

Beginnings

Protestors "Occupy" the park around City Hall in downtown Los Angeles last October

Discovery: Assigned to cover a protest with no leaders or official spokesmen, Kate turns to the Internet and to social media to search for information. "The use of social media increased the breadth of voices in our reporting."

Started with **basic searches**, and found social sites run by Occupy people. Also found hashtags on Twitter that people were using, such as #OWS (the father of the Occupy movement, Occupy Wall Street), #OLA, #occupy, etc.

On the ground at City Hall, Kate **asked people for their online identities as part of her reporting routine**. Some participants didn't have cell phones, but many who didn't had an internet presence.

Many had met first online, followers of Annoynmous and Occupy Wall Street who connected online and then in person at City Hall.

During the process, Kate became a much **more active and engaged user of Twitter**. Previously had an account, but mostly just Tweeted links to her stories. She interacted more and started Tweeting newsworthy events as they happened, for instance, she was there when **councilman Eric Garcetti said**: "Stay as long as you need to." Kate took a picture of Garcetti and tweeted it.

Continuing coverage

Kate will describe her strategy for covering a story that **extended over many weeks**.

She'll talk about the **night she spent in the Occupy camp** and how she kept her notebook and pen stowed away, using her cell phone to take notes. That put the people she was interviewing at ease and cut down on the verbal abuse she received from passersby. **"It got tiring being jeered at."**

When she wasn't at the encampment, Kate depended on the Internet to keep tabs on what was going on with the movement. Among her sources:

Email listserv: Much of the movement's planning was carried out here. Kate noticed the link on the Occupy website and signed up. "It gave me access to the internal message traffic of the most active people and gave me a peak at their philosophy as it was developing.

There were so many questions, **what do they mean to accomplish**, what is this movement about?

Through the listserv we learned (and were the first to report) **that city officials and protesters were in negotiations** about relocating the camp):

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/nov/22/local/la-me-1122-occupy-la-move-20111122>)

Amazingly, those negotiations were later posted on Youtube. **These guys film EVERYTHING.** (We'll show part of the video)

Video streaming: The revolution will ... televise itself

Video -- **much of it live streaming in real time** -- was a crucial source of information for Kate's reporting. Because the story stretched out for two months and Kate couldn't be there all the time, she needed other eyes and ears.

"The protesters had **their General Assembly meetings every night**, starting at 7:30 pm. I would have burned out pretty quickly if I had to be there nightly. But I could keep an eye on what they were talking about -- and make sure there was nothing newsy happening -- from my house."

Video was being streamed by participants and by freelance video sources, such as crossbonesx (later a subject of a Column One feature in the Times about the phenomenon).

Source of most of the video was UStream (ustream.tv) but discovery is much easier from twitter and facebook, in updates from sources you have connected with. This also helps you make sure that the stream source is what it appears.

"The unique thing about this movement was how incessantly it was being documented by the protesters themselves. (she spent time discovering the most active livestreamers and reached out to them)"

"I would walk around camp and **ask the people with cameras for their twitter handles**. I'd know when they were posting videos online, and then I could monitor what was going on from my computer, even when I wasn't at the camp."

Martin will talk a bit **about verification that video is authentic** and shows what it appears to be showing.

We'll show a video of a protester hitting an LAPD officer with a skateboard.

The eviction: Tweeting live

Kate was embedded with the **LAPD's operation to clear out the Occupiers** in late November.

Worked through the night, tweeting throughout.

"It's a great outlet for details and **color and minutia** that might not make it into the big story or blog post."

She'll share (and we'll) show examples of some of the interesting color she captured.

Live tweeting is like notetaking, observing the details of events you are witnessing and sharing that with followers.

Some of this incremental reporting made it into posts and stories (editors in the office were following the tweets from Kate and others on our staff at the scene and using the raw material for the 30+ blog posts during wee hours.

Examples: the legal observer, tree house guys

The aftermath

When activists are no longer centrally located, social media helps you keep up with activities and plans.

Following and friending on FB and Twitter allowed Kate to continue to keep tabs on the now more disfused movement.

And when Occupy LA resurfaced in the news, Kate felt like she had a head start on jumping back into the story.