sanoin, mitä innovaatio mielestäsi tarkoittaa.
- Miten mielestäsi innovaatiot ja luovuus liittyvät toisiinsa?
- Odotetaanko teiltä innovaatioita työssä?
- Kertoisitko tilanteesta, jonka koet olevan esimerkki onnistuneesta innovaatiosta.
 - Miksi juuri tämä mainitsemasi esimerkki on innovatiivinen?
- Kertoisitko tilanteen, jonka koet olevan hyvä esimerkki pieleen menneestä innovaatiosta?

Neljäs osio: Teknologia

Puhutaan seuraavaksi työskentelystäsi tiimissä.

- Millaisia teknologioita käytätte tiimissä työskentelemiseen?
 - Työskentelettekö koskaan kasvokkain?
- Millainen merkitys viestintäteknologialla on innovaatiotyöskentelyyn/luovaan työhön tiimissä?

- Missä määrin viestintäteknologia mielestäsi tukee innovointia?
- Missä määrin viestintäteknologia mielestäsi rajoittaa innovointia?
- Kertoisitko esimerkin tapauksesta, jossa olette tiiminä olleet luovia tai innovatiivisia viestintäteknologian välityksellä.

Viides osio: Journalistinen työ ja sen rajankäynti

Olemme keskustelleet nyt työstäsi erityisesti luovuuden, innovaation sekä teknologian näkökulmista. Tietyllä tavalla nämä teemat liittyvät myös seuraavaan osioon, jonka tavoitteena on saada tietoa journalistisen työn tekemisen tavoista ja työn ja muun elämän keskinäisistä suhteista.

- Kuvailisitko, millä tavalla Slackin käyttö on muuttanut työskentelytapojasi.
 - Vertaa aikaa, jolloin et käyttänyt Slackiä työntekoon tämänhetkiseen tilanteeseen.
 - Millaisia ohjeita työnantaja on antanut viestintäteknologian käyttöön työajan ulkopuolella?
 - Millainen oletus sinulla on siitä, miten nopeasti Slackissa tullessiin viesteihin pitää vastata / kuinka hyvin sitä kautta pitää olla tavoitettavissa?
- Miten viestintäteknologia on muokannut journalistisessa työssä työn ja muun elämän suhdetta?
- Koetko, että nämä elämän eri osa-alueet ovat toisistaan erillisiä vai toisiinsa limittyneitä?
 - Kuvaile tilannetta, jossa tämä näkyy.
- Kuinka paljon puhut työasioistasi työajan ulkopuolella?
 - Kenelle puhut; miten he reagoivat siihen?
- Tuntevatko työyhteisösi jäsenet ihmisiä yksityisen elämäsi puolelta?
 - Esim. puoliso, ystäväsi, lapsesi?

Lopuksi

- Jos tekisimme tämän haastattelun uudestaan viiden vuoden kuluttua, miten luulet, että puhuisimme sen teemoista (luovuus, innovaatiot, teknologia) silloin?
- Onko haastattelun aikana noussut mieleen asioita, joista haluaisit vielä kertoa?
- Haluatko kysyä meiltä jotakin?