Representations of 'trolls' in mass media communication: a review of media-texts and moral panics relating to 'internet trolling'

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Abstract: There is a general trend amongst mass media organisations around the world towards concentration of the visual, written and audio packaging and of newspapers, websites and television as channels of information. These platforms are explored in detail in this paper in relation to the moral panics around 'internet trolling'. This paper discusses the history of trolling in the context of mass media, specifically 'classical trolling' and 'Anonymous trolling'. A review of different media headlines finds that whether or not a story is portrayed in newspapers, online, or on television, the media will use a variety of ways to convey their messages. In the case of 'trolls', they show a darker, sinister and transgressive side of cyberspace in the form of abuse and vitriol (i.e., anonymous trolling). The paper concludes that future research should look in detail at the different character types of internet troller and how these affect the way so called 'trolls' are represented in the media and the effect this has on the attitude towards young internet users and trollers in general.

Keywords: internet trolling; new media; mass media; audience theory; stereotypes.

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1 Introduction

Internet trolling is one of the fastest spreading pieces of computer jargon of the 21st century. The term has been helpful for building the careers of politicians in search of

causes to fight, as well as mass media organisations looking for a means to create a moral panic that provides both entertainment and interest to their audiences. English speaking countries across the world have quickly adopted the term to better communicate ideas and concepts around forms of internet abuse and misuse. The moral panic in the UK was probably ignited because of the abuse of the memorial page of Natasha MacBryde by Sean Duffy, which was popularised around 2011. In Australia and New Zealand, the moral panic took off in 2012 following the abuse of Charlotte Dawson on Twitter, who was an Australian television personality who was born in New Zealand. In the USA trolling came to the forefront much earlier with the suicide of YouTube user Megan Meier in 2006, and in Canada it followed the suicide of Amanda Todd in 2012, whom was abused on YouTube, even after her death.

The term trolling has essentially gone from meaning provoking others for mutual enjoyment to meaning abusing others for only one's own enjoyment. Figure 1 presents different 'memes' from the past and present that captures the differences between trolling as it was in the 1990s, and as it has become in the 2010s.

Figure 1   Differences between trolling memes in the, (a) past (b) present

"I admit I was trolling (provoking), but thank you for your intense participation."	*"Banned from facebook for 24 hours for trolling idiots and a talentless dead piece of shit"*
(a)	(b)

The change in the meaning of trolling needs to be explored in detail, in order to better inform the knowledge base around the topic. This paper therefore presents a document analysis of media coverage of internet trolling to discuss the topic from the point of view of stereotyping, character theories and audience theory.

2   The difference of internet trolling

The word 'troll' conjures up different meanings for different people. One way to understand these differences might be to apply the works of Jacques Derrida. Derrida introduced the term 'différence' (i.e., difference) to describe the concept that two terms should be made distinct from one another as entities. He also introduced the term 'différance' (i.e. differance) to indicate that even with these distinctions it is not possible to fully understand a term as an entity without understanding all the words used to describe it. On this basis 'troll' it could be argued has different definitions and meanings in general and that it is not possible to fully conjure up a meaning of that term that is the same to every person. One of the first recorded attempts to define internet trolling was in the mid-1990s with the launch of the book, 'Netlingo', which is now also online where one can see their definition of trolling (Jansen and James, 1995, 2002).

The word 'troll' when used to refer to persons who try to provoke others might have originated in the US military in the 1960s prior to the realisation of the internet for mass communication, with the term, '*trolling for MiGs*' (Wilcox, 1998). The term's differance is likely to have come from fishing, because of one 'reeling in' one's opposition, which is also often considered the source of the use of the word trolling in relation to the internet (Shah, 2004). The term in this context was reputed to have been used by US Navy pilots in Vietnam in their 'dog-fighting', popularised by the film starring Tom Cruise called

Top Gun. Such a practice, of trying to provoke the opposing fighter pilots was not an authorised operation, but was defended by pilots in order to identify their 'strengths and weaknesses' in combat (Elward et al., 2001). In the US military terms like 'hot pursuit' evolved to describe chasing an opponent's MiG into a restricted area in an 'authorised' way, as provoking them to do so through trolling was forbidden (Wilcox, 2005). So, one can easily see how expressions like 'trolling for newbies' could easily share this difference. For instance, the established members of an online community, called 'elders', can very easily entice newer members into a 'flame war'. It has been argued that this helps newbies identify the strengths and weaknesses in their opinions so that they can more quickly become part of a community, transition from novice to regular (Kim, 2000). This art was lost by the start of the 21st century, and resulted in a number of research papers discussing the prevalence of non-participation, or lurking , and how this could be overcome through greater involvement of elders (Bishop, 2007; Nonnecke and Preece, 2000; Preece et al., 2004). Others have argued the term troll derived from the Scandinavian tradition of 'trolls' as horrific characters that lurked under bridges (Crystal, 2006). If one thinks of the types of trolls that lurk in the background ready to pounce on some unsuspecting user, then it is easy to see how things differance could be formed.

2.1 Classical trolling and Anonymous trolling

The terms, 'classical trolling' and 'Anonymous trolling' might become essential terms for understanding the difference between trolling as it was understood in the 1990s from that which has been popularised by the mass media in the 2010s (Bishop, 2013). Trolling became a common expression in the early 1990s, especially in the usenet group, *alt.folklore.urban*.

Trolling as a phrase for describing internet abuse was popularised in 2011, following a number of tragic cases of 'R.I.P Trolling', where the memorial pages of deceased persons were attacked (Walter et al., 2011). The use of the term 'troll' to describe transgressive and subversive humour was proliferated by the 'hactivist' group, Anonymous, who had accommodated the Manga website (http://www.4chan.org) to share their abuses of others, which was done for their own enjoyment. This creates an easy to identify difference between trolls in the classical sense, and this more modern usage. Classical trolling can be seen to be done for the community's consensual entertainment in order to build bonds between users. Anonymous trolling on the other hand can be seen to be done at the expense of someone outside of a particular community for that person's own sick enjoyment, or to share with others who are part of a 'clubhouse' that encourages trolling. These trolls thus do it for their own enjoyment, even if there is a victim whom has no benefit from it.

2.2 Kudos trolling and flame trolling

Others have described a Troll as someone who mostly initiates threads with seemingly legitimate questions or conversation starters, but with the ultimate goal of drawing unwitting others into useless discussions (Turner et al., 2005). It therefore might be essential to distinguish this abusive form of '*trolling*', by accepting it as '*flame trolling*', which is not intended to be humorous, as compared to that which is intended to entertain others, called '*kudos trolling*', which may be based on transgressive humour, although not exclusively (Bishop, 2012c). This takes account of the fact that what may be grossly

offensive to one person (i.e., a flame) may be entertaining to another (i.e., kudos). It may be helpful to apply this distinction not only to Anonymous trolling, but classical trolling also. One could consider 'trolling for newbies' to be a form of flame trolling, as it encourages flaming by the novice, and the less disruptive trolling, such as a common ritual where two members mutually try to get the better of each other peacefully, could be seen as '*kudos trolling*'. Recent developments include celebrities who have latched on to the term 'troll' as being a negative type of internet user, creating a 'Lolz not trolls' campaign. This creates an obvious difference between Lolz ('laughing out loud' on many occasions) and trolls as people who abused others. This is perhaps ineffective as being a troll in the 1990s and likely in the future when the media interest in trolling dies down will refer to a mischievous character. A more effective campaign from the point of digital natives might have been 'Lolz not Lulz'. In this context Lolz can be seen to synonymous with kudos trolling and Lulz equally synonymous with flame trolling. The phrase 'trolling for the lolz' could then be seen to be distinct from 'trolling for the lulz', with the former being classical trolling performed by elders to initiate novices into the community, and the later performed for the abuse of others for one's own sick enjoyment, such as the transgressive or subversive humour associated with Anonymous trolling. The former is often conducted in online communities frequented by the same people, such as message boards and forums, and the latter on places were there are vulnerable people, who might not be as skilled at internet use.

3   The effect of mass media communications on creating a moral panic around 'trolls' and 'trolling'

The mass media can be seen to have accommodated the word troll between 2010 and 2011. In March 2011 in particular, newspapers like the Daily Mail and the Express, who tailor their content to a more 'right-wing' audience, became a useful term for describing people who abuse others online, following an interview with an English studies student who had done a case study of 4chan. Concurrently the Australian press were starting to use a separately derived term, 'cyber-trolls'. This refers to people who post 'anonymously', or hiding their true identities per se, in order to get enjoyment out of provoking and harming others as opposed to the 4chan mutation of the term, which derived completely from online culture. One might want to ask whether 'R.I.P Trolling' really is internet trolling when most evidence points to the fact that it is done because the poster feels a sense of obligation to disrupt the memorial website because it is being used by people who want to 'jump on the bandwagon' as opposed to being solely used by those who knew the deceased and experience genuine grief (Walter et al., 2011).

3.1   Stereotyping internet trolling

One thing that is certain of all media of all eras is that they rely on popular stereotypes to convey meanings that appeal to their audiences. Mass media organisations are one of the economic components of the global business market (Bučar-Ručman and Meško, 2006). They exist for one purpose – to further their audience figures by using all means at their disposal, from action codes to acting stars. There has been a move away from traditional media by younger audiences, particularly as they feel that the mass media organisations do not represent them (Hopkins, 2009). Mass media organisations are known to keep the

message simple, visible and adaptable to our living situations (Meyer, 2006). The more educated younger audiences may not find this 'dumbing down' of news and other coverage that appealing. The mass media organisations have for a long time created demonised transgressive characters to increase their audiences. The coverage of terrorism, for instance, especially prolonged incidents such as hijackings and hostage situations, has provided an endless source of sensational and visually compelling news stories capable of boosting audience figures (Wilkinson, 1997). Indeed, uses and gratifications research has a practical application in that it assists mass media organisations to determine the motivations of their audiences and serve them more efficiently (Steinberg, 1995). The way in which the word 'troll' has achieved the demon status of other transgressive terms like 'terrorist' shows the way in which the media manipulate and change the meanings of words for its own ends. It exploded from the use of the term to refer to those conducting online harassment of memorial pages in an interview to the Daily Mail newspaper following the abuse of Natasha MacBryde's family by Sean Duffy, a repeated 'R.I.P Troller', following the setting up of a memorial page after the teenager's death (Phillips, 2011).

3.2 Character theories of internet trolling

There have been a number of character theories devised over the history of media formats. Propp (1968) presented a framework of characters that one would find in the typical folktale, which include a hero and a princess. Some have attempted to introduce minor advancements to understanding characters in online communities (Campbell et al., 2009), but a more comprehensive model can be found in Bishop (2008), which was extended by Bishop (2012c) following the mass use of social networking for surveillance and escape, such as Facebook, by all generations when it was once the preserve of the Net Generation (Leung, 2003). This adapted model by Bishop (2012c) is presented in Table 1.

It has long been known that not all trollers are obnoxious and can troll equally for good as bad (Lambropoulos, 2006). The former 'good' ones are the kudos trollers, and the 'bad' ones the flame trollers (Bishop, 2012b, 2012c). In Table 1, it is easy to identify those who could be considered flame trollers. The Big Man, who assumes a de facto council who judges others, can be seen to sometimes unknowingly flame others by correcting their 'inaccuracies' and asserting the 'truth' from their point of view. The Snert is perhaps more of what people now see as what a 'troll' is, and it might be obvious to see they are a type of 'Hater', as is used more technically to describe people who abuse others. The E-Venger will have been wronged by someone in an online community, or someone belonging to a cause the website supports, so this may be another example of how 'Haters' come into existence, such as those who target celebrities. E-Vengers will go out of their way to damage the community or its users in any way they can, if they felt wronged by them. Another type of Hater is the Iconoclast, who will do all that it takes to make sure everyone knows the 'truth'. They will post facts that users do not want to hear as it puts them into a state of dissonance by dashing their worldview, known as 'mind-hooking' or even 'mind-f--king'. A particularly problematic troller is the Chatroom Bob, which is a type of 'Lolcow'. These characters are online to satisfy their needs, which often include asking other users for 'naked pictures' or trying to seduce others into lured acts. Another problematic troller is the 'Elder', which as an 'Eyeballer' looks for unsuspecting novices to troll. Central to the community and whom have been there a long

time, will have had enough and are looking for a reason to leave so that they are 'pushed' rather than having 'jumped'. They often do this by 'trolling for newbies', where they will post comments they know will incite these new members into flaming them, which will start a barrage of offensive messages, known as a 'flame war'. The character in this model referred to as a 'Troll' resembles more the type of troller seen in classical trolling than the 'trolls' seen in Anonymous trolling. It might be an effective difference therefore would be to refer to those trollers who carry out classical trolling as 'Trolls' (with a capital 'T') and those who carry out Anonymous trolling as 'trolls' (with a lower-case 't').

Table 1   List of troller character types and their trolling techniques

		Troller character type	Description
Haters (like to inflame situations so for no real benefit to tohers)		E-Venger	Driven by 'vengeance' forces. An E-Venger does trolling in order to trip someone up so that their 'true colours' are revealed.
		Iconoclast	Driven by 'destructive' forces. An Iconoclast takes part in trolling to help others discover 'the truth', often by telling them things completely factual, but which may drive them into a state of consternation. They may post links to content that contradicts the worldview of their target.
		Snert	Driven by 'anti-social' forces. A Snert takes part in trolling to harm others for their own sick entertainment.
Lolcows (like to provoke others so the attention is on them)		Big Man	Driven by 'order' forces. A Big Man does trolling by posting something pleasing to others in order to support their world view.
		Ripper	Driven by 'thanatotic' forces. A Ripper takes part in self-deprecating trolling in order to build a false sense of empathy from others.
		Chatroom Bob	Driven by 'existential' forces. A Chatroom Bob takes part in trolling to gain the trust of others members in order to exploit them.
Bzzzters (like to chat regardless of accuracy or usefulness of contributions)		MHBFY Jenny	Driven by 'forgiveness forces'. An MHBFY Jenny takes part in trolling to help people see the lighter side of life and to help others come to terms with their concerns.
		Wizard	Driven by 'creative' forces. A Wizard does trolling through making up and sharing content that has a humorous effect.
		Flirt	Driven by 'social' forces. A Flirt takes part in trolling to help others be sociable, including through light 'teasing'.
Eyeballs (like to watch what others do for the 'opportune' moment to post a provocative message)		Lurker	Driven by 'surveillance' forces. Lurkers make silent calls by accident, etc., clicking on adverts or 'like' buttons, using 'referrer spoofers', reporting posts, modifying opinion polls or user kudos scores.
		Troll	Driven by 'chaos' forces. A Troll takes part in trolling to entertain others, bringing some fun and mischief to an online community.
		Elder	Driven by 'escape' forces. An Elder is an outbound member of the community, often engaging in 'trolling for newbies', where they wind up the newer members often without questioning from other members.

3.3   *Audience theory and internet trolling*

Audience theory is the driving force behind how the media presents itself, for the reason that under free-market conditions, people demand coverage that reinforces their values (Morris, 2011). It has become apparent that those who dislike internet trolls in the UK read The Sun and the Daily Mail as it is those that carry the most articles attacking so-called trolls as abusers. The Sun has been running a campaign to solve the 'problem' of trolling, and is always ready to claim credit to its readers when a development occurs. Existing studies have attempted to inform a theoretical reconsideration of how far audience theory can be applied to internet participants and how far the internet's interactive features make it unlike other mass media (Green, 2001). The internet seems to make 'uses and gratifications theory' even more present. According to Marketline industry reporting, there are also no switching costs for readers of newspapers, and little stopping a change of subscription save brand loyalty. They point out that the product is, although differentiated, quite replaceable and most readers will substitute happily when their chosen newspaper is unavailable. This indicates the importance to a newspaper or news website building a strong fit for a particular point of view, and in the case of internet trolling there are very clear segments. There are the digital natives, who are annoyed news-sources are 'misusing' the term trolling. There is a group of people looking for a new villain to attack in order to escape their own insecurities. And there are the counter-cultured groups who enjoy identifying as trolls as they know it is seen as deviant by others, making their subversive and transgressive humour that much more enjoyable.

4   A review of mass media representations of internet trolling and trolls

The depictions of parental surveillance purport to protect the child from unknown dangers, such as on the internet, and are in keeping with both moral panics related to children and technology (Steeves, 2012). Such scandals and moral panics are inherently relevant for the mass media as massive public attention provoked by transgressions is both a constituent element of scandals and the ultimate purpose of mass media organisations to increase audiences (Kühne and Sadowski, 2011). The final product of 'ideas', which are depicted through mass media communication to entice audiences, reflects the interests of the small powerful groups in the society (Al-Hasani, 2010).

4.1   *Methodology*

The methodological approach taken in this study is document analysis. Document analysis is done to analyse entire forms, such as intelligent form analysis and table detection, or to describe the layout and structure of a document (Kleber et al., 2010). In the case of this study it will be the latter. One new problem in web document analysis is the rich variety of data formats (Lopresti and Zhou, 1998). This is something this paper hopes to address, by showing how different online formats relate to their equivalent offline formats.

4.2   Documents

In the first surge in the take-up of the internet, between 1997 and 2001, the moral panic portrayed was the safety of children, and the risk of being subject to transgressive manipulation by internet predators for their own ends (Facer, 2012). The current fascination with 'trolls' appears to be the latest extension of the misunderstanding of technology and fear of its potential by people who consume media to confirm their prejudicial fears. Table 2 describes three types of media-text containing representations of trolling and trolls that will be used in this study.

Table 2   Three types of mass media communication both online and offline

Mass media communication method	Description
Newspapers	In newspapers verbal information is communicated through the printed word in a various typographical manners and often congruence is maintained through these being anchored with images that enhance the message of the writer.
Websites	On websites verbal information can be presented in many rich ways. Visual images can include text, or series of images can accompany sound in video clips. Traditional options like streaming video, sound recordings, and plain text are also available. The congruence of anchoring of text with imagery is very much dependent on the websites approach to things.
Television	On television verbal information is more than often actually conveyed verbally. However issues like the mise en scene often come into play, as in order to create congruence the persons speaking will have to conform to a stereotypical dress-code suited to the location of where they may be reporting from.

4.3   Results

The results from the document analysis provides clear differences in terms of how the different mass media communication methods present information on trollers, and also show how there are clear differences between how individual publications present information to appeal to different audiences. Most of the outlets present trollers as the 'trolls' in Anonymous trolling as opposed to 'Trolls' that one would find in classical trolling.

4.3.1   Newspapers

Mass media organisations selling newspapers have been hit hard by the global financial situation at a time when they were already struggling to deal with the implications of technological advances on their business model (Bridgman, 2010). This means the need for sensationalist transgressive representations, often of youths, to create moral panics in order to boost sales is needed more than ever. Since 2011, their target has been what they call 'trolls', which is a simple term they use to describe a variety of flame trollers.

Figure 2   Representations of Liam Stacey in, (a) Mirror (b) Express

(a)   (b)

One of the most publicised transgressive flame trolling narratives was that of Liam Stacey. Stacey, a 21-year-old biology student, was sentenced to 56 days in prison, of which he served half, for posting racist abuse on Twitter, following being rebuked by other users for an insensitive comment about a footballer. Stacey mocked the cardiac arrest of Fabrice Muamba, a Bolton Wanderers player, who collapsed on the pitch at an FA Cup fixture. Stacey faced complaints from celebrities and the public alike. One, Stan Collymore, who is known for his past media highlights of his domestic violence (discussed below), said he was proud to report Stacey to the police, saying "people need to report every incident of racist behaviour". The reporting of Stacey's conviction in the media appeared to change based on the newspaper reporting, and may offer some insight into the sympathies or otherwise of those newspaper's readers as can be seen from both Tables 2 and 3.

Table 3 shows the differences in portrayals of Stacey and Muamba in the Daily Mirror and Daily Express. The Mirror adopts a transgressive narrative, branding Stacey a 'sick troll', compared with the Daily Express calling him a 'sobbing student'. The use of troll in this context could be compared with other loaded words of a transgressive nature like 'killer' or 'mad man', often used to describe people involved in severe violent attacks. Using the persuasion continuum, one can see the Mirror is trying to present Stacey at the domination end, when it was more likely he was towards the playtime end. The Mirror says that Stacey was "suspended from his university course", which by its blandness suggests an indifference. This significantly contrasts with the Express, which says Stacey faces being 'kicked out' of Swansea University, suggesting the writer finds Stacey to be maltreated or wrongly singled out, and in fact the victim of others

transgressions. This would suggest that the Express places Stacey very much at the playtime end of the participation continuum.

Table 3   Differences in reporting of Liam Stacey by Daily Mirror and Daily Express

| Newspaper	Stacey is:	Muamba is:
Daily Mirror	A 'sick troll', university student, handcuffed, suspended from his university course	A Bolton star, remaining in intensive care, engaged to his girlfriend
Daily Express	A sobbing student, in a smart brown shirt and matching tie, sobbing uncontrollably, taken to the cells in handcuffs, broke down and shook visibly, hugged by mother Hayley and father Neale, faces being kicked out of Swansea University	Collapsed 11 days ago, recovering well in hospital with fiancée at his side.

The Express refers to Stacey as being 'hugged' by his mother Hayley and father Neale, indicating that he is being supported through a tough time, making him look like a playtime Ripper rather than as a domination Snert (or 'Anonymous troll') as the Express tried to. Equally the Mirror refers to Muamba as 'remaining in intensive care' and 'engaged to his girlfriend'. This may imply that he is at death's door and struggling for his life, meaning his 'girlfriend' may lose her fiancé. Contrasting this with the Express shows a different take on the story. The Express says that Muamba is "recovering well in hospital with his fiancée at his side". This suggests Muamba is on the mend and being supported by his partner. Equally the reference to his collapsing 11 days ago suggests as it was a long time ago Muamba is not in as serious a condition.

4.3.2 Websites

Websites which are visually attractive by having the correct choices of colours, fonts, graphics and overall layout on a website are known to influence users' perceptions that website's credibility (Chua et al., 2012). This can have a huge impact on readers' approach to news websites. The differences between newspaper articles and websites used in this paper are clear, as are the similarities. One can see from Figure 3 that in print the 'enormity' of a story's transgressive appeal is reflected with headlines with huge text anchored to similar imagery, whereas on the web the headlines are pretty much the same size for each article.

The article on the left of a shameful time for Stan Collymore, shows him looking that way with his head down almost masked by a baseball cap. Equally one can see the same in the internet troller Joshua Cryer being led out of court when Collymore was the victim – of Cryer's racist abuse – making him look like a Ripper (see Table 1).

The image on Figure 3(a) reports how Collymore went on a drunken rampage in the Spanish resort of La Manga. Collymore, who was 29 at the time, set off a fire extinguisher among other damaging acts. Despite this drunken spate, years later, Collymore, apparently forgetting his past, criticised the transgressions of drunken student Liam Stacey (discussed earlier) for his questionable text messaging when he was drunk, saying, "*I'm proud to say I did report Liam Stacey. People need to report every incident of racist behaviour*". It is interesting to note how Stacey was presented with his head down (Figure 2) as Collymore was during his 'drunken rampage'.

Figure 3   Representations of Stan Collymore in, (a) Mirror newspaper (b) Mirror online

(a)   (b)
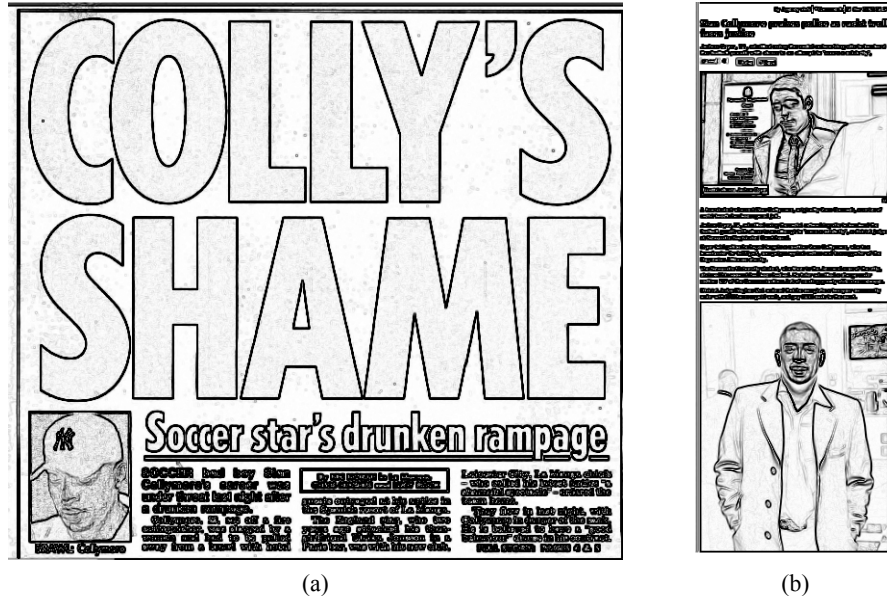
Equally, Joshua Cryer, who was 21 at the time, was convicted at Newcastle Magistrates' Court in March 2012 under Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 for sending grossly offensive messages to goad Collymore. As one can see from the depiction of Cryer in Figure 3, he had his head down. This indicated shame, as appears to be common used as a way the media can represent the humiliation of those they want to portray transgressively, suggesting he is a domination troller that was 'caught red handed'. This article presents Collymore as the victim, where he is shown dressed smart a pleasant smile to indicate confidence and strength. It contrasts with the image of Collymore in the article presenting him as a shameful drunken and violent man. Cryer is made to look like a shamed strategic E-Venger or Snert (see Table 1), whose messages were intended to deliberately goad Collymore. This was a rare use of the Communications Act at the time, and his sentence for his premeditated attacks attracted a two-year community order and was also ordered to pay £150. The fact that both sensational transgressive news narratives are from the same newspaper shows how the media manipulate imagery for their own ends. What would people have thought if the Mirror had used the same image of Collymore when he was in a shaming situation in the article where he was the victim?

4.3.3 Television

While the power and influence of newspaper coverage is well known, television is by far the most powerful tool of demonisation (Wolfsfeld, 2001). In terms of trolling, there have been a number of documentaries relating to it in Great Britain since the term 'troll' was used by the media to describe a cyber-bully. The mise en scène and montage of these programmes appear to reflect the way the producers want to manipulate their audiences. For instance, the BBC Wales programme in May 2012 had a particular sinister backdrop. Their 'Big Man' for the programme, who was their expert, looked typical of someone

who might inhabit an 'underworld' of demon-like trollers. This expert was portrayed in dark lighting in front of a computer

Most flame trollers are youths, and one might be forgiven for wondering whether the media campaigning against so called 'trolls' is evidence of a continued social and political demonisation of young people, which has led to increasing levels of stigmatism about them in the community outside their home (Deuchar, 2009), which they project onto others though their actions online.

Figure 4   (a) Representations of Duffy (b) His victims on ITV News

(a)   (b)

If one were to look to Figure 4(a), one can see how the media reflect this demonisation of young people through televised media. The repeat R.I.P Troller in this instance, Sean Duffy, is pictured side-on walking to the left, and therefore away from something – most probably decency. This makes him look like a Hater, which is what he is in one form or another. One can compare this with the way his victims are portrayed in Figure 4(b). Natasha MacBryde was a 15-year old who was hit by a train, when her memorial page was ransacked by Duffy four days after her death. Duffy created a YouTube video called '*Tasha the Tank Engine*' which had MacBryde's face superimposed on a locomotive. Duffy was sentenced to a 13-week prison term under the Malicious Communications Act 1988. Speaking after the case, MacBryde's mother said, "*I remember going up and lying next to her at the cemetery thinking I can't stop this person hurting her. This is something that we shouldn't have to go through – we've lost our daughter and that was really hard. This was just a whole new thing we had to put up with again*". MacBryde's father was equally disturbed, "*This person was hiding behind a computer. For me you can't see him, you can't do anything. It is very hard for a father. You all try and protect your kids*". As can be imagined, the family of Natasha MacBryde look disheartened and dejected, which is reflected in their posture and facial expressions, resembling Rippers. The way they are grouped together suggests resilience, implying they will not be defeated, yet having their head down shows their sorrow.

5   Towards a common framework for classifying internet trolling

This paper has presented the various different distinctions between different types of internet troller, and those between various ways of looking at types of trolling. These have included describing the differences between classical trolling, which was done to entertain and inform, with those of Anonymous trolling, which are done at other's expense, often to cause harm. Established ways of defining trolling, such as by Jansen

and James (2002), need to be considered also. In this case trolling was judged in grades. They were namely, playtime, tactical, strategic and domination, with the first the least severe, and the last most severe. There have also been other concepts presented in the media, like cyber-bullying and cyber-hickery, used to describe types of trolling. Others included cyber-bantering, which is mostly harmless, and cyber-trickery, which requires a little more planning. Table 4 presents an amalgamation of these, synthesised with the earlier investigation to provide an easy way to understand the differences and differences between ways of understanding internet trolling.

Table 4   A matrix of internet trolling types and implications

Type	Description	Classical trolling	Anonymous trolling
TM1 – playtime cyber-bantering (cyber-trolling)	In the moment and quickly regret	This type of classical trolling is often in the moment, or otherwise intended to give the troller and others a laugh as close to the point that the troller thought of their 'gag'. Contemporary outlets for this type of cyber-bantering include Yahoo Answers.	Examples of cyber-bantering websites using Anonymous trolling are Sikipedia and Encyclopedia Dramatica, which are free speech, but can be offensive to some.
		Questions where the user protests that they are not trolling, when usually they are. The most prolific troller on Yahoo! Answers was known as 'Phil J' and always wound people up with his sick stories usually ending with "...it was a lot more erotic than I expected."	Reece Messer posted a tweet to Tom Daley, an Olympic diver, saying that he let his late father down by not getting a medal. When others attacked him following Tom Daley retweeting it, resulting in his followers setting upon Messer, he apologised, but this dignified and honest apology was not accepted, resulting in non-credible threats being made. Another example was that of Paul Chambers who posted a message on Twitter joking that if an airport did not open he would blow it up.
2 tactical TM2 – cyber-trickery (cyber-trolling)	In the moment but do not regret and continue	Popular 'subversive' websites like 'Temple of the Screaming Electron' (http://www.totse.com) would often have people go on there to ask for 'advice'. The typical response would be 'm/s' (i.e., murder/suicide). A discussion might ensue on how to do this.	Websites like 4chan and other 'image boards' are often accommodated for the posting of abusive images that require a small amount of effort. Liam Stacey is known for posting a tweet mocking the fact that Fabrice Muamba, a premiership footballer, had collapsed with a cardiac arrest. When others challenged him over this he became abusive, posting racist comments. It is likely he knew he was being offensive, but did not stop doing so.

Table 4   A matrix of internet trolling types and implications (continued)

Type	Description	Classical trolling	Anonymous trolling
TM3 – strategic cyber-bullying (cyber-stalking)	Go out of way to cause problems, but without a sustained and planned long-term CAMPAIGN	Websites subject to this type of classical trolling are ones that are open to a wide audience, where many can see the message posted and then move on.	Websites subject to this type of Anonymous trolling are ones where vulnerable people are easily accessible, sometimes as a result of lack of understanding of privacy settings.
		Jake Baker was a student at the University of Michigan. He was suspended following posting a story to *alt.sex.stories*, which had ideas around the rape and murder of a woman he said was his classmate. With a Canadian friend Arthur Gonda he would share abusive posts about women, which they never received. The person who was the 'victim' in the stories, Jane Doe, was only aware when charges were brought against Baker.	An unnamed troller was given a caution for abusing Bridget Agar, who was the mother to a child who died in a scooter accident. The youth posted messages on a fake Facebook page named after the child, such as "*Mum, I'm not really dead. I'm sat at the computer, I just ran away" and "I've gone to hell*"". The troller was forced to accept a harassment warning, and their identity was not revealed to Mrs gar.
TM4 – domination cyber-hickery (cyber-stalking)	Goes out of the way to create rich media to target one or more specific individuals	Websites subject to this type of classical trolling are usually ones based around private messaging, such as dating websites, e-mail and instant messaging.	Websites that are subject to this type of Anonymous trolling are usually social networking services used by the masses, such as Facebook and Twitter.
		The 'case of the electronic lover' was one of the most documented forms of cyber-hickery. Alexander was a psychiatrist from New York and posted to a chatroom under the name of Joan. He convinced women he was a woman and they opened up to him even having 'lesbian' cybersex. He portrayed Joan as having a disability, but was forced to come clean when others insisted on meeting him – as Joan, which he could not do.	Sean Duffy could be considered to be one of the most prolific of flame trollers in the world. Even though he is continually sentenced to jail, he goes out of his way to 'vandalise' the memorial pages of grieving families. In one instance, he went to the effort of making a video, called '*Tasha the Tank Engine'* to upset the family of the late teenager, Natasha MacBryde.

6   Discussion

The term 'troll' has changed in recent years to mean not only the provocation of internet users, but the abuse of them also. It could be argued that the increased use of the term is driven by the media's desire for a moral panic to shift its publications at a time when growth is low (0.2%). The nature of how trolls and trolling are presented varies between

different news sources, and this suggests the moral panic around internet trolling is presented to different audiences based on the gratifications they get from consuming them.

The paper found that there were clear differences between the presentation of trolling to audiences who read the Express and the Mirror. The former presented Liam Stacey, a Twitter troller, as 'sobbing', 'visible shaken' and 'hugged' by his mother, and the latter as him being 'sick', 'handcuffed' and 'suspended from university'. The description of Stacey's claimed victim was to have him portrayed as a victim by the Mirror which was unfavourable to Stacey, and as a survivor by the Express, which was more supportive of Stacey.

The study also found differences between the way trolling and trolls presented by the same media publication on their websites and in print depending on the objective of the journalist writing it. When Stan Collymore went on a 'drunken rampage' the text in the newspaper was large and showed him wearing a baseball cap with his head down, as if to represent shame. In the online article following him being a victim of trolling he was presented upright and cheerful to show confidence and how strong he was. This shows how the media will in a calculated way present people in visually distinct ways depending on the agenda of the journalist or newspaper.

In terms of television, this paper looked at the representations of notorious troll, Sean Duffy, and his victims. He was presented walking from right to left with his head down, as if to suggest he was departing in shame. The family whose daughter he targeted were presented outside the court bunched together looking sad, attempting to get people to pity them. This was another clear attempt to portray trolls in a negative light and exploit their victims to feed those who consume the media to detract attention from their own lives, where they may be less than perfect.

Overall this paper has shown how there are clear techniques employed by the media to convey particular messages about internet trolls and trolling. These vary between newspapers, suggesting they have different audiences that consume content in different ways. The demonisation of digital teens as trolls by the media provides a useful way to propagate the cycle of juvenile justice. These young people, who are a new generation of digital natives, enjoy control over their use and production of media, which goes beyond the control that some journalists may be comfortable with (Cavagnero, 2012). In this cycle, youths are at one point presented as the perpetrators of abuse against others, and the cause of a broken society. Then following this they are presented as victims of abuse, often the same people whom were actually to blame for the 'broken society'. Indeed, at the time of going to press, the media had started to focus on the 'cyberbullying' of young people and the fact that celebrities were stopping their children from using mobile phones and the internet.

6.1 *Limitations and directions for future research*

This paper has presented a brief account of the different representations of internet trollers through mass media communications – in particular in newspapers, on the internet and on television. The study was limited to only three main groups of stories in the media, and it might be that a more extensive study is required to replicate the findings. Future research could look in detail at the different character types presented in the study and how these affect the way so-called 'trolls' are represented in the media and the effect this has on the attitude towards trollers in general. Most of the trollers

investigated in this paper were youths, so a thorough investigation of whether the current moral panic over 'trolls' in the media is an example of the 'cycle of juvenile justice', where youths get targeted more severely at one point in time and less so at others. Studies may also need to look at issues such as misogyny, as many of the victims of R.I.P Trollers like Sean Duffy have been female.

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