IPI Report

Brave
News
Worlds

Navigating the
New Media Landscape

Preface

For the past three years, discussions about the future of the news media have centered on the decline of the so-called golden age of journalism and the descent into a chaos characterised by splintered audiences, decimated balance sheets, and the muscling-in of amateurs. Fearing that their halcyon days as the guardians of information are numbered, many editors and journalists have engaged in collective navel-gazing, asking themselves: What went wrong?

But is the future really so bleak? Is the decline a global phenomenon? Are we moving into a new 'golden age'? And what does it mean for press freedom?

To find answers to these pressing questions, the International Press Institute teamed up with the Poynter Institute, one of the premier journalism training centers in the world, to set out on a global investigation assembling an international group of editors, journalists, visionaries and sceptics to discover how the future of the news is developing around the world.

The result is that after a 10-year absence, the IPI Report series has returned, revamped and reinvigorated with a new edition entitled "Brave News Worlds", a report that charts the exciting times ahead for the news media and uncovers the many different global perspectives thereof.

Picking up where the IPI Report series left off in 2000, "Brave News Worlds" explores what the next 10 years hold for the news and journalism industry and offers insight into how journalists and non-journalists alike can take advantage of changes in the media and technology to make the future of news a bright one.

Edited by Bill Mitchell, Head of the Poynter Institute's Entrepreneurial Journalism and International Programs, the report brings together the greatly diverse perspectives of 42 editors, journalists and media experts from over 20 countries to tackle issues such as regulation and control, emerging forms of journalism and the power of the public, along with the need to reframe traditional news models to better engage with audiences.

With a focus on effective solutions and lessons learned, but also providing stimulus for debate, this report is not a definitive map, but instead a compass, pointing us, the global media, in the right direction: To a sustainable and successful future for journalism.

Lauren Dolezal
Commissioning and Production Editor

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Discovering New Value Along New Routes for News

By Bill Mitchell

Not that long ago, journalism's transition from analog to digital looked a whole lot simpler, the road ahead appearing nearly as straight and narrow as orderly packets of bytes zipping down the line one after another.

For a time, we even relied on a metaphor that, in retrospect, rings laughably naive. The Information Super Highway has been overtaken by a messier thicket of trails, many of which lead nowhere. And yet, with renewed signs of reportorial resolve stirring around the globe, journalists and non-journalists alike are uncovering paths that hold the promise of informing more people, more thoroughly, than ever before.

From Bogota to Burma, from Warsaw to Washington, they – we – are mapping new routes for news. You'll find accounts from each of those datelines and more among the 42 essays that follow.

In assembling this report, IPI and its partner in the project, the Poynter Institute, asked some of the most creative thinkers in and around journalism to provide a snapshot of today's landscape – and to sketch the world of news in the decade ahead.

Our intent with this collection is more provocation than documentation, more a call to action than a snapshot in time. We've divided the report's 42 essays into three chapters organized around three objectives: Scoping out the journey ahead, discovering paths with promise, and discerning lessons learned in reports from the field.

To make the report as useful as possible, we have attached tags and summaries to the first page of each article, easy for you to scan – based on your own interests – during your initial run through the pages that follow. In a concluding essay on page 149, I list 10 of the tags that emerge for me as especially useful waypoints through the report – and through the next few years for journalism. The report will also be available in digital formats, with details available at www.poynter.org/futureofnews.

Exploring journalism's critical issues is a fitting way to mark the first 60 years of the International Press Institute, launched in October 1950 by a group of 34 editors from 15 countries meeting at Columbia University in New York.

Those editors focused on the promotion and protection of press freedom and the improvement of journalistic practices. They founded the new organization on a bold and simple premise: that a free press would contribute to the creation of a better world.

Creating News in New Shapes and Sizes

The original shape of that free press has been disrupted, especially in recent years, by fundamental shifts in the ways news animates our civic lives and supports itself financially.

The free press, 60 years on, is sustained by a range of practitioners and initiatives never imagined by those editors gathered in Morningside Heights at the midpoint of the last century.

Whether you're a working journalist, a newsroom boss or a business-side executive, these essays offer evidence and insight useful in shaping your own view of journalism's future – and the steps you'll take to realize it.

A report like this presumes no single view of the future. Instead, you'll find some quite specific descriptions of how news is changing around the world, along with prescriptions that I know you'll feel free to accept or reject. As you read the report, consider what it suggests about how you and your organization do news today. Get clear about what you know, as my colleagues at Poynter like to say, and what you need to know next.

Like news itself, the report tilts in the direction of what's new as opposed to what's not, highlighting such topics as:

The emergence of the so-called Fifth Estate – bloggers and others whose work usually does not generate the bulk (or any) of their

income – and its relationship with mainstream journalists of the Fourth Estate. William Dutton and Geoffrey Robertson address the growing importance to democratic life of the core value of each estate: Freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

The Obstacles facing what Roy Greenslade characterizes as the "the journalism business and the business of journalism, in which the former represents commerce and the latter represents public service."

The value and values of citizen journalism and its often boisterous cousins, crowdsourcing and social media. How do they fit with journalism's ultimate purpose – as well as its bottom line? Rajesh Kalra points out that news organizations gain not only in content but in loyalty by engaging the contributions of their customers. But several of the authors also describe the challenge of resolving real conflict over such values as verification, fairness and independence.

The challenge of sustaining, in an era of uncommon customization, a common presentation of news to the diverse constituents who populate our civic lives. How do we make good decisions about the commonweal, in other words, if we have our noses buried in the Daily Me?

The central question for journalists and news organizations in each of these areas: How will you engage what Clay Shirky describes as the "coordinated voluntary participation" of your readers, viewers, listeners and users in creating the news that civil society requires?

Shirky's seminal 2009 essay, "Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable," helped inspire part of IPI's 60th anniversary Congress, "Thinking the Unthinkable: Are We Losing the News?"

In his essay for this report, he sketches a future that's quite thinkable, for journalists and their audiences alike, but only if journalists figure out smart ways of accommodating what he terms "the shock of inclusion" of the former audience in the enterprise of news gathering, distribution and sharing.

Shirky points out that a great deal of audience participation involves voluntary efforts motivated by "human desires to do things that make us happy, not just things that pay us money."

He says the "shock of inclusion is coming from the outside in, driven not by the professionals formerly in charge, but by the former audience. It is also being driven by new entrepreneurs, the men and women who want to build new kinds of sites and services that assume, rather than ignore, the free time and talents of the public."

Damian Tambini, the British expert on media law and policy, rejects the notion of a Fourth and Fifth Estate, arguing that there's "no real boundary between 'the Internet' and the press."

Media freedom without media power?
But he raises a key question: "The current crisis of the business model, and therefore of the fourth estate, itself leads to an uncomfortable question: Can we have media freedom without media power?"

Gone are the days when the twin challenges of journalism's commerce and craft could be addressed separately. Sustaining news as a fuel of democratic life demands not only traditional journalistic skills, but the entrepreneurial tools that Dan Gillmor lists as essential to creating the sort of value someone will pay for.

Premesh Chandran, the human rights advocate and co-founder of the leading online publication in Malaysia, Malaysiakini.com, offers a case study of the site's struggle to sustain itself with a pay wall that has been in place since 2002.

Reconciling that approach with the increasingly open and collaborative environment of the Web has been difficult, with subscription numbers stagnating since 2008.

"Twitter's ability to spread breaking news fast was …a major blow to Malaysiakini's positioning," he writes. "Twitter provided newsmakers, especially politicians, with a direct route to the audience, reducing their reliance on news media.

"As a subscription site, Malaysiakini has also been cut off from social media. Users are more likely to share links on Facebook and Twitter that their non-subscriber friends can read."

Chandran is not giving up on the subscription model, linking its rejuvenation to the sort of innovation he hopes will provide sufficient new value to users to sustain the site.

The year ahead will include significant experimentation with paid content, ranging from the sort of blunt pay wall recently imposed on all of the content of the Times of London to the more flexible

metered approach that the New York Times says it will introduce in January 2011.

In Chapter One of the report, The Journey Ahead, you'll find an essay about a more fundamental issue written by Alex Jones, author of the 2009 book, "Losing the News," that helped inspire the second part of the IPI Congress title.

Securing Coverage of the 'Commons'

Jones highlights a concern also raised by South Africa's Ferial Haffajee and others in the report: "It is easily possible to know in depth about your favorite sports team or an automobile accident in your neighborhood," Jones writes, "but to be utterly unaware of genocide in Africa… to know little about the broad picture that includes points of view that are foreign in every respect."

He adds: "That is not an enhancement of democracy. The most democratic – meaning, the non-customized view of the world – is the one that is most apt to be created with the idea of informing a lot of people with diverse interests and backgrounds."

The key to saving the news, Jones argues, is the editorial decision-making exercised by "the old-fashioned and disparaged editor with independent judgment…"

The loss of such professionals has damaged journalism's capacity for public service in ways that Greenslade acknowledges he underestimated: "I frankly admit that I made a mistake some years ago, while in the first throes of cheering the digital advance, of advocating the reduction in editorial jobs," he writes "It was a reasonable argument at the time but publishers have taken it to an unreasonable limit."

Greenslade says journalists must focus now on the construction of "a bridge from old to new media in order to preserve the best of what we have in order to enhance the good that is to come."

Some of that "good to come" is already being created by newcomers to the world of journalism, contributors to an emerging ecosystem of news who are no longer content simply to receive reports produced by others.

Steve Buttry points out that journalists have long relied on community members for eye-witness accounts of news that journalists missed. Many people have stopped waiting for reporters to show up and are just publishing their observations on their own, a trend that enterprising news organizations are beginning to pick up on as they incorporate some of that content.

There's opportunity to create new value for users with that material. There are also risks.

Not all of what users share is accurate. IPI's Alison Bethel McKenzie points out the challenge of sorting out truth from rumor in the blizzard of social media that followed the 2009 Iranian elections. With foreign correspondents thrown out of the country, it fell to people on the street to document with cell phone cameras and text updates the stories of the uprising that ensued. In an early example of the sort of collaboration that will be required going forward, journalists in London, the US and elsewhere stepped in to provide the fact-checking and context understandably missing from reports from the streets.

Along the way, journalists and their new partners will need to wrestle with their often conflicting views of such values as verification, transparency, accountability and fairness. Collaboration will be key with a whole range of partners, not just the blogosphere. News organizations are also developing new alliances with NGOs, universities and even competitors.

The St. Petersburg Times, owned by the Poynter Institute and the largest newspaper in Florida, has merged its reporting from the state capital with its state-wide rival, the Miami Herald.

The pace of all this change can be overwhelming. International media consultant Fernando Samaniego says media executives sometimes respond to his call for urgent action by suggesting that the revolution can wait.

"I always tell them that they are dead wrong," Samaniego writes, "because their readers/clients have discovered the Internet and… will bypass traditional media if they are not offered quality content."

The essays collected here suggest no reason to wait. The issues of press freedom that moved those 34 founding editors to take action 60 years ago are ever more urgent. As IPI's Bethel McKenzie notes, there's no let-up in powerful forces erecting barriers to the freedom of information that's a fundamental, universal right.

Around the globe, journalists and their collaborators are discovering the tools and tactics that can yield new routes for news and, in the process, protect the rights common to us all.

Bill Mitchell leads the Entrepreneurial Journalism and International programs at the Poynter Institute, a school for journalists in St. Petersburg, Florida. To contact any of the authors in this report – or to suggest follow-up discussions of any of the issues raised – send an email to bmitch@poynter.org.

News as a Service to be Sustained Rather than a Product to be Sold

By Jeff Jarvis

A new news ecosystem is forming, in which newspapers are part of networks that enable communities to share and make sense of information.

Editor's Note: We asked Jeff Jarvis, the author, journalism professor and media visionary, to update an essay he wrote three years ago for the World Association of Newspapers. The topic: "Newspapers in 2020."

We must blow up our conception of a news organization—and news. Very soon, we had better hope that newspapers aren't just papers any more but are valued members of larger networks that enable their communities to gather, share, and make sense of the news they need.

Communities won't need news organizations to gather and share information; using technology, they are starting to do that on their own at a marginal cost of zero. Journalists and publishers then must ask how they can add value to that process, how they can become platforms (Google-like) for conversation and sharing, for asking questions and getting answers, for pooling knowledge and holding debate, for adding reporting, for building new ecosystems of news.

The journalists may offer technology and training as well as reporting. The publishers may set up networks that help sustain their members with advertising, events, services, and other sources of value and revenue. One company will yield to 100 companies, each smaller but—thanks to the efficiencies of collaboration and specialization and the higher value of targeting—each more efficient and profitable.

In the US, I see the first seeds of such a new ecosystem of news emerging.

In Washington, DC, TBD.com, started by the company that owns POLITICO, will cover Washington with a few dozen journalists collaborating with scores of local bloggers in content-and-ad networks, competing with the Washington Post and its much heavier cost burden.

In Brooklyn, my colleagues and our students at the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism are running The Local with the New York Times. We are working together to nurture a new ecosystem, training members of the community in media and journalism and training citizen sales forces to sell new forms of service to local merchants.

At Journal Register, a beleaguered and recently bankrupt newspaper chain, new CEO John Paton decreed that his staff should put digital first and print last as he remakes his company collaborating with local blog networks built by startup Growthspur. The company (I'm among its advisors) has found new efficiencies even in print (on 4 July, all 18 of its dailies were published using only free online tools).

Yes, we see the beginnings. But we still have not been nearly radical enough in rethinking what a newspaper is.

So what is a newspaper? That's what young people may soon ask. Jeffrey Cole of the USC Annenberg School's Center for the Digital Future concluded from one of his surveys of Internet use a few years ago that people 12-to-25 years old—who'll be in the golden 25-to-38 demographic in 2020 – will "never read a newspaper." Never is a strong word. Phil Meyer famously predicted in his book "The Vanishing News-

paper" that if current trend lines continue, the last American paper will be published in 2043 (or sooner perhaps). Let that word, too, sink in: last.

So get ahead of the curve for once. Kill the newspaper yourself. Pick a date in the less-distant-than-you-think future and unplug the press. And then ask: What's a newspaper? What is its real value? And how does that value live on and grow past paper?

Oh, printed products may well continue and in some countries still grow. But I wouldn't mourn their death so long as we find ways for their journalism to live on, change, and grow. For a newspaper mustn't define itself by its medium. It isn't just paper. Its strength and value do not come from controlling content or distribution. And protecting those dwindling advan-

tages is not a viable strategy for growth—or survival.

I'll argue that a newspaper isn't even a product. Journalism is a service, a process, an organizing principle. And thanks to the technology that some think is a threat to newspapers—the Internet—that service can now expand in so many ways, turning a newspaper into something new and something more—at a lower cost. So rather than asking what a newspaper will be, I think we should ask what a news organization's relationship with its community can be.

I am reminded of a moment at the 2007 World Economic Forum meeting in Davos. In a session of the International Media Council, a leading newspaper publisher beseeched Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg for advice on how his newspaper

could create a community. The famously laconic Zuckerberg's response: "You can't." Full stop.

Later, Zuckerberg explained that communities already exist and are already doing what they want to do, so the question we should ask is how we can help them do that better. Zuckerberg's prescription: Bring them "elegant organization." When you think about it, that is the essence of what journalism has tried to do: It helps organize a community's knowledge so that a better-informed society can accomplish the goals it sets for itself.

Do what you do best and link to the rest
So I suggest that news organizations turn themselves into service companies, enabling and training networks of local bloggers and specialized news sources to sprout

up in their communities. They should enable others to succeed at creating content so the news organizations don't have to go to all that expense alone, so they have something to link to.

The link frees them from the need to waste their ever-dwindling resources on commodity information the community already knows. They no longer need to recreate the same news everyone else has. They can link to it. They no longer need to be all things to all people. They can link to specialized coverage that is better than what they could have afforded to offer themselves. They also no longer need to waste resources on ego, on all having their own television critics, on sending one-too-many reporters to the big story that is all over TV just so they can say they did. They can collaborate. The link economy demands that they do what they do best and link to the rest.

They must find other efficiencies in the organization as well. For the economics of media have inexorably changed. On its public policy blog, Google took news or-ganizations and the US government to school on modern media economics in a recent response to Federal Trade Commission ideas for saving (old) news: "The large profit margins newspapers enjoyed in the past were built on an artificial scarcity: Limited choice for advertisers as well as readers," Google said. "With the Internet, that scarcity has been taken away and replaced by abundance. No policy proposal will be able to restore newspaper revenues to what they were before the emergence of online news. It is not a question of analog dollars versus digital dimes, but rather a realistic assessment of how to make money in a world of abundant competitors and consumer choice."

Accept this new reality. Then what? News organizations must operate on a radically smaller scale, taking advantage of content networks and of the savings realized by eliminating print and distribution costs. As a result of building a strong, collaborative relationship with the community, they'll be able to rely more on word of mouth – as opposed to expensive marketing campaigns – to sell products and services of real value to customers. (No, I do not think that pay walls are news' salvation.)

Even smaller, how do they make sufficient revenue in the future once print advertising disappears (along with print's costs)? I believe that newspapers can and should put themselves at the center of revenue networks for the new, emerging media ecosystems in their communities.

That is what we saw in research we did at CUNY on the local news ecosystem. We found hyperlocal bloggers across the US

> Rather than asking what a newspaper will be, ask what a news organization's relationship with its community can be.

pulling in $200,000 in ad revenue and we believe that could reach $350,000 if they were able to join networks – networks that news organizations could create. Those news organizations can make money from selling top-down advertising and also from new revenue sources: events, education, data, and more.

You can find our research at newsinnovation.com and our models (which you are free to download and change) at newsinnovation.com/models. The assumptions in these models are focused on an American market, to be sure: In the US we do not have the strong and varied national media of European nations; we have stronger local governments that demand stronger coverage; and we do not have the growth of print readership that newspapers in some nations enjoy. Still, many of the dynamics and opportunities presented by the Internet will be universal. So it's worth looking at the various experiments under way in the US as a canary in the coalmine (and the canary is tilting on its perch).

The ecosystem we envisioned in our CUNY research had more than 100 companies, many owned by journalists, with about 250 full-time-equivalent staff for content—an equivalent resource to what exists in the newsroom of a paper in such a city today. But these journalists are much closer and more accountable to their communities;

they cannot afford to waste effort on commodity news and production. And there still is a citywide news organization, but it is smaller and much more efficient.

There is, I believe, a future for news. It's not guaranteed. It won't appear on its own. It must be built, if not by the incumbent institutions then more likely by the entrepreneurial journalism students I'm training at CUNY (whose best opportunity is to disrupt the legacy players).

Some suggest that we are seeing a market failure in news. I disagree. We are seeing a failure of imagination by some—only some—of those legacy players. They are the ones making themselves vulnerable to new and efficient competition by not reinventing themselves and instead by resisting inevitable change and hiding behind the skirts of government, seeking to get regulation to grant them an uneven playing field by expanding copyright or limiting fair use or enabling pricing collusion or handcuffing Google.

Google, by the way, is not news' enemy. It sends publishers four billion clicks a month, four billion opportunities to build a relationship with readers and find value there. If they can't, that's not Google's fault; it's theirs. Rather than treating Google as the enemy, news executives should see it as a model of success in a new marketplace. They should be asking (pardon me for plugging my book): What would Google do?

It's way too soon to give up on the market. Google certainly hasn't.

So the real questions are: Will there be a market demand for reporting and journalism? It's a leap of faith, perhaps, but I believe there will be. If not, news and informed democracies are sunk.

The next question: Can the market meet that demand? That's why we are performing our research at CUNY. We believe we are seeing credible ways for the market to advance. And we are seeing entrepreneurs seize that opportunity.

Then the big question is, again: What can and should news be? And I don't mean it's an iPad app; thinking that way isn't reinventing news but is more often a sad attempt to hold onto old models of news. No, I mean, what relationship will news have to its community? How can it open up to become collaborative, networked, efficient, and sustainable? That is our challenge and opportunity.

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Openness, Collaboration Key to New Information Ecosystem

By Alan Rusbridger

The Guardian's success with experimentation in journalism suggests linked information is a path to the future.

In 2009 you could smell the fear. As banks crashed and the recession hit, even the grandest media companies trembled a little. We had all known for some time that the revolution we're all living through would at some stage get really tough. But, for many, as advertising drained out of our pages and websites, thoughts of survival clouded out all else.

It's hardly time to relax yet in 2010 but – for the moment – we can come up for air and look at the landscape. How has it changed?

Well, much depends on how you saw the revolution in the first place. It's now a cliché of media life that these are both the best of times and the worst of times. Those who were seized by the opportunity and possibility of digital transformation will believe in pushing ahead even faster. Those who were wavering or skeptical in the first place may want to apply the brakes.

I tend, by nature, towards the first camp. Those in the second camp have a rude word for us: Utopians. They believe we have stars in our eyes and have failed to see what, to them, is blindingly obvious: That the time for playing around has to stop. It's time for some hard-nosed realities.

Utopians can't stop thinking about the possibilities ahead: We literally lie awake at night fighting off the thoughts of what can be done – and what, even as we eventually submit to sleep, others are busy doing.

We think the future is about endless experimentation, that this is a journey which has barely begun. To us it seems fairly evident there are two features of this new information ecosystem which it would be foolish to ignore, whichever camp you're in: Openness and collaboration.

Openness is shorthand for the way in which the vast majority of information is, and will continue to be, part of a larger network, only a tiny proportion of which is created by journalists. Information may not want to be free, but it does want to be linked. It's difficult to think of any information in the modern world which doesn't acquire more meaning, power, richness, context, substance and impact by being intelligently linked to other information.

Collaboration refers to the way we can take this openness one stage further. By collaborating with this vast network of linked information - and those who are generating and sharing it - we can be infinitely more powerful than if we believe we have to generate it all ourselves.

The rather clumsy name we've given this openness/collaboration theme at the Guardian is mutualisation. It's an attempt to capture the energy and possibilities we

can imagine from working with readers and others to be a different kind of news organization.

Some examples of where it has borne fruit:

• **An investigation into corporate tax avoidance.** This was an area where some of our readers almost certainly knew more than we did about an infinitely complex matrix of international accountancy, law and high finance. We appealed for their help in finding the information and in interpreting it. It worked. We were sent some extremely interesting leads – and readers saved us a lot of time, trouble and expense by advising us on the meaning of documents and transactions.

• **The death of Ian Tomlinson.** Traditional reporting completely failed to uncover the true story behind the death of an innocent man at the G20 conference in London in 2009. It took one reporter, Twitter, and the collaboration of thousands of readers to find the digital record of the moment a policeman struck Tomlinson. Conventional reporting would not have revealed the truth as quickly if at all.

• **Trafigura.** A "super-injunction"[1] granted by the British Courts and aggressive action by the oil trading firm's lawyers prevented the reporting of documents and parliamentary questions about the dumping of toxic waste in Africa, together with the injuries and deaths which it was claimed were associated with the dumping. Again, the use of Twitter led to thousands of people ferreting out the suppressed information and to the company backing down from legal action. The collaboration of thousands of strangers achieved something a newspaper on its own would have struggled with – but it needed a newspaper's investigative skills to get the information in the first place.

• **MPs expenses.** Reviewing 400,000 documents released by parliament posed an impossible task for conventional newsroom to handle. We built a widget that allowed 23,000 Guardian readers to help us identify the important documents.

• **Comment is Free.** In addition to a traditional op-ed section – with a handful of staff writers – we built a site where hundreds of experts, most of them non-journalists and most of them writing for no payment, have their say and thousands of others join in the argument. The result is a comment website which is much richer and more diverse than we could possibly achieve in print alone or without involving numerous other people.

• **Environment.** We built a website with real ambition to cover this most important of issues. Even with five or six full time writers on the subject, we realized we would not be able to do it justice alone. So we created a Guardian Environment Network whereby we host the best contributions from some of the excellent websites and blogs that already cover the subject. We gain: the content on the site is deeper, better and generally more comprehensive than we could ever achieve ourselves. Our partners gain by being exposed to much greater traffic (we currently have 32-35 million unique visitors a month) and from a share of revenues from advertising.

• **Travel.** The traditional travel section sends writers off to distant parts to report back. Why not harness the people who live there, or who know the places better than any visting travel writer? We can have hun-

> Utopians like me think the future of journalism is about endless experimentation, that this is a journey which has barely begun.

dreds of contributions about a particular city, recommending bars, museums, hotels and activities – much more comprehensive and knowledgeable than we could aspire to in the past.

These are all examples of openness and collaboration in our journalism. In some of the above examples, our journalists started something: It could begin with a story or an old-fashioned investigation. In other cases our involvement can be confined to editing, or moderating the response.

We are embracing a world where we do not imagine that we, as traditionally trained journalists, are the only experts or authorities. By harnessing the expertise, knowledge and ideas of others we can build something richer than we could alone. We can begin to think of ourselves as a platform for others as well as a publisher of our own.

There are challenges to how we think of journalism implicit in all this. One of the most fundamental questions is about how we think of the basic currency of journalism - the story. 10 years ago few of us would have questioned what a story was: it was efficient , pyramid-structured way of telling the reader what happened at a particular point in time. It often had a beginning, a middle and an end. There was gen-

erally little by way of response. The next day you'd move onto the next story.

Everything about that tidy world has changed. Smart reporters now often involve their contacts or readers or 'communities' in research – i.e., the "life" of a story may begin well before it is actually published. A reporter may choose not to write a story at all, but to blog it. A blog need not 'report' a story in the conventional way: it can link to other reports and to source materials. Within minutes of publication most stories will be subject to challenge or addition or clarification or correction. How we react to, or incorporate, that challenge is of basic concern. A 'story', thus told, may have no obvious natural finishing point. The resulting piece of journalism is more fluid than its predecessors. It more closely resembles the real world, which is rarely about neatly cut and dried events with only one narrative version and a finite ending.

The more we learn to involve others in what we do, the richer and more trusted our journalism will become. It is certainly the way the rest of the Web is going. But it is up to us endlessly to experiment and pioneer these new forms of story-telling.

It is difficult to see how that can be done except through being open to, and collabo-

rative with, the countless people who are with us on that journey. I don't see that as particularly utopian. I think of it as a basic necessity for survival.

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[1] A super-injunction is one in which the existence of the injunction, and the accompanying court proceedings, cannot be reported.

Alan Rusbridger is Editor in Chief of the Guardian Newspaper in London. His editorship has been notable for pioneering the development of the paper's digital edition, twice voted the best newspaper website in the world. He is also noted for fighting, and winning, a number of high-profile legal cases involving free speech issues and corruption in government.

How Technology Turned News into a Conversation

By Turi Munthe

Collaborative journalism has changed sourcing, storytelling and distribution, while it reminds us of the value of editing.

Not even 15 years ago, the only way for a non-professional journalist to join the news debate (apart from being its subject, of course) was to write in to the papers. And in the UK at least, the likelihood of being published in the left-wing press if you weren't a trade-union leader was as slim as being published in the right-wing press if you weren't a Lord. A rare Oxbridge academic might merit a mention, but as an exception rather than the rule. The news was a lecture; op-eds were sermons: journalism was a job for pulpiteers.

Today, news is a conversation:
• Some of the first pictures of the Hudson River plane crash in January 2009 were published via Twitpic by non-journalist Janis Krums.

• With professional journalists jailed or deported during the Iran election in June 2009, the world subsisted for a fortnight on local Twitter updates hash-tagged #iran-election that were circulated over one billion times, as well as through YouTube, opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi's Facebook group, and Demotix, which I run.

• Twitter – by which I mean thousands of people's Twitter feeds – broke the Trafigura story. Flickr, back in 2005, was the resource of record for the Kifaya demonstrations in Egypt; Blogger for news of the Israel-Lebanon war in the same year.

Non-journalists, through a combination of the Web and social networks, are breaking, annotating and distributing global news stories in ever increasing ways. Technology has made journalism a conversation between the reporter and the reader (and often the participant). Today, the newspapers' online "letters" pages (also known as the comments stream) on any political article on any major news site on the Web can run into the hundreds, with rarely a Lord or trade-union chief's missive among them.

The role of the non-professional journalist in the news space has changed every aspect of the business. For sourcing, I don't know a single professional reporter who doesn't use social media as a feed, and I know of many who use it as an encyclopedia. When the MPs expenses scandal broke in the UK, the Guardian dropped the nearly half-million documents into a public widget that about 23,000 citizens across the country downloaded and helped dissect.

In story-telling, the advantages of immediate reporter/reader interaction have created a whole new journalistic form in the liveblog which reports, corrects and verifies as it publishes in direct communication with its readers, all in real-time.

But it is in distribution that 'people power' really flexes its muscles. It is no longer exclusively editors who choose what goes on the front page anymore – it is you. The unbundling of news on the Web – whereby you can get your cricket news from Pakistan's Dawn.com, your business news from London's Financial Times and your general

info from CNN.com – essentially means that whatever is most popular amongst your friends on Facebook, or most tweeted amongst those you follow on Twitter, or most Digged, StumbledUpon or Reddited will be your front page of the day.

It's no surprise then, given the wash of information available (and its endless repetition, distortion and misattribution), that the top-hit news sources on the Web continue to be the mainstream news outlets. Trust is a major factor, but so is that critical journalistic function: editing. Not just in the packaging of what is told, but in choosing what counts as news.

We read the news not just to keep informed, but to be part of a conversation – regional, national, communitarian – about it. The news around us helps us define our relationship to the world, and to those also engaged in defining themselves. Newspapers and broadcasters create communities: just ask CNN viewers what they think about Fox News viewers.

But more than building communities of interest, old-fashioned journalism also speaks to an understanding of what news is that 'citizen journalism' cannot, because most news of real interest is built painstakingly and over time. Most news is, in fact, a story.

The kind of news that can be crowdsourced is bitty, image-led, or data-driven: Vide the examples above – pictures of surprise events like 9/11 or the tsunami, accidental reporting of the Mayhill Flower variety (who caught Obama referring to disenfranchised Pennsylvanians who "cling to guns or religion"), or the kind of (fantastic) work being done by a host of open-data outfits like Ushahidi, WIkiLeaks or the Open Knowledge Network. What it can't do is tell meaningful, full-length stories about that information, nor, critically, can

it do possibly the most important form of news reporting on its own – that is, investigative journalism.

The trouble is, increasingly, neither can mainstream news. Although a handful of US news organizations still maintain robust foreign news operations, the once mighty foreign staff of the Baltimore Sun has been eliminated and the consolidation of Tribune Co. staffing overseas has trimmed those ranks as well.

The latest State of the News Media report found that US newsrooms lost 25 percent of their staffers over the last three years. Professional journalism has suffered not just in foreign reporting, but in domestic reporting and investigative journalism (which is increasingly the bailiwick of the nonprofit sector, see ProPublica and, in the UK, the Bureau for Investigative Journalism).

If old-fashioned news reporting has been brutally attacked by the Web's free-content-for-all business-model dictat, it has to look to the Web (and to its highly-informed, entrepreneurial reader-cum-activist-cum-contributors) for some of its salvation. Yesterday's sub-editor is today's commenter (get a fact wrong in an article online and you're a global laughing stock). Yesterday's roving foreign correspondent is today an army of local bloggers and local stringers.

Citizen journalists, amateur photographers and others willing to join the news conversation, or supply their content for free are often blamed for the ever-more harried (and underfunded) lot of the professional journalist. They shouldn't be. If anything is to blame for that, it is the wholesale departure of the classifieds market to independent sites like Craigslist, Facebook, et al, and the massively smaller ad revenues of the Web that no newspaper site has been able

to marshal into a functioning business model. Citizen journalists, which today broadly means anyone with a Internet connection and an interest in the news, are part of the solution, not the problem. And while, of course, only a tiny fraction of Web surfers engage with real news, their engagement with the news has incomparably augmented the conversation, and expanded its reach.

As news organizations, professional journalists and geeks figure out new and more efficient ways to harness the power of millions of engaged voices and opinions on the Web, the quality of global news and reporting and information will explode. And that will only accelerate once the media moguls figure out how to fix their business models.

Spare a thought for them, not for journalism as we know it.

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The Shock of Inclusion and New Roles for News in the Fabric of Society

By Clay Shirky

Technological and cultural shifts have enabled a new coordinated, voluntary participation in media, a "cognitive surplus" that in aggregate is changing the nature of news and how it is created and shared.

If you were in the news business in the 20th century, you worked in a kind of pipeline, where reporters and editors would gather facts and observations and turn them into stories, which were then committed to ink on paper or waves in the air, and finally consumed, at the far end of those various modes of transport, by the audience.

A pipeline is the simplest metaphor for that process, whether distribution of news was organized around the printing press or the broadcast tower. Part of the conceptual simplicity of traditional media came from the near-total division of the roles between professionals and amateurs, and the subsequent clarity that division provided. Reporters and editors (and producers and engineers) worked "upstream," which is to say as the source of the news. They created and refined the product, decided when it was ready for consumption, and sent it out when it was, to readers or listeners or viewers.

Meanwhile, we, the audience, were "downstream." We were the recipients of this product, seeing it only in its final, packaged form. We could consume it, of course (our principal job), and we could talk about it around the dinner table or the water cooler, but little more. News was something we got, not something we used. If we wanted to put our own observations out in public, we needed permission from the pros, who had to be convinced to print our letters to the editor, or to give us a few moments of airtime on a call-in show.

That pipeline model still shapes the self-conception of working professionals in the news business (at least working professionals of a certain age), but the gap between that model and the real world has grown large and is growing larger, because the formerly separate worlds of the professionals and the amateurs are intersecting more dramatically, and more unpredictably, by the day.

Cognitive Surplus

Here's a 21st century question: What is Wikipedia made of? Or another: What is Flickr, with its billions of photos, made of? Or Wordpress, the open-source blogging platform: What is Wordpress made of?

The shallow answer is that Wikipedia is made of words and Flickr is made of pictures and Wordpress is made of code. That's true enough, of course, but we had words and pictures and code in the 20th century, and we didn't get Wikipedia, or anything else that relied on a large pool of amateur contributors.

The deeper answer, the answer that's true of all those projects and countless more, is that they are made of coordinated volun-

The News Pipeline: a 20th Century metaphor

tary participation. The participation part comes from a medium that is implicitly two-way and group-oriented, a medium that makes everyone who connects to it a potential producer of bits and not just a consumer of them.

The voluntary part comes from the staggering volume of free time available in the developed world (trillions of hours a year), coupled with human desires to do things that make us happy, not just things that pay us money.

And the coordination comes from entrepreneurs of generosity, people like the founders of Wikipedia or Flickr or Wordpress who offer us opportunities to pool our free time, using this group-oriented medium, to make ourselves feel happy or engaged or satisfied by creating things together we couldn't create on our own.

Taken together, this coordinated voluntary participation is a new resource, a cognitive surplus that allows us to treat the connected world's free time and talents in aggregate, as something which, used right, can change the very idea of news – what it is, how it is created and experienced and shared.

How participation has changed news

Here are a few surprises in the news business in our little corner of the 21st century, courtesy of the ability of amateurs, working alone and together, to participate and not just consume:

In 2002, after Speaker of the House Trent Lott praised Strom Thurmond's segregationist 1948 campaign, the man that did Lott in was Ed Sebesta, an amateur historian who had been tracking racists statements made by American politicians to segregationist groups. Shortly after Lott said his praise had been an uncharacteristic slip, Sebesta contacted Josh Micah Marshall, who ran the blog Talking Points Memo, to share recorded comments made by Lott dating back to the 1980s.

These comments help destroy Lott's ability to characterize his comments as a slip, and led to hims losing his position as Speaker. Sebesta had built the database of racist speech on his own, without institutional support; Marshall was an amateur blogger (not yet having incorporated); and the source contacted the news outlet, 1,500 miles away, rather than vice-versa. No professionals anywhere in sight.

In 2005, the London transit system was bombed. Sir Ian Blair, the head of London's Metropolitan police, went on radio and TV to announce that the the cause had been an electrical failure in the underground. Within minutes of Blair's statements, people began posting and analyzing pictures of a bombed double-decker bus in Tavistock Square, and in less than two hours, there were hundreds of blog posts analyzing this evidence and explicitly contradicting Blair's interpretation.

Seeing this, and overriding the advice of his own communications staff, Blair went on air again less than two hours later to say that it had indeed been a bombing, that the police didn't have all the answers yet, and that he would continue reporting as they knew more. When he spoke to the public, Blair had the power of all the traditional

media behind him, but it was clear that merely having a consistent message on every broadcast channel in existence was no longer the same as having control.

In 2006, Kate Hanni was stuck, for 8 hours, on a flight that landed in Dallas during a lightning storm, while the airline refused to allow passengers off the plane. She was as furious as all the other passengers who've ever experienced such a thing, but she decided to do something about it. She founded a pressure group agitating for an air passengers bill or rights, and then she set about recruiting members by finding online newspaper accounts of flight delays, and posting about her nascent group in the comments of those articles.

Hanni realized that on the Web, news outlets could act not just as a source of information, but as a site of coordination, finding the people who cared about a particular story and helping them take action together. The US airline industry had successfully fought off pressure to create any new rights for passengers for decades, but within three years of the launch of Hanni's group, first New York State and then the US Congress passed a Passengers Bill of Rights, largely because Hanni had used the press to turn an unorganized group of angry passengers into an organized group of angry passengers.

On and on this list goes: Tehrani protestors using their camera phones to document the Green Uprising, or the chemical company Trafigura's inability to preserve the press injunction of their pollution off the Coast of Côte d' Ivoire, once Twitter users got on the case.

The cognitive surplus of the former audience is increasingly driving hybrid professional-amateur models that would have been both unthinkable and unworkable even 10 years ago: ProPublica covering every Iowa caucus in 2008 with citizen journalists, a feat that would have bankrupted them had they done it with stringers; the reshaping of Korean presidential politics by Ohmynews, a pro-am journalism site; the Guardian's crowdsourcing its tracking of the expenses of UK
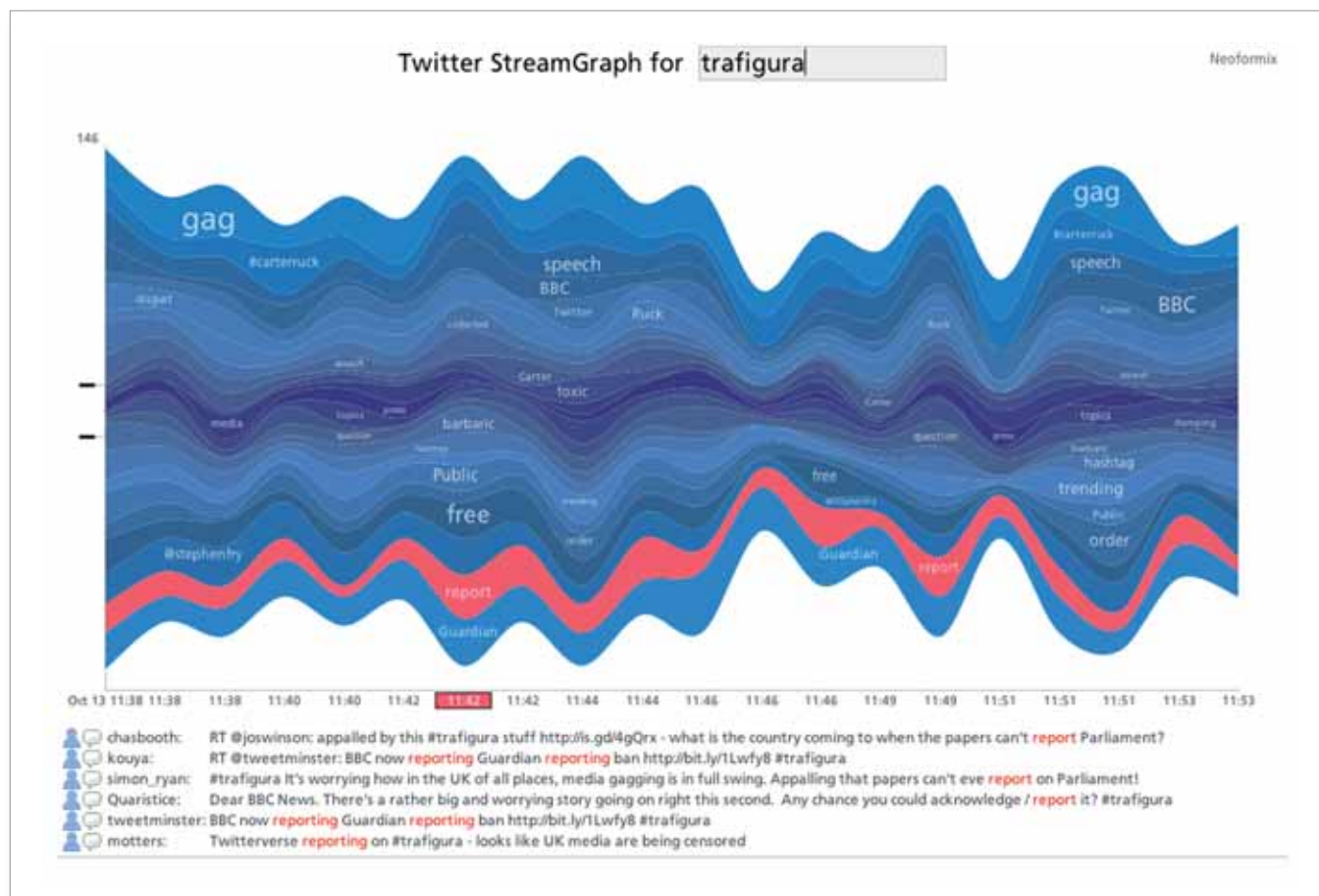
> What's going away isn't the importance of news, or the importance of dedicated professionals. What's going away is the passivity of the audience.

Members of Parliament, because the job, done by employees, would not just have cost too much but taken too long.

Now journalists have always used tip lines and man-in-the-street interviews, and consumers have always clipped and forwarded favorite articles. What's new here isn't the possibility of occasional citizen involvement. What's new is the speed and scale and leverage of that involvement, the possibility of persistent, dramatic amounts of citizen involvement. What's new is that making public statements no longer requires professional outlets, that citizens now have tools that enable them to assemble around causes they care about without needing to live near each other.

This is a change in degree so large, in other words, that it amounts to a change in kind. As Steven Levy observed, writing about the iPod, when you make something 10 percent better, you've created an improvement, but when you make something 10 times better, you've made a new thing.

So it is with the harnessing our our cognitive surplus. Tip lines only worked in geographically local areas, but Ed Sebesta was able to find Josh Micah Marshall halfway across the country. Man-in-the-street interviews are random, because the professionals controlled the mode and tempo of public utterances, but with Flickr and weblogs, British bloggers could discuss the London bombings in public, at will, and with no professionals anywhere in sight. One person can clip one newspaper column and mail it to one other person, but to catalyze mass action takes something likes Kate Hanni's use of the Web.

What's going away, from the pipeline model, isn't the importance of news, or the importance of dedicated professionals. What's going away is the linearity of the process, and the passivity of the audience. What's going away is a world where the news was only made by professionals, and consumed by amateurs who couldn't do much to produce news on their own, or to distribute it, or to act on it en masse.

We are living through a shock of inclusion, where the former audience is becoming increasingly intertwined with all aspects of news, as sources who can go public on their own, as groups that can both create and comb through data in ways the professionals can't, as disseminators and syndicators and users of the news.

This shock of inclusion is coming from the outside in, driven not by the professionals formerly in charge, but by the former audience. It is also being driven by new news entrepreneurs, the men and women who want to build new kinds of sites and services that assume, rather than ignore, the free time and talents of the public.

This a change so varied and robust that we need to consider retiring the word 'consumer' altogether, and treat consumption as simply one behavior of many that citizens can now engage in. The kinds of changes that are coming will dwarf those we've already seen, as citizen involvement stops being a set of special cases, and becomes a core to our conception of how news can be, and should be, part of the fabric of society.

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Fifth Estate Joins the Fourth in Push for Freedom of Expression and the Press

By William H. Dutton

If the Fourth Estate is defined as traditional media institutions, the new, networked power brokers of the Internet can be defined as the Fifth Estate, which faces unique challenges and requires unique protections.

The creative and economic challenges posed by Internet-enabled digital media now top the agenda of most traditional print and broadcast enterprises. The growing popularity of, and trust in, the Internet relative to other media is one of the most important developments of recent years. For example, Internet users in Britain view the network as being more essential as a source of information than television or newspapers. Moreover, users trust the information they can obtain online as much as broadcast news and more than they trust newspapers.

Such analyses of the nature of actual Internet use helps to reveal how this kind of 'new media' has enabled an emerging 'Fifth Estate' of networked individuals (Dutton 2009). This complements and competes with the traditional press, the Fourth Estate of one-to-many mass media. It also opens new ways of making government, media and other institutions more socially accountable. Protection of freedom of expression and open access to information on the Internet is therefore likely to be as central to democratic processes as freedom of the press has been for the mass media.

The concept of 'estates of the realm' originally related to divisions in feudal society between the clergy, nobility and the commons. Although the characterization of these estates has evolved (e.g. the first three

estates as the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government in the US), the identification of the Fourth Estate with independent, free news media has remained consistent. It is based on philosopher Edmund Burke's coining of the phrase in the 18th Century to identify the Reporters' Gallery in the British Parliament as becoming more important than the other three Estates. The emerging Fifth Estate has distinctive characteristics that identify it as more than simply an extension or adjunct to the Fourth Estate. Unlike the original estates, it is not based on an institution but on a new 'network of networks' space, or platform. This is independent of other estates and can be used by individuals to reconfigure their access locally and globally to information, people and other resources in ways that enable them to enhance their 'communicative power' relative to institutions of the other estates.

This enhanced communicative power of networked individuals rather than institutions helps to change outcomes. When people read the news online rather than in a newspaper or magazine, they frequently come across stories they would not have seen otherwise; and the relationship between media producers, gatekeepers and consumers are changed profoundly when previously passive audiences generate and distribute their own blogs and when search engines point to numerous sources

Protesters demonstrate against the MPs' expenses scandal outside the Westminster Magistrates Court in central London, 11 March, 2010. Four British MP's appeared in court for their allegedly shady practices in filing their expense claims.

reflecting different views on the same news item or topic. The ability to hold other estates more socially accountable through the interplay between ever-changing networks of networks in the Fifth Estate does not in itself mean the Internet inevitably empowers all its users directly. Instead, it supports access to online resources that both incorporate and go beyond the resources of more traditional institutions (e.g. local newspaper, library, university or government office). Individuals can then network with information and people in ways that can change their relationships with more institutionalized centres of authority in the other estates.

Fifth Estate Faces Threats to Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Information

The enhanced communicative power of networked individuals has led to many attempts to censor and control the Fifth Estate which are equivalent to those used against traditional media. The two-sided nature of the Internet means that the way it opens doors to a cascading array of user-generated innovations and content also allows in techniques that can block online access and comprehensively monitor and filter Internet traffic.

These attempts are typified by the Chinese government's efforts to control Internet content, creating the 'Great Firewall of China'. There are many other examples, including the Burmese government closing down the country's Internet service during political protests in 2007 and a court order in Pakistan in May 2010 stopping the use of a Facebook page called 'Everybody Draw Mohammed Day!' as the portrayal of the Prophet Mohammed is against Islamic teachings.

At the same time, as the Internet diffuses worldwide it is being used by networked individuals to challenge such controls. For example, the www.herdict.org website accepts and publishes reports from Internet users of inaccessible sites around the world, while the OpenNet Initiative and Reporters Sans Frontièrs (RSF) are among the groups campaigning in this area.

The RSF website includes the Internet as one of its sections detailing restrictions on freedom of expression and physical intimidation of journalists and bloggers around the world, which indicates similarities between freedom of speech issues online and offline, as stressed by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

However, the democratic implications of the Fifth Estate are far broader than such overlaps between new and traditional media. Research at the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) has shown that Internet users increasingly go online as their first port of

call when looking for information on all types of subjects. Networked individuals can also mobilize political campaigns effectively, as occurred to boost the election of President Obama in 2008.

People involved in a particular sphere, such as medical professionals and patients, can also use the Internet to reach trusted online sources of information and services in their field of interest and not be limited to their local practice or organization.

Growing numbers within institutions rooted in the other estates are also networking beyond the boundaries of their organizations. This has led to geographically distributed individuals coming together online, form collaborative network organizations to co-produce new information products and services. The online encyclopaedia Wikipedia and open source software products such as the Firefox browser are examples of this phenomenon.

The communicative power of these networked individuals crucially depends on open access to information and the tools to analyse it. In 2009, for instance, the Daily Telegraph newspaper bought a disk containing full details of the expenses of UK Members of Parliament, which led to the exposure of what were generally regarded as many unacceptable practices. As the newspaper owned the disk, it could still act as the gatekeeper in analysing and disseminating the information according to its own priorities. In response to the resultant public outrage with politicians, and the limitations of the press, the government at the time legislated to ensure all expenses would in future be published on the Web, available to all to analyse.

The government's move implicitly acknowledged

> The growing popularity of, and trust in, the Internet relative to other media is one of the most important developments of recent years.

the existence of a Fifth Estate role of networked individuals as a key democratic constraint on unacceptable activities, as reflected in the subsequent coalition government's announcement that "greater transparency across Government is at the heart of our shared commitment to enable the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account". A key element in this policy is to publish more information online in 'user friendly' forms, including detailed departmental plans and all new items of central government spending over £25,000 ($38,535).

Protecting the Openness of the Fifth Estate
The democratizing potential of the Fifth Estate could be lost if inappropriate forms of Internet regulation are introduced that restrict its openness and creativity. Yet, tensions with other estates result-

The Fifth Estate and other institutions: partnerships and threats

Traditional Estate	Modern	Type of threat to Fifth Estate	Partnership opportunity
1st: Clergy	Public intellectuals	Internet as an amateurs' space without expert knowledge and analytical rigour.	World wide research networks; science commons; experts' websites and blogs.
2nd: Nobility	Economic elites	Centralization of information utilities; commercialization of Fifth Estate spaces.	Collaborative network organizations; new online relationships with customers.
3rd: Commons	Government	Censorship, regulation and other controls that constrain and block Internet access.	Online innovations in engagements with citizens (e-democracy; e-government).
4th: Press	Mass media	Competition for audiences, funding; charging for access to information.	Use of Fifth Estate spaces to complement traditional media.
Mob	Citizens, audiences, consumers, Internet users	Undermining of trust in the Internet through malicious (e.g. spam, hacking) and accidental uses.	Informed, helpful fora (e.g. on medical and other specialist issues); greater democratic engagement.

ing from the Internet's role in challenging traditional institutions could lead to demands for such restrictions. As Table 1 illustrates, threats emanate from each of the four estates. Public intellectuals, a contemporary equivalent of the clergy, have attacked the Fifth Estate as amateurs, not worthy of serious attention. However, the amateurs can complement and enlarge the public agenda since they are not part of the pack. Economic elites, today's nobility, are generating wealth through the Internet, but place the Fifth Estate at risk in building monopolies that will jeopardize trust in search and information sources. Governments, representing the commons, are placing increasing controls on freedom of speech and information, such as out of concern for privacy, security and consumer protection. The Fourth Estate is emulating aspects of the Fifth Estate, but also seeking to co-opt its users and producers. Finally, among its wide base of users are malicious individuals, whom might have been called 'the Mob' by Burke. Over-commercialization of the Internet and the activities of malicious users in the lay public are among the key threats.

It is important therefore to formulate guidelines for appropriate regulations to protect participants in the Fifth Estate of the Internet realm. These should address threats to the Fifth Estate as well as support areas of productive and creative cooperation.

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The Journalism Business and Business of Journalism Must Align More Closely in the Future

By Roy Greenslade

The sometimes-uncomfortable marriage of commerce and public service has become increasingly strained for news organizations. As cost cutting on the one side has limited journalism on the other, will democracy be the victim?

Where are we going? That question, and variants of it, is the one I am asked most often by practising journalists and, most particularly, by increasingly concerned students about to embark on media careers.

My answer? I always tell them I don't really know. It has the virtue of honesty, though I note the raising of eyebrows.

After all, I have called myself a digital revolutionary. I have espoused the panacea of a participatory, inter-connected, linked journalism. I want to consign to the dustbin of history the undemocratic vertical relationship between us, the secular priests known as journalists and the readers, formerly known as the audience.

In its place I envisage a horizontal relationship, a journalism of the community, for the community, by the community. I know it's an idealistic vision but surely none the worse for that. Pursuing ideals is good.

Despite being unsure of the outcome, I am convinced it's the direction we should be taking, and I know that the technology both allows it and invites it. The danger, however, is that we will neglect this historic opportunity to shape a coherent journalistic landscape for the future.

I am troubled by the way in which others who share this vision of a coming golden age appear to be untroubled by the problems we are now facing. Unlike too many of them, I am deeply concerned by this increasingly bloody period of transition because we are losing journalists with valuable skills and, at the same time, failing to forge a meaningful online strategy that melds the best of "old" mainstream journalism with the emerging "new" journalism.

Old media is on its knees and, in the process, is destroying journalism. Its owners and managers, confronted with crisis, have chosen to dispense with the people who produce words – the information-seeking, news-gathering, story-writing, headline-composing, picture-making staff.

I readily accept that there has been an economic crisis. The newspaper business model has been wrecked, though there are differences in the effect on companies from country to country. For example, several traditional publishers in the United States have been forced into bankruptcy protection to deal with colossal debts while, in Britain, publishers have managed to avoid falling through the insolvency trap door and continued to trade profitably.

Across Europe, there have been similar problems, again with wide variations. In almost all cases, however, the medicine to cure the ills has been similar: publishers have indulged in an orgy of cost-cutting. They have employed new media technology to save money, not to embrace its power to advance towards a new form of journalism. In short, they have subverted a crucial technological breakthrough for their own commercial ends.

There are exceptions of course. I am aware that when describing a contemporaneous revolutionary process it is easy to fall into the trap of generalisation and overstatement. Damning every media owner and manager would be wrong because there are newspaper groups, along with the individuals who guide them, who can envision a radical new journalistic activity and are genuinely trying to practise what the revolutionaries preach.

The vast majority, however, do nothing more than pay lip service to a brave new world. They pretend they are moving onwards and upwards by inelegantly spinning every tranche of editorial cuts with jargon-loaded announcements about their enthusiastic engagement with a dynamic new form of publishing (the word "journalism" appears less than I'd like).

One key problem for them, and for us, is that they still operate within a media paradigm constructed in the 19th century, one built of the logic of big businesses maximising profits through advertising revenue and an accompanying journalism that was created on the principle of centralised elitism.

It was a commercial and editorial model that stood publishers and journalists in good stead for so long that it's unsurprising they should seek ways of sustaining it. Many of them, even while recognising that there is little chance of maintaining this system, do understand that things are changing and will change further. What they are doing is putting off the evil day. This is perfectly rational. Debts aside, though operating profits may be dwindling, they are still profits. However, the consequences for journalism are truly terrifying.

I want to make a distinction here between the journalism business and the business of journalism, in which the former represents commerce and the latter represents public service. The former is about private profit, the production of newspapers on the baked bean ethos. The latter is about acting for and on behalf of society.

Throughout the 20th century the twins - fraternal, never identical - marched hand in hand. They knew they depended on each other and though they occasionally fell out, as siblings tend to do, they regarded each other as a necessary evil.

For journalists, the commercial departments were the dark side. For managers, journalists were an on-cost. As the late publisher, Lord Thomson, memorably joked: News merely fills the space between the adverts.

Now look where the twins' journey has taken us - to an era when the siblings are becoming more and more estranged. And it is the fate of the journalistic twin that should concern us most.

Grotesque cost-cutting threatens to divest us of skilled, experienced and dedicated

staff who have been the backbone of news-gathering and news processing.

I frankly admit that I made a mistake some years ago, while in the first throes of cheering the digital advance, of advocating the reduction in editorial jobs. It was a reasonable argument at the time. But publishers have taken it to an unreasonable limit.

Newspapers did tend to be overstaffed or, at least, employing people to do jobs that became genuinely unnecessary in a digital environment. Judicious editorial budget

savings were therefore in order. New media's glittering array of innovations were seen by publishers as some sort of labour-saving device.

It hardly helped that running in parallel with a technological revolution was a banking crisis followed by a deep recession, disemboweling a business that relied on advertising revenue. All this came against a background of the relentless decline in print circulations.

Publishers took measures that made financial sense, at least in the short term. They cut costs. It is fair to say that the early cost-cutting was probably justified. There were too many under-used print works. Top-heavy staffs needed pruning. There had to be some financial compensation for digital investment.

Initial success with cost-savings - as publishers prefer to refer to cuts - went to their heads. It became the only game in town. Cuts begat cuts. The management of decline soon spawned a language all of its own.

Publishers justified their excesses with a range of euphemisms about rationalisation in the digital age, concentration of resources, improvements to editorial efficiency and so on. They jumped at the chance to reduce staffs still further by outsourcing a range of tasks.

At this point, readers may be forgiven for saying: We know all that. My point in giving the history lesson was to provide the context for my contention that if this process of editorial sabotage continues then journalism, and society, will be the loser.

At first sight, this may seem odd, given that I have espoused the value of an emergent journalistic form. The point is, however, that we have a way to go before we reach that promised land. We need to construct a bridge from old to new media in order to preserve the best of what we have in order to enhance the good that is to come.

In this period of transition from old to new, journalism is suffering. At virtually every newspaper in Britain - national, regional and local, daily and weekly - journalists are being required to feed two platforms, print and online, and both, in their different ways, are the loser.

There is precious little synergy between them despite the building of work structures that enable editorial copy to appear as smoothly as possible on both. Papers such as the Financial Times, the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph have performed wonders by providing 24-hour news coverage in which their journalists produce print copy, online text, video and audio material, and mobile phone alerts.

It is a tribute to them, their editors and dedicated in-house digital pioneers that they do it so well after a steep and rapid learning curve. The situation outside of the London nationals is altogether more depressing. But, with the greatest of respect to all those newspaper journalists who are making valiant online efforts, almost all of it is old media journalism masquerading as new media journalism.

Mainstream journalists are not engaging with their audience. To allow online users to comment is all very well, but if the originator of the article merely observes readers' contributions (in many cases, they don't even bother to scan the threads), then it is a bogus exercise, without any value.

What we face, though too many journalists fail to grasp it and too many publishers refuse to discuss it, is a looming crisis for journalism. It has the potential to eradicate the key historic role of the media to act for the public good as a countervailing force against political and commercial power. In short, if this is not too pompous, democracy is at risk.

> Where are we going? I envisage a horizontal relationship, a journalism of the community, for the community, by the community.

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The Irony of Editors and Democracy

By Alex Jones

As algorithms become editors and readers use other tools to filter information, there is still an important role for professional journalists whose news judgment aims to serve democracy.

At the Personal Democracy Forum in New York in June, a collective gasp rippled through the sophisticated audience of Web geeks, political analysts and new media triumphalists at a morning session called, "Can the Internet Fix Politics?"

Eli Pariser, the former executive director of MoveOn.org, told the assembled activists that if each of them went to Google on their iPads, iPhones, or BlackBerrys and searched "BP," each person in the room would get a different response.

Some doing the search might get tens of millions more results than others. But the top responses of everyone would be different, because of algorithms that Google has in place and does not explain. They are, to use Pariser's term, "invisible."

Over lunch, everyone at my table did the BP search. In every case, Google kicked out an individualized, customized response. "There is no standard Google anymore," said Pariser.

Instead, at Google and other search engines, there is a "personalized" response based on dozens of criteria that are not disclosed and make each searcher as singular as a finger print. The idea is to be helpful, to give you what the search engine thinks you want.

But the implications of such a mechanism for informing people about news, politics and public affairs hit that audience like a sharp slap.

As Jeremy W. Peters wrote a month later in The New York Times, "Welcome to the era of algorithm as editor."

In 1993, the introduction of the Mosaic Web browser software launched the World Wide Web as a gigantic, global information system. From the start, the interactive, what-you-want, non-heirarchical Internet culture was viewed as a giant step toward "democratization."

Early zealots tended to crow at how the digital world had broken the tyranny of top-down editors who had long imposed their view of what was important on their audiences. The Web made it possible to be your own editor, and as a result to have more breadth and depth and variety to the news and information that shaped your view of reality. Hugh Hewitt, an Emmy-winning former news-anchor-turned-blogger, was expressing a widely held view among New Media converts when he proclaimed that "the power of elites to determine what (is) news via a tightly controlled dissemination system (has been) shattered."

As we approach the Web's second decade, it has delivered on two of the promises it made in democratizing the media. Anyone with Web access can create content, and anyone can also collect virtually unlimited content provided by others. But the third promise – that democracy would be enhanced – remains a promise that may be impossible to fulfill without those same elites that were to be shattered.

Indeed, it is especially ironic that the much-maligned top-down editor at mainstream news organizations from community dailies to The New York Times may prove to be the greatest bastion of democratic journalism in a world of editing-by-algorithm and customized news.

As a veteran of small daily newspapers and New York Times, I feel I know editing – which is to say the selection and shaping of a daily report using news judgment.

My first editor was J. Neil Ensminger and he could not type. But he knew his community

as though it were his own body. He knew the sensitive areas and the competing yearnings, when to indulge and when to discipline. He was beloved and respected, but most important, he was integral. It is a model that every community newspaper should follow. Was it democratic? No one

had elected him to do the job. But they trusted him and felt free to complain and criticize - a right that he indulged with pleasure by publishing letters-to-the-editor without a response, even if the facts were wrong. "If you correct them, it takes the sting out, " he told me, "and they need their chance to sting." A good rant was not the creation of the Web.

At The New York Times, every afternoon the top editors of every department of the paper assembled to battle for space on the front page. The foreign editor would pitch his best stories, then the national editor, the metro editor, and on down the line - business, arts, culture, science - each making a case like a lawyer before a jury.

Then, with passionate argument and a sense that they were creating the best-possible snapshot of the world for Times readers, the top editors chose what led the paper, what was the off-lede, what above the fold, what inside.

The collective education, training, skill, experience, intelligence and commitment represented by the corps of editors struck me as staggering. Here they were, struggling each day, to select the best fruit of all the material that had been assembled by the paper's reporters, put it into form that was clear, and then picked over it to make sure that the most important things got space.

When I pick up my Times each morning - which I do, on paper - I still marvel at what went into creating this version of the state of the world and how valuable it is to me to have editors doing that work on my behalf.

It is easily possible to know in depth about your favorite sports team or an automobile accident in your neighborhood, but to be utterly unaware of genocide in Africa. It is easily possible to have a flow of news that is tailored to your politics or race or narrow interests, and therefore know little about the broad picture that includes points of view that are foreign in every respect.

That is not an enhancement of democracy. The most democratic - meaning, the non-customized view of the world - is the one that is most apt to be created with the idea of informing a lot of people with diverse interests and backgrounds.

For instance, on an ordinary Saturday in July 2010, the A section of The New York Times' national edition had 44 full stories, plus a dozen or more short summaries. Some were updates from Iraq and Pakistan, but it is hard to imagine a customized news list that would include articles as diverse as a piece on flawed brain research at Columbia University (above the fold), obituaries of an African American scholar on probability and the country music song writer who wrote Patsy Cline's "I Fall To Pieces," and a long piece about the artist Christo's ongoing effort to drape the Colorado River.

It is the gatekeeper – the editor – who seeks to appeal to a mass audience that assembles such a varied, rich and nourishing mix of news.

But how does the gatekeeper do that worthwhile job in a digital age when a quasi-outlaw organization such as WikiLeaks bypasses gatekeepers altogether by publishing classified information that may well have not been reported on ethical grounds when editors truly functioned as the arbiters of information?

The answer is a realistic recognition that in some respects the gatekeeping role is moot in a free-flowing online information environment.

But that does not mean, as a practical matter, that the job of editors is not alive and well. Editors still decide what appears on the front page and above the fold or what is featured on the nightly news. The impact of those traditional news delivery systems is still tremendous, in part because many of us want someone to help guide us to what we really need to know.

The most important thing for the editor of today is not to lose confidence in the job's power and its mission. It still has power, and the mission has never been more vital.

Indeed, it may be the old fashioned and disparaged editor with independent judgment who will prove to be the champion of democracy in an age in which the choice is often news by algorithm or a flood of information that recognizes no constraints.
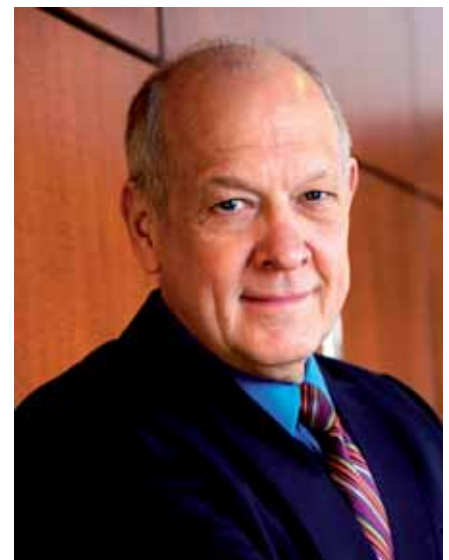
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In the New Media Rush for Instant News, Where are the Journalists?

By Alison Bethel McKenzie

More information is not necessarily better information if standards of accuracy and credibility slip due to citizen journalism or the new practices readers inspire in the newsroom.

Every human being has a fundamental, universal right to information.

However, across the world many people in positions of power do everything they can to prevent the free flow of information. The barriers they throw up have traditionally included assassination, physical assault, harassment, arrest, absurd fines, imprisonment, and unfair trials. Until a few years ago, their victims were often journalists using traditional, easy-to-monitor means of information dissemination, including newspapers, radio broadcasts and television reports.

However, in recent years there has been a rapid and dramatic evolution in the kind of media used to capture and transmit news.

In a commentary piece for the Guardian newspaper, renowned BBC World presenter Nik Gowing noted:

"New information technologies and dynamics are together driving a wave of democratisation and accountability. It shifts and redefines the nature of power in such moments. It also creates a new policy vulnerability and brittleness for institutions, who then struggle even harder to maintain public confidence.

"Increasingly routinely, a cheap, 'go-anywhere' camera or mobile phone challenges the credibility of the massive human and financial resources of a government or corporation in an acute crisis ... The new lightweight technologies available to almost anyone mean a new capacity for instant scrutiny and accountability that is way beyond the narrower, assumed power and influence of the traditional media."

Nowhere has this seismic shift been more apparent over the last 15 months than in Iran, which was wracked by violence following the disputed June 2009 re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president. Despite a media blackout imposed by the authorities, graphic footage of the violence seeped out, through YouTube, Twitter and other outlets. Surreptitiously 'armed' with mobile phones and other handheld devices, or simply reporting through Twitter, citizen journalists informed the world about what was really happening inside Iran.

A deadly-earnest game of cat-and-mouse ensued, with the Iranian authorities trying to shut down the virtual space in which this vital information was circulating. It was reported, at the time, that hackers were helping Iranian bloggers and others circumvent the Iranian authorities' efforts to hinder the flow of information across the Internet.

Across the world, the bloggers and citizen journalists who – often at great personal

risk – were hailed as heroes as they shared breaking news with the rest of the world. And heroes they were.

But were they journalists?

Amid the frenzy surrounding the Iran developments, and the reliance of the global public on citizen journalists, an important element was often forgotten: How reliable was the information, particularly since it had not been vetted by experienced editors?

The dangers inherent in the citizen journalism process were highlighted when CNN iReport published an inaccurate report from someone stating that Apple boss Steve Jobs had suffered a heart attack and had been rushed to the hospital. Apple shares nose-dived almost immediately following publication of the report.

According to the BBC, the report said:

> "Steve Jobs was rushed to the ER just a few hours ago after suffering a major heart attack. I have an insider who tells me that paramedics were called after Steve claimed to be suffering from severe chest pains and shortness of breath. My source has opted to remain anonymous, but he is quite reliable. I haven't seen anything about this anywhere else yet, and as of right now, I have no further information, so I thought this would be a good place to start. If anyone else has more information, please share it."

The report did not run on the CNN broadcast channels, nor did it appear on the CNN website. Instead it was on the broadcaster's iReport forum which is open to all, and bills itself as "Unedited. Unfiltered. News."

BBC reporter Rory Cellan-Jones said that he was sent the following statement by CNN:

> "iReport.com is an entirely user-generated site where the content is deter-

mined by the community. Content that does not comply with Community Guidelines will be removed. After the content in question was uploaded to iReport.com, the community brought it to our attention. Based on our Terms of Use that govern user behaviour on iReport.com, the fraudulent content was removed."

The fact remains, though, that the inaccurate information appeared in a forum associated with CNN - and readers could be forgiven for thinking that the forum reflected CNN standards of accuracy.

Standard editorial guidelines at any radio station, TV broadcaster or newspaper would have prevented publication of such a report without prior fact-checking. However, CNN, like many other news outlets, is under pressure to promote the new, virtually-instantaneous, interactive world in which the viewers and readers are engaged; but the line between professional and amateur journalism becomes blurred. Traditional media, in an attempt to redefine itself and provide news now for a 'now' generation, is embracing 'open source' media – which allows it to integrate across multiple platforms.

For all the assertions that the inaccurate content on the iReport forum was not CNN's (which of course it wasn't), the broadcaster's reputation for accuracy still suffers when such a fallacious report is published – particularly when it suggests that Steve Jobs is in the hospital with a heart attack, and Apple shares go through the floor.

The promotion of multiple platforms for the delivery of comment and news has even caused problems for experienced reporters.

In early July 2010, CNN fired 20-year veteran and Senior

Middle East Editor Octavia Nasr after she expressed respect for Lebanese cleric Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah in a Twitter post.

Parisa Khosravi, CNN International's senior vice president for newsgathering, wrote in a memo: "At this point, we believe that her credibility in her position as senior editor for Middle Eastern affairs has been compromised going forward."

It's not surprising that a number of organizations, including Reuters, have launched guidelines on how their employees should use social media to ensure that their journalistic integrity – which includes exuding a balanced image - remains intact.

It is vital that – while embracing rapid technological change – journalists and editors continue to ensure that news consumers around the world receive accurate, fair and balanced information.

The free flow of information is a central tenet of democracy. Article 19 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights underscores the right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas." Therefore, citizens and journalists are inextricably linked by the right to seek and impart information.

It is vital that journalists continue to ensure that news consumers around the world receive accurate, fair and balanced information.

Governments have a responsibility to refrain from hindering the free flow of information. At the same time, journalists should abide by self-regulatory – not statutory – systems to ensure that their integrity and the professional values of journalism are upheld, and that the information they impart or promote is the truth.

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Newsroom Structures and Cultures Limit Journalism Innovation

By Jean-François Fogel

Old media newsrooms are structured for analog publishing and create obstacles to digital publishing. A factory line model of production, diffuse responsibilities and a resistance to change will challenge newsrooms trying to reinvent themselves.

Luddites are resilient. Since their first rise, against the stocking frames of the nascent textile industry in England, they have been fighting new machines and technologies. For two centuries they lost, again and again, while transport, agriculture, energy and the production of goods were totally transformed all over the world. Nonetheless they kept alive their old tune saying that you never change for the better. Today luddites are entrenched in old media newsrooms.

Of course, no company would dare to present itself as an old media anymore. Any media company has at least a digital business or pretends to have it. Old media have been running news websites for years now. Newspapers are online; radio programs are distributed through podcasts; and watching TV is more and more a catch-up activity.

Actually, the digital track record of old media is an awful one. The press, especially the printed press, missed most of its opportunities. It lost the classifieds market to Craigslist or look-alike online services; it was late to recognize the potential of blogs, giving away a huge slice of the news market; it thought of ads mainly as a display and never tried to produce news on demand; and, yes, right now, it's a mere follower of the social media revolution. In a world driven by technology, it's impossible to quote the name of a significant piece of digital code – a program, a tool, a mere application – invented by a news organization. It's that simple: So far, old media played no part in the invention of the new media.

The management of their companies is still asking, over and over, the same question: What can I do with my content? Actually, there is only one legitimate question: What can I do for the audience? Search, mapping, aggregation, open conversation, geolocalization, social networking are impossible answers for people looking at the digital world with content ownership and analog business models in mind.

Nothing personal. As a consultant working in Europe and Latin America, I've met wonderful multi-skilled journalists in traditional media newsrooms. They're talented and efficient people, able in the same day – sometimes on the same assignment – to commute from the old to the new media and back. But for the most part, the newsroom – that structure inherited from the industrial age – is so precisely designed for the production of old media content that we must see it as a main hurdle on the path to the digital future.

Newsrooms are the curse of any news organization trying to add a digital channel of distribution to its traditional one. When such operations integrate – asking journalists of a single newsroom to produce across two

> The newsroom is a factory that feeds printing plants; journalists are but the first leg of an efficient and repetitive industrial process.

or more platforms – radio and television are in a slightly better position. Thanks to real time broadcasting, staffers in those newsrooms move content quickly from old media to new. Trapped in the beat of a daily deadline, on the other hand, newspapers face a rougher situation. They're faced with three limitations as they struggle to get old newsrooms producing new media.

First and foremost, the newsroom is a factory. When it feeds printing plants, journalists have no choice there but to be the first leg of an efficient and repetitive industrial process. They do the same tasks every day, at the same time, using the same technology because it's the only way to have a responsible cost-effective production of news fitted into pages. To the contrary, a good – i.e. innovative - digital media is a lab connected to a workshop with ever changing tools and crafts because the digital technology and the audience behavior move very fast.

To ask a workforce to feed a printing plant and a news website, simultaneously, is to run a team with two clocks. Quite often it's done with poorly integrated tools, even with two distinct toolboxes. I've visited dozens of such newsrooms. Nowhere, have I found more than a third of the journalists actually working for both media on the same day. Of course, in a company focused on a single platform – a so-called pure play – each person is involved all day long with the invention of the new media, obeying a single clock and using a single set of tools.

The success online of elcomercio.pe, the digital branch of the old Peruvian newspaper, is based on such a no-nonsense approach. The site uses a content management system designed for a tagged content and serviced by a team dealing with search

engines and communities. In other words, it's a traffic-driven team as opposed to the news-driven environment of the old newsroom.

That makes a huge difference, impossible to evaluate unless you've experienced the digital revolution within a pure play enviornment with no strings attached to an old news organization. To quote Gary Hamel, the theorist of modern management, in the past we had only two ways to bring human resources together: bureaucracy and market. The digital world added a new way: the network. Here is the second limit of the old newsroom: It is unable to organize itself as a network. Its pyramidal power structure from the editor to the intern journalist, its vertical hierarchy so closely knitted with desks, sections, and crafts along the copy flow, and its necessary definition of a daily budget, are quite contrary to the spontaneous, horizontal and interactive way news is produced and distributed in a digital media.

You don't have to breathe more than a few minutes in lasillavacia.com, in Colombia, or elmostrador.cl, in Chile, to catch the distinct feeling of a team interacting with its audience. In those two countries, historically stricken by political violence, both sites are pure players displaying a strong flow of user comments generated by the open and quick way they serve news. It's like a dialogue around a cup of coffee.

The third limit is the biggest one: an attitude problem. As individuals, journalists understand that they live now in a new, news ecosystem. Some have written magnificent stories about the digital age. Some are even changing the way they work and they relate to their audience.

But as a whole, they share an esprit de corps, embodied in the newsroom, that prevents the necessary mutation. For decades, the press was so influential so profitable, so protected by its position as a

monopoly or an oligopoly that it can't bring itself to abandon what seemed for so long like best practices.

It's a classic pattern in the diffusion of new technology: Facing a disruptive innovation, a profession does its best to keep its old culture, preventing or slowing down the process of change. The stubbornness and arrogance evident in smart press people reflects their uncomfortable feelings: They know what they are giving up and they can't imagine their future. They used to speak, but now they must listen to their audience. They must learn how to read data traffic as a marketer. They must imagine new applications or tools as a developer.

The challenge is tough but not insurmountable. Lanacion.com.ar, in Argentina, the digital child of a traditional newspaper, has improved a lot in the recent years thanks to the digital efforts of key journalists. Many have decided to upload content and speak to their audience several times during the day, significantly improving the digital density of the online offer.

As I commute a lot between Europe and Latin America, people ask me what differences I find between cultures of the two continents. Apart from languages, there is none. North and south news media share the same endeavors. The two distinct continents, regarding the press, are now the digital one, where journalists work within the audience, and the traditional one, where publishing and broadcasting remain mainly a one-way process. Latin America as a whole isn't lagging behind the rest of the press. A large chunk of its press is well established in the digital world, largely as the result of individual journalists acting as pioneers, pushing and struggling in order to build their future.

To tell the management of an old media about the true level of their digital readiness isn't the most comfortable part of a consultant's life. But it's easier that it seems,

should you use my simple trick: I shoot pictures of the integrated newsroom in the morning at 8 am, 9 am, no later than 9.30 am. And then I show empty desks. By 10 am in most digital media, the morning traffic is already past its peak. How can you fight for a news website if your troops don't show up at the beginning of the battle? To win the morning in order to win the day is a basic rule for a media drawing most of its traffic from workplaces.

The newsroom as we knew it is doomed. The idea that information wants to be free, as Steward Brand said in his often misquoted statement, is still worthy of debate. But surely journalists deserve to be free. That will happen only if they are released from yesterday's newsroom.

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Three Tasks for Journalism: Control Costs, Embrace New Ways, Believe in the Business

By Paul Tash

Newspaper profitability has varied over time, and the past holds some lessons for the future. After such a party, the hangover needn't be fatal.

Between 1980 and 2000, the profit margin of the Chicago Tribune grew from 8 to 30 percent. A former publisher of that newspaper revealed those figures during a conference at the Poynter Institute several years ago, stamping them in my memory.

My question, then and now: Which percentage was the exception?

At the beginning of the new century, the generous profits most newspapers were generating seemed well established. One of my elders in the business once confided that newspapers were a lot like electric companies; both were pretty hard to screw up.

But after another decade, those days of easy money and all-but-certain success seem a fond but distant memory. According to the Newspaper Association of America, advertising revenues have dropped to the same total that the industry posted in 1986, when numbers were on the way up.

Too bad you missed the '80s, I tell my young colleagues. You would have liked them. The business isn't what it used to be.

Or is it? For much of their history, newspapers were not an especially profitable enterprise. Nor is this the first time that great newspapers have struggled or even succumbed to financial challenge. Some fine newspapers are still published in New York, but Hearst's Journal American and Pulitzer's World are not among them.

Perhaps the historic aberration was the last quarter of the last century, when gushing revenues indulged higher costs and encouraged bold ambitions. After such a party, the hangover has been hideous, but it need not be fatal.

I don't pretend to be a scholar of newspaper history, but it strikes me there are lessons we can take from the best of our predecessors, including these:

They kept costs down. Upon his death in 1978, Nelson Poynter gave away the St. Petersburg Times to keep it independent and out of a chain. He was a great visionary. By all accounts, he was also tight with a buck.

At the school that bears Poynter's name, we periodically gather a board of advisers from around the country. One of them, Cory

Bergman, is an Internet whiz in Seattle. Among other things, he has started a group of neighborhood websites where residents can post local news that big organizations don't cover. He says he is trying to keep the costs of journalism low enough that it can be sustained.

In the early days of such collective community efforts, I heard a Wall Street Journal columnist sneer that citizen journalism "is a lot like citizen surgery." That drew a big laugh from a convention hall full of editors. But the truth is: Just about anybody can learn to do a little first aid.

These days, I don't hear any editors laughing at the notion that non-journalists might provide some useful material, for free.

They embraced new ways. At this year's meeting of Florida publishers and editors, it was the oldest person in the room who was carrying an iPad. Old dogs can learn new tricks, or at least adapt some tricks they know already.

At the St. Pete Times, we have retooled our political coverage by launching a website – PolitiFact.com – devoted not just to reporting what politicians say, but testing whether their statements are true. Those statements get a rating from our Truth-o-Meter, with "pants on fire" for the real whoppers.

This takes work, leaving less room for duplication of coverage we might secure from other sources. Within Florida, we have combined forces with the Miami Herald for political coverage, and scoops from each paper get prominent play in the other. Beyond Florida, we are building a network of PolitiFact partners, with newspapers in Texas, Georgia, Rhode Island and Ohio.

So far, PolitiFact's success is mostly journalistic, including a Pulitzer Prize in 2009, but broadening our scale for a bigger audience creates a better climate for advertising and commercial reward.

They believed in their business. In 1980, the Chicago Tribune was in the hands of newspaper people. Today, it is part of a company struggling through bankruptcy at the hands of a real estate magnate who took a chance on quick profits. Chastened not by experience, he now foretells the end of printed newspapers delivered to subscribers.

Truth be told, a note of pessimism – even fatalism – has crept into the conversation of some longtime newspaper operators over the last several years. In this thinking, print is in a holding pattern against the future, and creative energy should be devoted to all things digital.

But not, I would caution, at the expense of our established print business, the one with a rich history and – for all its current challenges – some enduring strengths. Like any enterprise, it also needs fresh thinking and investment. Six years ago, our company launched a new newspaper – tbt* Tampa Bay Times – a free tabloid edited for a younger audience. It has grown sharply and steadily, to the point that its advertising revenues now exceed those of our website, and it contributes nicely to our financial results. The most frequent complaint from readers is that the boxes are empty before they can find a copy. Who says print is dying?

In contrast to the blowhard from the Windy City, another media mogul bears more attention in my book. Rupert Murdoch recently told a conference in New York that printed newspapers would be around "for decades." Note the plural. The first step in planning for the future is to believe there is one.

> Too bad you missed the '80s, I tell my young colleagues. You would have liked them. The business isn't what it used to be. Or is it?

Paul Tash is chairman and chief executive of the St. Petersburg Times, and chairman of the Poynter Institute, the school that owns the newspaper.

Reinvention of Journalism Marked by Seven Key Features & Six Critical Steps

By Dan Gillmor

Journalism's future requires entrepreneurial thinking, as a startup culture pervades competitive experiments outside newsrooms.

In April 1999, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Andy Grove took the stage. In a conversation with Jerry Ceppos, former editor of the San Jose Mercury News, Silicon Valley's once-great daily newspaper, Grove warned the editors that their time was running short. Newspapers faced a financial meltdown, he said. He wasn't the first to issue such a warning, and hardly the last. But the degree to which he was ignored remains instructive, and sad.

Grove was chief executive of Intel Corp., one of Silicon Valley's classic entrepreneurial success stories. More than a decade earlier he'd led his company through a wrenching transition. He and his colleagues changed Intel's focus from computer memory, a business they were losing to Asian competitors, to the central processor chips that became the heart of the world's personal computers. With that move, the genius of which became clear only much later, Grove gave Intel its future – at least for the next several decades – and assured his own place as one of America's great business leaders.

Now he was telling editors they, too, were in deep trouble if they didn't wake up. He said:

"You're where Intel was three years before the roof fell in on us. You're heading toward a strategic inflection point, and three years from now, maybe, it's going to be obvious... And my history of the technology industry is you cannot save yourself out of a strategic inflection point. You can save yourself deeper into the morass that you're heading to, but you can only invest your way out of it, and I really wonder how many people who are in charge of the business processes of journalism understand that."

Grove was right about the trajectory, though a bit premature about the timing. He was even more right about the industry's likely response: Rampant cost-cutting, much too little investment and, above all, the failure to appreciate the value of entrepreneurial thinking.

You might imagine I'm a pessimist about journalism's future. You would be dead wrong. I'm a wild optimist.

Why? Because the startup culture has infiltrated journalism in a big way – because so many people are trying new things, mostly outside of big enterprises but also inside the more progressive ones; because experimentation is so inexpensive; and because we can already see the outlines of what's emerging.

Although the transition will be messy, we're heading toward a great new era in media and journalism. To be sure, we are losing some things we need, at least temporarily. But if we do this right we'll

have a more diverse and vibrant media ecosystem.

"Ecosystem" and "diversity" are key words here. The dangers of monocultures – systems that have little or no diversity – are well understood, even though they still exist in many areas, such as modern farming and finance. Because monocultures are inherently unstable, the results are catastrophic when they fail. A diverse ecosystem, by contrast, features ongoing failure side by side with new success. Entire species come and go, but the impact of losing a single species in a truly diverse ecosystem, however unfortunate for that species, is limited.

In a diverse and vibrant capitalist economy, the failure of enterprises is tragic only for the specific constituencies of those enter-prises, but what economist Joseph A. Schumpeter called "creative destruction," assuming that we have fair and enforceable rules of the road for all, ensures the long-term sustainability of the economy.

The journalistic ecosystem of the past half-century, like the overall media ecosystem, was dominated by a small number of giant companies. Those enterprises, aided by governmental policies and manufacturing-era efficiencies of scale, controlled the marketplace and grew bigger and bigger. The collision of Internet-fueled technology and traditional media's advertising model was cataclysmic for the big companies that dominated.

But is it catastrophic for the communities and society they served? In the short term, it's plainly problematic, at least when we consider Big Journalism's role as a watchdog, inconsistent though the dominant companies have been in serving that role. But the worriers appear to assume that we can't replace what we will lose. They have no faith in the restorative power of a diverse ecosystem, because they don't know what it's like to be part of one.

As Clay Shirky and others have noted, the cost of trying new ideas is heading toward zero in the digital media world. That means lots and lots of people will be – they already are – testing the possibilities. What is entrepreneurship all about? Whether you're doing it inside or outside another enterprise, the following are key features:

Ownership: This doesn't necessarily mean owning stock in a company, though of course there's nothing wrong with that.

It's about owning the process, and the outcome, of what you're doing.

Focus: If you can't focus, you can't succeed in a startup. I know this from experience.

Ambiguity: Startups are full of ambiguities and even chaos. If you're the kind of person who can't deal with this, you may be wrong for entrepreneurship. Understand a rule of startups: Your ultimate product is likely to be vastly different than what you originally imagined, and it'll keep evolving.

Resourcefulness: Startups have to use what's available. If you have everything on your wish list, you're either over-funded or under-creative.

Speed: Entrepreneurs move fast. They change with evolving conditions and take advantage of opportunities that emerge and disappear in short order. They make decisions and move forward.

Innovation: You can innovate by being more efficient or thorough, not just by inventing new technologies. The Googles are few and far between, but innovators often connect dots where others can't imagine the connections.

Risk: Appreciating risk is essential to the entrepreneurial process, but it doesn't belong at the top of the list. You minimize the risk when you can, understanding that you can't eliminate it.

> We're heading toward a great new era in media and journalism. If we do this right we'll have a more diverse and vibrant media ecosystem.

The process of entrepreneurship differs from project to project. In the digital media space, however, I'd suggest the following:

First, start with a good idea, and above all follow your personal passion. An entrepreneur who doesn't believe in their goal with every fiber of their being has already started to fail.

Second, develop it quickly and collaboratively, using off-the-shelf tools when possible and writing code only to get the parts you can't find elsewhere. Be open with others about what you are doing. "Stealth mode" projects can and do work, but most ideas will find more traction with the help of others who care about what you're doing.

Third, launch before you think you're fully ready. As my friend Reid Hoffman, founder of the LinkedIn network and a prescient investor in Internet companies has said, "If you aren't completely embarrassed by your website when you launch, you waited too long."

Fourth, assume you're in beta mode for some time. You will have bugs and problems. Fix what's broken and keep iterating.

Fifth, if you see the project will fail, do that quickly, too. Don't prolong failure, and don't spend investors' money after it's clear you should stop.

Sixth, repeat. A smart failure teaches valuable lessons. Internal entrepreneurship in companies, also called "intrapreneurship," should be especially forgiving of failure, assuming it's not stupid or reckless.

While large enterprises can innovate, they may be better off in the digital media world buying or licensing from startups. Bill Joy, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, put it best when he said, "No matter who you are, most of the smartest people work for someone else."

I hear about dozens of new startups every month. Most will fail, but I have to stress again: This is not a flaw in the system. It's a feature.

I'm jealous of my students, and I tell them so. I'm jealous that I'm not their age, starting out when the slate is so blank, when the possibilities are so wide open. They, not my generation, will invent our future.

Dan Gillmor is director of the Knight Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communications. This is an edited excerpt from Mediactive, his new book and online project, and is licensed under a Creative Commons "Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License" (see http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/).

Legal Threats to Privacy, Free Speech Appear Over the Horizon

By Geoffrey Robertson

Recent developments, including the publication of Afghanistan war documents by WikiLeaks and major news organizations, highlight looming legal issues related to free speech and privacy.

This is a crucial moment to ponder the future of international investigative journalism in light of the legal constraints that increasingly threaten. The haemorrhaging of "top secret" data about the war in Afghanistan has raised fundamental questions about the definition and role of journalism, as politicians demand prosecutions of sources and of WikiLeaks. Meanwhile, the tentacles of privacy law are beginning to strangle valuable forms of journalism previously free from the chill of the courtroom: The damage award against the author of "The Bookseller of Kabul" is the latest example.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), once the vanguard of free speech in Europe, has lost its way, with some intellectually inferior judgments which lack understanding of the practicalities of journalism and of the principles of freedom of expression. There is some good news from abroad: The Speech Act in the US Congress promises to discourage some forms of libel tourism - but the challenges of defending free speech in this Internet age are greater than ever.

The first challenge for the media is to agree on free speech principles in relation to electronic publishing, an agreement that was so embarrassingly lacking at the end of the first week of the WikiLeaks saga (the point at which I am writing).

The 75,000 pages of raw war data were made available exclusively to The New York Times, the Guardian and Der Spiegel and published as if they amounted to a latter day Pentagon Papers coup, demonstrating the failures and illegalities of the war against the Taliban. Soon the doubts set in, fanned by rival newspapers and encouraged by the Pentagon: Was this not irresponsible conduct that put at risk the lives of those who have provided information to the allied forces?

The three newspapers said they had alerted the Pentagon before publishing and had received no request to hold the reports, but the Pentagon replied that it had not been supplied with any details (and if it had, injunctions might have been obtained on national security grounds, at least in the UK). The media could not decide whether Julian Assange, the fly-by-night founder of WikiLeaks, was a hero or villain, or even whether he was a journalist.

Clearly, old definitions of journalism and ancient debates over media responsibility must be revisited and updated. The Pentagon Papers case in itself – that great Supreme Court rejection of censorship on grounds of national security – made exceptions where lives were at stake or where the publication revealed "troop movements in wartime," and arguably the WikiLeaks material revealed both. But who is to decide - Mr. Assange? Or the editors of the Guardian, or the Pentagon censors? Ultimately, I suppose, the Taliban - if it actually uses the information for lethal reprisals.
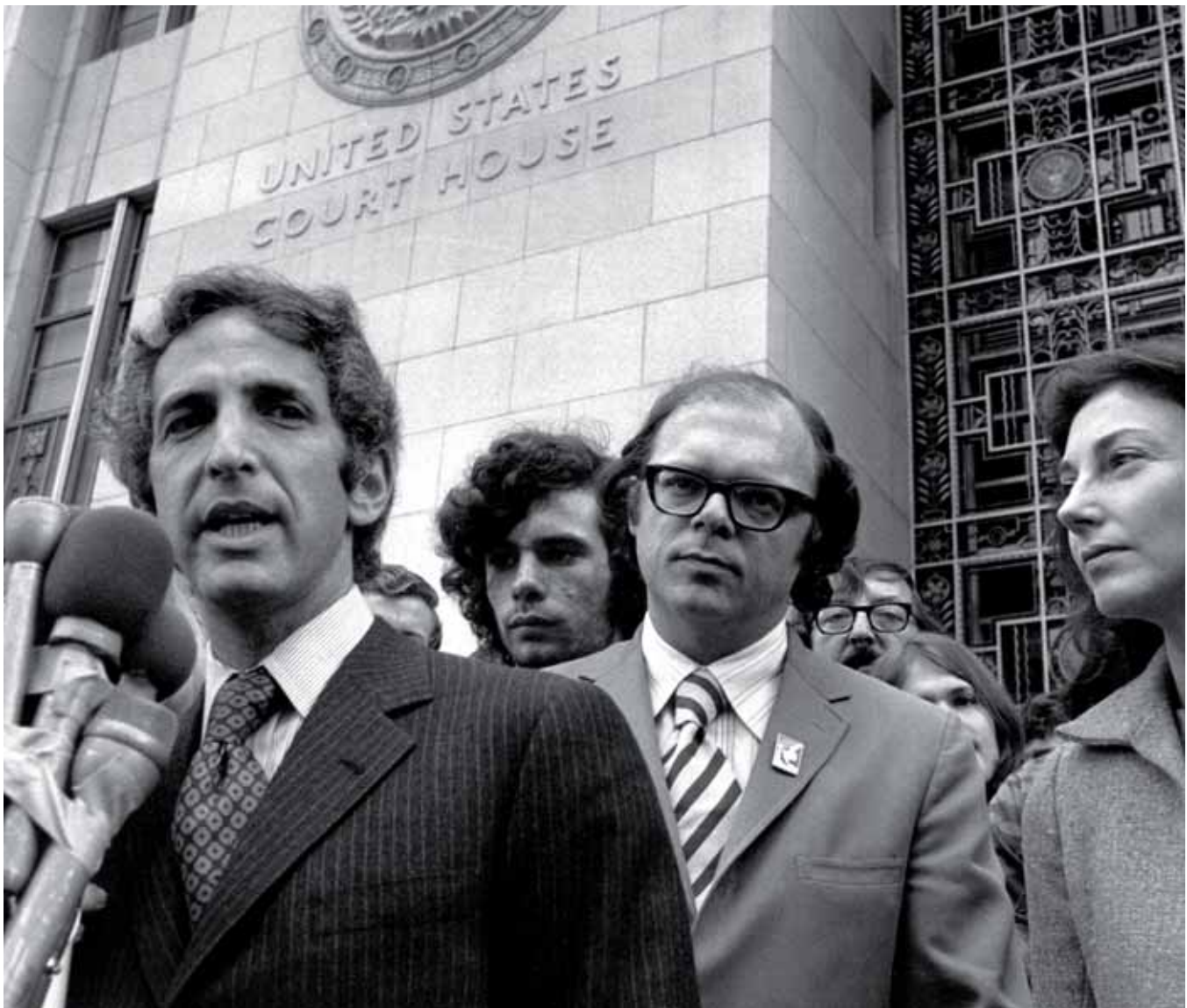
But this cannot be the basis of a free speech principle, which must either be absolute (putting the onus on the military to encrypt or otherwise secure information relating to informers and to protect them should their cover get blown) or else to make sensible distinctions that are based on the long-run public interest, i.e. the public's right to know the extent to which a brutal war fought in its name is killing innocent civilians through irresponsible or illegal targeting decisions.

If Mr. Assange is not a journalist, he is certainly an awfully big source for journalists and the media has a duty to protect him and his subsidiary sources if it uses their material. It must be remembered that the US, for all its much admired First Amendment freedoms, has no constitutional protection for sources (the result of an adverse 5:4 decision in Branzburg v Hayes), and it severely punishes those who blow the whistle to journalists from government offices (a Sunday Times source for information from the US Drug Enforcement Agency's files about UK politicians was recently jailed for two years).

If the implications for national security transparency call for more considered media ethics as the basis for a common position against the new Official Secrecy laws that are being threatened, the almost exponential development of privacy law needs forceful and immediate challenge, certainly in Europe where the growth is rapidly turning privacy into a jungle.

What has gone wrong with the European Convention is fairly clear and is to some extent a question of what has gone wrong with the calibre of judges on the ECtHR.

When the Convention was formulated, back in 1950, it was endowed with a free-standing and quite formidable freedom of expression (Article 10(1)) defeasible only if "necessary in a democratic society" to serve some overriding public interests including the rights and reputations of others.

So Article 10 set up a presumption in favor of free speech - the individual's right to privacy and reputation were exceptions to be narrowly construed and applied only where necessary to reflect an overriding social need. The right to privacy in Article 8

was limited to "the right to respect for his family life his home and his correspondence."

There was debate over whether to include "honor and reputation" as a privacy right but this was emphatically rejected. There was to be no "balancing act" between Articles 8 and 10: Media cases should be decided according to the taxonomy of Article 10 with privacy and reputation as a limited exception to free speech. This was the approach in the court's early free speech cases, permitting the courts to publish full details of the thalidomide tragedy and allowing reporter Bill Goodwin to protect his source.

But in recent years, the court has changed its approach, improperly interpreting Arti-

cle 8 to include protection of the "reputation" and requiring a "balancing act" between Articles 8 and 10. And of course, it is judges - not editors - that get to do the balancing. The rot set in with the decision in the Von Hannover case, in which it was decided that Princess Caroline of Monaco could not be photographed in a public place:

"...private life, in the court's view, includes a person's physical and psychological integrity;... Article 8 of the Convention is primarily intended to ensure the development, without outside interference, of the personality of each individual in his relations with other human beings...There is therefore a zone of interaction of a person with others, even in a public context, which may fall within the scope of private life."

This psycho-babble provides no comprehensible basis for restrictions on freedom to communicate truthful information: what is meant by "a zone of interaction of a person with others even in a public context"? National courts have interpreted it as a recipe for awarding damages for the publication of truthful information and even opinion about public figures caught in morally dubious circumstances and Silvio Belusconi is trying to make it the basis for a new law that will stop the Italian media from poking their noses and lenses and microphones into aspects of his life that others might regard as corrupt.

The plaintiffs in the "Bookseller of Kabul" case invited the journalist into their home to write a book about them: When it turned out to be less than hagiographic they sued. One of the booksellers' wives received €26,000 ($33,264) for the invasion of her privacy. Formula One mogul and son of a prominent British fascist, Max Mosely, whose penchant for beating women for pleasure (his and theirs) was exposed by a British tabloid, received £60,000 ($67,776) for breach of privacy. He should have received damages for libel - he was wrongly accused of running a Nazi sex orgy, when in fact it had been an old fashioned British sex orgy. He has now been permitted to take his case to the European Court claiming that Article 8 requires prior notification by the media to those who they intend to expose. So celebrities can run to court and obtain pre-publication injunctions. These developments have been opposed by the media in different countries in a half-hearted and disorganised way, which has failed to curb the unprincipled growth of privacy

> The first challenge for media is to agree on free speech principles in relation to electronic publishing.

restraints that are impacting severely on journalists and authors exacerbated by the failure of many of the current European court judges to understand and apply free speech principles.

This process will continue unless and until the European, national and international media make common cause and put their collective heads together and fight the growth of privacy law and stop the progressive weakening of Article 10.

It must also be remembered, of course, that free speech is a right to be enjoyed by the public, and the public has no legitimate interest in protecting the publication of falsehoods or reckless half truths or in permitting paparazzi to harass celebrities or allowing journalists to publish personal information without public interest justification.

The Speech Act, which is likely to be approved by the US Congress later this year, will do something to discourage forum shopping - the device of suing in Europe (especially in plaintiff friendly London) to harass foreign publishers. But it will apply mainly to protect US publishers, by preventing libel awards being enforced in the US The European media need to lobby to change the laws here which give plaintiffs far too much choice about where to sue, especially in relation to Internet publications.

Press freedom is so often a case of one step forward and two steps back. There have been some important advances but plaintiffs' lawyers have regrouped and retaken the offensive. The new "right to personal dignity" in the Lisbon Treaty will be a great boost to those of their clients seeking to protect "dignity" which their secret dealings - if exposed - would show they do not deserve. There are big battles ahead for freedom of expression, and the media will lose them unless it can come together with a Europe wide, if not a worldwide, strategy for winning the struggle.

Geoffrey Robertson QC is head of Doughty Street Chambers and author of "Media Law" (5th edition), "Crimes Against Humanity" and "The Case of the Pope", all published by Penguin Books.

Legislation and Libel Laws Erode Press Freedom, Jeopardizing Democracy

By Robin Esser

With regulation, less is more, if it protects journalism's public service function rather than undermining it.

A few years ago I was asked to give evidence to a British quango called the Better Regulation Commission. I began my address with the words: Better regulation, in my book, is less regulation.

This is especially true as far as newspapers, in all their forms, are concerned, and it is also true of television, which is regulated in the UK with statutory force.

Only in the US is press freedom a part of the Constitution. In Britain – the supposed cradle of democracy – the media is only half free and faces an uncertain future in the face of authoritarian laws, publicly funded rivals, feather-bedded by taxpayer money, and economic stress.

The restrictions on news media in Britain send the wrong message abroad, encouraging regulation of the media in other parts of the world and bringing comfort to those who wish to keep their populations in ignorance.

The case for official regulation of TV has long since gone with the multiplicity of channels now available. The UK government could save a lot of taxpayers money by abolishing the broadcast regulator, OfCom.

Ironically, as the influence of newspapers has extended online far beyond the boundaries of their physical circulation areas, the independence of those newspapers has been hedged in by new legislation and by the increasingly draconian and expensive laws of libel and privacy, eroding freedom of the press to an alarming extent. Democracy itself is in danger on a local, regional and national level in Britain.

Few people realise that the Labour Government, almost as its last act, brought in a law, the Bribery Act – which could, and given the impact on Members of Parliament probably would – have been used to prevent the Daily Telegraph publishing their MP's expenses exposé, which has altered the face of Parliament forever.

Agreed that so far this century no editors have been thrown into British jails and no presses have been blown up.

Journalists working in oppressive and dictatorial regimes, sometimes in fear of their lives, may think these restrictions are minor – but they encourage those oppressions when the Mother of All Parliaments countenances such restrictions.

In Britain there are now many Acts under which journalists can be jailed for doing their job.

Prison is the punishment for breaches of the Bribery Act (10 years), potentially in the Data Protection Act (two years) in the Harassment Act, and in the anti-terrorist laws.

It is prescribed in the Representation of the People Act (6 months); in the Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994; in the Criminal Justice & Immigration Act 2008 – stirring up hatred on grounds of sexual orientation (6 months or 7 years) in the Racial & Religious Hatred Act 2006; in the Public Order Act and the Criminal Justice Act 1987; and in the Official Secrets Act 1989. It's a wonder any of us are free!

While the Government protests that these laws are not intended to suppress press freedom, how long before a government that wants to reduce media criticism comes into power?

Legislation, hanging over news media like the Sword of Damocles, is not the only worry.

Britain has one of the world's most draconian and expensive set of libel laws which are a constant threat to freedom. When it costs up to £1,000,000 or more to defend a defamation case due to the 100 percent success fees upgrade introduced by the last government, editors are reluctant to risk a controversial story which could bankrupt their publisher.

Added to that are the sinister ranks of PR, spin doctors, agents and clever lawyers who are dedicated to projecting and protecting their rich clients' reputations at the expense of the truth. The use of super injunctions and injunctions to suppress legitimate stories, and the development by unelected judges of a privacy law in their interpretation of the vague terms of the Human Rights Act, have a chilling effect on investigative journalism.

As we come more and more under the influence and power of Europe, the threat of further restrictive regulation at the behest of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) is all too real. The ECtHR, criticised by Lord Hoffman as being unable to resist "aggrandising its jurisdiction" and as inter-

fering in domestic law, is to hear a case being brought by Max Mosley which demands the establishment of a rigid "prior notification" requirement for all critical stories.

Imagine what the powerful international drug companies, the conglomerates, and the rich and powerful would make of that in terms of suppression of the news!

Prior notification would soon become prior restraint.

Society of Editors Fights to Enhance Media Freedom

The last government must take credit for the Freedom of Information Act which has enabled so many news outlets to ferret out

information the public should know but has been hidden from them heretofore by obsessive secrecy on the part of those who rule over us. However, having let the genie out of the bottle, the government then tried to weaken the Act and protect rafts of public service workers from its probes. In Britain, the Society of Editors helped to ward off this backsliding.

The Society recently produced a comprehensive report, written by Professor Peter Cole, Emeritus Professor of Journalism at the University of Sheffield and a former national newspaper editor.

In writing about the so-called "democratic deficit" in Britain today he identified the following problems:

pers and magazines. As this is an editors' code, the editors have signed up for it and are therefore ready and able to stick to it. This code is administered by the independent Press Complaints Commission, which has a majority of lay commissioners drawn from public life and a minority of editors from the industry. It is financed by the newspaper industry itself. Despite all the barriers that must be surmounted, I am an optimist. I believe that the public's appetite for news is undiminished and it is in satisfying this appetite that the future of the media and its journalists lies.

We need to be constantly on the watch for attempts to get between the public and the media. So while I think our system of self-regulation is just about acceptable in a democracy – I would end by repeating what I said at the beginning.

Better regulation is less regulation. Set the news media free and the future will be more assured.

Robin Esser is Executive Managing Editor of the Daily Mail. He is also the Chair of the Society of Editors' Parliamentary and Legal Committee. He has been on Fleet Street for over 50 years.

"One of the most significant threats to media freedom, to the public's right to know, is not the result of legislation or regulation but of recession and economic decline. The crisis of advertising and circulation decline in the print media particularly, of advertising and audience decline in commercial broadcasting and of enforced cuts in the BBC, all contribute to what has been called the democratic deficit."

The regional and local press has experienced this worst, with newspaper closures and reductions in editorial staffs as a consequence of declining revenues.

This democratic deficit is now widely recognised, but there is little action, if that is possible, to redress it. There are suggestions of public funding for local media; the Press Association (PA) – Britain's premier news agency – has initiated what it calls a Public Service Reporting Project where it would organise a pilot for court and council coverage with reports available freely to anyone who would wish to publish them; local websites and new free newspapers have emerged; new local broadcasting franchises are being set up. But the PA project is finding it hard to secure funding and the other projects are more discussed than implemented.

Meanwhile local communities, towns and cities are under-reported and the public service role of the local and regional media, to hold those in power to account and to represent those over whom power is exercised, is left wanting.

Adding to the concern is the emergence of a number of council-funded newspapers, supported by council tax revenue and purporting to fill the gap left by traditional local newspaper coverage. MPs and editors have called for an investigation into these council newspapers which they say threaten the survival of independent local media and undermine democracy. The Society of Editors describes such newspapers as an 'insult to democracy.' The papers mislead the public by posing as independent media, and also damage commercial counterparts by encroaching upon their advertising territory. In Britain we have a very effective system of self-regulation. While US editors would and could reject such a system out of hand, in Britain it works well.

A committee of editors drawn from across the industry devises a code which sets standards for newspa-

> I believe that the public's appetite for news is undiminished and it is in satisfying this appetite that the future of the media lies.

Media Freedom in a New Media Landscape

By Damian Tambini

How we define media freedom affects how we defend it. Freedom of expression is a universal right, while freedom of the press may be more limited, and it remains unclear what the rights of citizen journalists are or should be.

The theme of the Congress of the International Press Institute in 2010 is 'Media Freedom in a New Media Landscape'. But we don't often stop to consider what we mean when we use the term 'media freedom.' My guess is that it would be difficult to find people at the Congress prepared to speak out against media freedom. The question, in a globalizing world where a growing majority of the population do not have effective protection of fundamental rights, is surely how media freedom is to be defended.

But is it so simple? We must draw a clear distinction between media freedom, which applies to the media, and freedom of expression, which applies to everyone. These principles are not always one and the same. Is media freedom – and its close relative 'press freedom' – ultimately the freedom of those who own, or control the press and broadcasters? What happens when freedom of expression and media freedom collide, as for example when a politician demands access to the media to express her point of view, but a media company refuses?

Perhaps even more attractive to the participants in the IPI Congress will be the notion of 'journalistic freedom'. This too can only be a good thing, surely. Well, those of us who have spent a lot of time with journalists may think we might want to think about some limits.

But on a serious note, journalists and media companies have been at the fore-front of the developing law on freedom of expression. In Europe, for example, the celebrated Sunday Times vs. the UK (1979) and Jersild vs. Denmark (1994) judgements by the European Court of Human Rights, and a series of others since the 1970s, have set out clear safeguards that prevent governments within the European Court of Human Rights system from controlling the media.

The Inter-American and African human rights systems offer hope for similar progress in the future elsewhere in the world. It is important to remember that whilst there are numerous international declarations, treaties and communications that mention media freedom, it is freedom of expression – rather than freedom of the media, the press or journalism per se – that tends to be protected by constitutions.

So journalists are fighting for freedom of expression on behalf of everyone. But there is an ongoing debate in various countries regarding the extent to which journalists have special rights as journalists, or whether in fact journalistic freedom is a subset of freedom of expression.

Does, and should, the law reflect a specific category, journalists, to whom special privileges – and perhaps responsibilities – should be given? What happens when there is a conflict between media freedom and the freedom of journalists? Should journalists be given specific legal protection from their owners?

A previous generation of thinkers on these issues, in the 1970s, tried to develop a notion that incorporated freedom of expression with freedoms of journalists and of the media into a 'right to communicate.' In so doing they derived a right of access to the media, reasoning that if freedom of expression is to mean anything in a communications system dominated by the mass media of press and broadcasting, people need to have access to those media.

Ultimately, the attempt to merge media freedom and freedom of expression, reflected in work carried out by UNESCO, the New World Information and Communication Order, and others, failed.

In part, it failed because offering open access to scarce communications resources such as transmitters and presses was impracticable. More recently, authors such as Karol Jacubowicz and others have revisited this topic, arguing that rights to communicate are possible now that the Internet offers the possibility of universal access to the means of mass communication.

Jacubowicz himself proposes that the right to free expression should be replaced with the right to public expression in the new media age. (See the papers gathered together on the Mediapolicy.org website: http://www.mediapolicy.org/general/do-we-really-need-a-right-to-public-expression/.)

Interestingly, the UN Special Rapporteur for freedom of expression, Frank de la Rue, has recently taken a similar position.

But is not theoretical debates about rights that will determine the future landscape of media freedom and freedom of expression. It is political will on the one hand, and the daily grind and experimentation of working journalists, and the legal and political battles that they and others fight on the other.

For the subtle balances that have been institutionalised in the laws, rules, codes and, crucially in the everyday practices of journalists are the product of centuries of legal reasoning, professional development and political street-fighting.

A definitive statement about press power was set out in a Times editorial from 1854:

"We cannot admit that its purpose is to share the labours of statesmanship, or that it is bound by the same limitations, the same duties, the same liabilities as that of the ministers of the Crown. The purpose and duties of the two powers are constantly separate, generally independent, sometimes diametrically opposed. The dignity and freedom of the press are trammelled from the moment it accepts an ancillary position. To perform its duties with entire independence, and consequently with the utmost

public advantage, the press can enter into no close or binding alliances with the statesmen of the day, nor can it surrender its permanent interests to the convenience of the ephemeral power of any government."

The professionalization of journalism and the development of media freedoms have gone hand in hand. Judges tend to be more likely to accept that journalists have acted in the public interest and that media companies deserve protection when they have been doing 'responsible journalism.'

A difficult one to test, and judges nearly always defer to the journalists themselves to decide what is responsible, but the point is that where journalists' actions impact on other people's rights – to reputation, for example, or to privacy – judges and others are keen to see that journalists are acting responsibly. In this sense, media freedoms are conditional on good behaviour.

So where does all this leave 'Media Freedom in a New Media Age'? Whilst it is true that the current period may be one of a particular disjuncture – new technologies fundamentally alter business models, and arguably the financing of 'responsible journalism' – it is only by understanding the past and the longer term development of what we now call media freedom, that we can understand this present.

There are two views of how we got to where we are. On one hand – in England we would call this a Whig view – there is the view that media freedom is the product of the steady, long march of liberal enlightenment values. The gradual acceptance of a brilliant and simple idea: the view that, following John Stewart Mill, freedom of expression is the best way of guaranteeing

truth, democracy and self-expression, and therefore social progress.

Another view of the development of media freedom is that it has been hard fought, and only really gained acceptance through the development of the brute power of the 'Fourth Estate' and the sometimes brutal deployment of media power in the defence of media freedom and the interests of media owners.

The truth, as ever, is probably somewhere in between. But this is not just a theoretical exercise. Asking questions about what rights and responsibilities journalists have, and – both historically and politically – why they have these rights, is crucial at this particular moment.

This is an important question when we ask about how the law and other institutions should treat bloggers, citizen journalists, Twitterers and the other 'networked journalists' of the Internet age.

Should amateur bloggers get the same privileges – in terms, for example, of source protection – as traditional journalists? Whether they enjoy the same privileges of access to information is often a question for the sources, rather than society at large. But government information is the key source. Should governments be able to control key announcements as they have, or should government data and freedom of information be radically opened in order to foster networked journalism?

Clearly, we are at a crossroads. In the mature democracies of Europe and North America at least, and in some other countries to varying extents, an accommodation had been reached between state and political power and the power of the media. The notion of the fourth estate – a familiar one in France and the Anglo-Saxon world – reflects the notion that the power of the media has a pseudo-constitutional status, and the law on freedom of expression set out some clear boundaries in the standoff between governments and the media. But the current crisis of the business model, and therefore of the fourth estate, itself leads to an uncomfortable question. Can we have media freedom without media power?

If media freedom requires 'the brute power of the press,' this has implications for how most effectively to work to establish media freedom around the world and how to respond to the current blurring of the categories of media, journalist and press freedom.

Should citizen journalists and others be accepted into the fold? If they are to enjoy the protection of the law, how best can self-regulation and professionalization govern their 'responsible' behaviour? And in the established democracies, how is responsible journalism – upon which media freedom depends – to be protected where the business model for news is being undermined?

Oxford Professor of Internet Studies Bill Dutton has suggested that we should think of the Internet as a 'Fifth Estate.' (EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE PAGE 22) I disagree, for two reasons. First, the Internet has none of the deliberate, self-conscious power that the press and the other estates have exercised. And second, there is no real boundary between 'the Internet' and the press.

In my view, Fourth Estate power is indeed faltering, but it is not in a terminal decline. The role that the media have played in social progress remains crucial, but we are far enough in to the Internet age to be aware that the shift we are witnessing is a fundamental one.

So this is a period in which debate and openness is required, about how the media are changing, and about how to foster responsible journalism. Debate about the future should not deflect us from the task of protecting journalists: It is crucial that the value of media freedom is robustly defended, particularly where freedom of expression is not protected, and where media freedom is not merely the freedom of media owners.

But at the same time, we must be prepared for a much more fundamental renegotiation of the social compact between media and the state in coming years. And a new framework for media freedom.

> We must draw a clear distinction between media freedom – which applies to the media – and freedom of expression, which applies to everyone.

Damian Tambini was appointed as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media and Communications, LSE, in September 2006. He is also an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and at the Oxford Internet Institute. His research interests include media law and policy, and ethics and regulation in a changing media environment.

Defending Freedom of Expression on the Internet

By Susan Pointer

The Internet has equipped journalists and non-journalists alike with a platform that enables – but does not guarantee – extraordinary expression of opinion and distribution of information.

With great foresight, the authors of Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights extended the basic right of freedom of opinion and expression – including the freedom "to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas" – to "any media and regardless of frontiers". Even back in 1948, such a human right was considered to be technology and geography-neutral.

In media terms, this principle has traditionally played out most in the written media, not only with reflection of different voices and viewpoints, but also through committed and - all too often - necessarily very brave journalists working to bring information that holds public value and interest from the local or foreign to the national and global, often from behind barriers and walls.

Protecting human rights and freedoms in the Internet era

The technology on which the Internet is based is inherently global and open. It has no central control point or managed information 'push', but instead relies on multiple entry points and the ability for any one Internet user to 'pull' any online content that others have chosen to make available. We are only just beginning to comprehend and appreciate the value of an open and accessible platform in supporting human rights and freedoms, transparency and

A supporter of Google in China pays his respects at the company's headquarters, 15 January 2010.

accountability: Politicians and their electorate in direct communication, spotlights thrown on corrupt governmental and institutional practices, real-time visual challenges of reported 'facts', citizen journalism and so on.

Mobile Internet technology has become a new tool in upholding human rights and exposing corruption, particularly in the hands of those around the globe who have not in the past had access to mass communications. A personal phone handset has provided a new group of individuals with tools to become electronic bearers of witness on events going on around them, e.g. after the military junta shut down communications in Burma.

The incredible power of online translation tools also is often missed in acknowledging innovations that have helped tear down, in this case, linguistic barriers to communications flows around the world. Many of us now have access to local primary sources of information in languages unfamiliar to us and can participate actively in the conversation in our own languages.

In this way, the Internet has offered an additional powerful means to have a window on the world beyond our immediate environment, challenging us with new information and competing opinions; also in many cases mobilising people to come together - either virtually or physically - around shared concerns and campaigns.

Empowered and news-hungry individuals are, it seems, actively seeking a broader plurality of news sources, and the news sources themselves are increasingly partnering with new players. Take the recent volatile post-election period in Iran where, excluded themselves from Iran, some international broadcasters transmitted their news from the offices of user-generated content platforms such as YouTube who were receiving live video postings from users on the ground.

Encroaching threats
But this doesn't mean that we are all of a sudden in some information and free expression utopia, the aims of Article 19 of the UN Human Rights Declaration met. The freedoms that the Internet facilitates with respect to open communication and information access are not universally embraced by those who have traditionally preferred to control information and communication.

Furthermore, authoritarian or statist regimes that want to monopolise or restrict information distribution are becoming increasingly technology-savvy and are not always content to sit back and watch this information revolution. Censorship and restrictions can take many forms, from the blatant to the more discreet or indirect: filtering content through firewalls; blocking websites at the ISP level; introducing restrictive regulations on content and on hosting platforms; walled gardens; and technical barriers to prevent access to foreign sites.

At a more subtle level, some require licenses that are not granted, insist on local legal establishment of a foreign Webservice, or apply local domestic legal requirements to an incoming service. Sophisticated information security attacks, and - perhaps most insidious of all - active cultivation of fear of contributing information or views online, promote a self-censorship culture, which risks generations growing up shaped to think and operate only within artificially-constructed silos.

And this is a phenomenon that doesn't just happen in distant countries. We are seeing an alarming trend of filtering and control efforts much closer to home, in those very countries that genuinely espouse the principles of a free society. Sometimes, authorities acting with the best (and shared) intentions such as protecting children online or dealing with illegal content, can display a tendency to over-reach or to apply disproportionate restrictions on the Internet when there are more appropriate ways to deal with legitimate challenges, most recently in Australia. The impact of such 'justification-creep' – if it proceeds unnoticed and unchecked – can, in time, fundamentally risk the open accessible Internet.

As users seek ways around political censorship, it is inevitable that censorship, blocking and filtering methods will continue to evolve also.

What does all of this mean for Google?
We believe strongly in maximising access to expression and opinion, that access to information and the ability to exchange ideas lies at the heart of robust knowledge, integration of different viewpoints, better decision-making, transparency, accountability, good governance and empowered individuals. Making information universally accessible and useful is what brought the company into being in the first place, as Larry Page and Sergey Brin sought to make it easier for people to find what they were looking for on the Web.

Many of Google's products are platforms for retrieving information and contributing content and views. Yes, there is Google Search, but also Blogger, Google Earth and Google Maps, Google Books, Gmail, collaborative document creation in Google Apps, YouTube etc.

But as a global company operating across more than 150 countries, all with their own cultures and cultural sensitivities, history, legal environment, case-law and politics, the role of being a provider of such communication tools is not always a straightforward one.

Access to YouTube is banned in Turkey, for example, because YouTube has chosen to reject an order to remove on a global basis a handful of videos that were uploaded in the US to the US-based site but which within Turkey are considered illegal because they are critical of Kemal Ataturk. The issue is not one of deliberate insensitivity but rather a much deeper jurisdictional discussion about whether one country can apply its domestic content laws on a global basis to content hosted on a website outside of that country.

We also have Google employees who recently received suspended sentences in an Italian Court for allegedly violating privacy because of a video that was posted by a user to the Google Video online platform, even though this video was removed by the company upon notification of its existence (in line with the requirements of the European e-commerce Directive).

This ruling - which we are appealing - sets a particularly dangerous precedent because it implies that any employee of an online hosting platform - such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, DailyMotion or even blogs sections on online newspapers - can be held criminally-responsible for content that is uploaded unbeknown to them by a third-party.

Cooperative action and transparency on censorship
Three years ago, Google joined negotiations with Microsoft, Yahoo, human rights groups, responsible investors and others in Europe and the US to see if we could arrive at a code of conduct for how technology companies operating in restrictive regimes could best operate to promote freedom of expression and the privacy of users.

These discussions resulted in the Global Network Initiative (GNI). The principles to which we have all subscribed through GNI set out a detailed set of guidelines outlining how companies and groups should respond to government censorship attempts or government requests for personally-identifiable information of users.

At Google, we have also recently introduced a 'Government requests' tool. Like other technology and communications companies, we regularly receive requests from government agencies or courts around the world to remove content from our services or for information about the users. The tool is an attempt to bring a greater level of transparency on such requests.

> Censorship and restrictions can take many forms, from the blatant to the more discreet or indirect.

This is admittedly still at a very early stage of development but is nonetheless an attempt to bring greater transparency to the discussion about government-sought and court-order removals of content from the Web.

Let's not take the open Internet for granted
There is an expression that you only appreciate what you have when it's gone. Let that not be the case for the Internet. This is a critical moment to get ahead of that rather unfortunate timeline based on loss and regret and instead to be vigilant and consciously defend this incredible means for upholding our right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any means. Our taking the open Internet for granted may ultimately be one of the biggest risks it faces.

Susan Pointer is Google Inc.'s Director of Public Policy and Government Relations for Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Trends and Tips to Build the Business and Enhance the Craft

By Bill Mitchell

If only we could put Ushahidi to use (see Chapter Two) in mapping the crises facing journalism around the world.

Short of that, the Guardian's Alan Rusbridger summarizes key trends with the term "mutualisation," the growing openness and collaboration among journalists and people they serve. They are traits as important to the commerce of journalism as to its craft.

"Openness is shorthand for the way in which the vast majority of information is… part of a larger network, only a tiny proportion of which is created by journalists," Rusbridger points out, "Information may not want to be free, but it does want to be linked."

"It's difficult to think of any information in the modern world which doesn't acquire more meaning, power, richness, context, substance and impact by being intelligently linked to other information."

Here's the business-side consequence: Although the digital era has eroded publishers' control over information – and much of the profitability that accrued to such exclusivity – it has created the opportunity to provide new value.

Linking opens the door to new products and services that render the raw material of news ever more valuable to users and advertisers. Collaboration – with users, competitors and others – enables enhancement of value without adding big cost.

Mutualisation is also altering what Rusbridger characterizes as "the basic currency of journalism – the story." In an open and collaborative world, a story comes to life long before it appears as a fully formed pyramid, its long tail delivering value to users long after publication.

The views expressed in this report reflect no consensus, but neither do they fall into those tired old camps of Luddite and triumphalist.

Consider two takes on the future of print.

Jeff Jarvis argues that it's time for news executives to "get ahead of the curve for once" and acknowledge what he regards as print's inevitable demise.

"Kill the newspaper yourself," he urges. "Pick a date in the less-distant-than-you-think future and unplug the press. And then ask: What's a newspaper? What is its real value? And how does that value live on and grow past paper?"

Paul Tash leads a news organization, the St. Petersburg Times, that won one of the first Pulitzer Prizes ever awarded to a largely online initiative – the paper's PolitiFact fact-checking service.

But he still believes in print.

"A note of pessimism – even fatalism – has crept into the conversation of some longtime newspaper operators…" Tash writes. "In this thinking, print is in a holding pattern against the future, and creative energy should be devoted to all things digital. But not, I would caution, at the expense of our established print business. Like any enterprise, it also needs fresh thinking and investment."

As evidence, he cites the free print tabloid his newspaper launched six years ago that now generates greater advertising revenues than the company's website.

Whether you find yourself persuaded by Jarvis or Tash, I sense no disagreement between the two on Tash's guide to the future of news, which fits quite nicely in a mutualised world:

• Control costs.
• Embrace new ways.
• Believe in the business.

Chapter Two provides examples of all three.

Providing Platforms for Community Involvement in Journalism as a Social Good

By Grzegorz Piechota

Whether photographing a disaster or monitoring maternity wards, anyone can become an 'accidental reporter.' Gazeta Wyborcza is providing platforms to channel that impulse so that community service journalism is supported, in part, by the people it serves.

That morning, Wroclaw, the fourth largest city in Poland, became a stronghold. Defenders were not soldiers, nor firefighters. They were people like us armed with their mobile phones.

Michal: "Kozanow district is fighting. Nine lorries with soldiers, four diggers, hundreds of people try to make the river embankment higher."
Marta: "They told us to evacuate the sick and old. We are so worried and now we've run out of sand."
Kasia: "In Kozanow water is pouring through the embankment."
Magda: "Are you sure? What's the source of this information?"
Ziomek: "Confirmed: water really broke the embankment. Kozanow in panic!".

That morning, on 22 May 2010 – I was not there. I followed this fight with the flooding river on the Internet blog wroclawzwyboru.blox.pl.

Its editor, 29-year-old Pawel Andrzejczuk, a small business owner, collaborated with some 300 contributors who fed his blog with over 3,000 news items and uploaded 4 GB of photos and videos.

One amateur video captured the river breaking the embankment in the Kozanow district of Wroclaw. One could see the crowd running away and hear them swearing to God.

Watching streets under water I could not stop thinking about another flood that had hit the city in 1997. That time I was a young reporter at a local newsroom of my newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza.

Our editorial office was under water as were the offices of the other three local newspapers. In the early days of the flood, I lost my car driving through the water, so I was sailing across the city to collect information.

Fixed line phones were down. Mobile phones were very rare. The Internet was still a toy for geeks.

The flood of 2010 was so different. It affected a much smaller part of Wroclaw, destroyed many fewer houses and brought no casualties. But it was a bigger news event, as professional journalists were joined by amateurs who dared to provide independent, 24-hour live news coverage on the Internet.

How does it feel to be challenged by our own readers?
Not so bad, as we have brought it upon ourselves, in a way.

Everybody has a mobile phone with a camera now. Becoming an "accidental reporter" is just one click away.

Pawel's blog directly competed with all the TV news channels, radio newscasts and newspaper portals. In just five days it attracted 157,000 unique users in a city of 630,000 inhabitants. That's about one-third of what our established local news portal of Gazeta for Wroclaw is attracting monthly.

Fifty percent of users found Pawel's blog when Googling for "flood in Wroclaw" and similar keywords. They chose a link to an amateur news site instead of official sources, or professional media.

Official sources were disgraced as the mayor kept repeating Kozanow was safe, when it was not. Professional media – a bit slower than the real-time Web, more confident of the official version and cautious of the unconfirmed amateurs' accounts – turned off some audiences.

The amateur news feed also had its flaws. I had to cut through the jungle of rumors to find revealing witness accounts, but at the same time I felt as a reader that I had participated in something big and communal. Such a rare feeling in our individualistic world of "me."

Pawel might not be a professional news editor, but over the last five years he has built a strong online community. His Facebook profile had more than 2,600 fans at last count, almost as popular as our local Gazeta's profile. It all paid off during the flood. Finally, the trend described in Dan Gillmor's "We the Media" manifesto reached my part of the world.

Reader Participation Challenges Traditional Media

So, how does it feel to be challenged by our own readers? Not so bad, as we have brought it upon ourselves, in a way.

My newspaper, Gazeta Wyborcza, was founded in 1989 by anti-communist oppo-

sition to bring independent journalism to the country and support underground Solidarity's bid for the first free elections in Poland.

Today, Gazeta is the most read quality newspaper here with an average paid circulation of 347,000 and 4.2 million readers reached in total every week in print. Our online portal (Gazeta.pl, the fourth largest website in Poland), attracts 11.8 million users a month. That's 66 percent of all 17.8 million Polish Internet users.

Twenty-one years after its founding, Gazeta still believes its mission is broader than just delivering honest news. Since its launch it has been a voice of "modern Poland" – supporting democratic reforms, joining NATO and the European Union. It has been helping to build an open society by providing platforms for debates and inspiring people concerned with a common good.

We have embraced new media as they make our efforts easier and more effective. Our online forums (Forum.Gazeta.pl) let people discuss over 5,900 different topics ranging from politics to education and health-care to hobbies. Over the years, our users have shared over 113 million posts and two million photos.

Our blogging platform (Blox.pl) has become the biggest in Poland, hosting over 184,000 individual blogs. Pawel's blog on the flood in Wroclaw is one of them. When water broke embankments of that city, it became the most read blog on the platform. So, in fact, we have been sharing in all his traffic successes.

We've even been sharing some revenues. Pawel's blog is a member of our online

advertising network (AdTaily.com). This network helps to turn visitors of blogs and niche sites into advertisers and provides funding to independent voices. It has attracted over 13,000 amateur and professional online publishers so far.

Technology Should Further a Mission
Our successes with these technologies raise fundamental questions: What is our media is for? What do we care about? And why should people care about us?

Here at Gazeta we care about the quality of health-care. Since 1994 we have been reviewing maternity wards in Polish hospitals; we wished to improve passioned care by proposing a set of standards and checking whether they are met. We could have sent 100 journalists to assess the care, but a single mother – who actually gave birth in the hospital – can tell you more than reporters.

So we asked mothers for help. In 1994, we got 2,000 letters by post. In 2006, thanks to the Internet, we gathered 40,000 personal accounts of childbirth. We were able to review 423, or 96 percent of all maternity wards in Poland and produce the most comprehensive guide on hospitals ever. I personally benefited from the results of this campaign when my wife Magda was pregnant and gave birth last year to our son Adam.

As Adam will start school in a few years, I am looking forward to the results of another campaign. Last June, we sent 25 reporters back to their schools – public and private all over Poland – to check whether they embrace new technologies.

They spent a week going to classes, doing homework, talking to pupils, teachers and parents. Sadly, we found our education was stuck in the "chalk age," as one of the teach-

ers wrote in a letter we published on Gazeta's front page.

Computers, mobile phones and the Internet are rarely used during lessons other than computer science. So now, together with some non-governmental organizations, we want to introduce new teaching ideas to the Polish schools.

How about asking teachers for help? Here is an idea: we give them examples, access to experts and an online platform to share experiences; then they develop multimedia lesson scenarios and tools for themselves, together with pupils. We start in September, and we plan to target 7,000 schools.

Have you ever been on a diet? I have, and until now I have not been very successful. About 17 million or 46 percent of Poles are overweight. In the spring of last year, nine employees of Gazeta – editors, adver-

tising reps and bookkeepers – announced publicly they were going on a diet and invited readers to join them online. About 21,000 people did, and now they are registered in our social network of weight-watchers (OdwazSie.pl).

As readers followed the struggle of our employees, they could access a collection of free and paid online services. A few thousand subscribed to personally designed diet and exercise plans priced at €10-25 per month. Nearly 80,000 were buying books we published. Over 300,000 were getting sponsored supplements to the newspaper, like tables of calories or cooking recipes. After 18 months, our readers lost 12,500 kg in total. The most successful one lost 30 kg! I wish it was me.

Of these campaigns and community activities are funded by a mix of advertising, sponsorships, copy-sales, brand extensions, online payments and readers' contributions. By solving other people's problems we probably have found a way to solve our own.

Development of the Internet – amateur news feeds, the wisdom of crowds, the growth of social networks – reminds me that media, or communication within a society in general is more about people than just a message.

There is a lesson for journalism. We must convey news and tell stories of importance. But the story itself must matter to the community it serves. Journalism is also about assembling understanding communities, giving them tools, teaching how to use them to inspire people to bring about change.

"We are not indifferent," Gazeta's slogan reads. I hope we prove it.

> These technologies raise fundamental questions: What is our media for? What do we care about? And why should people care about us?
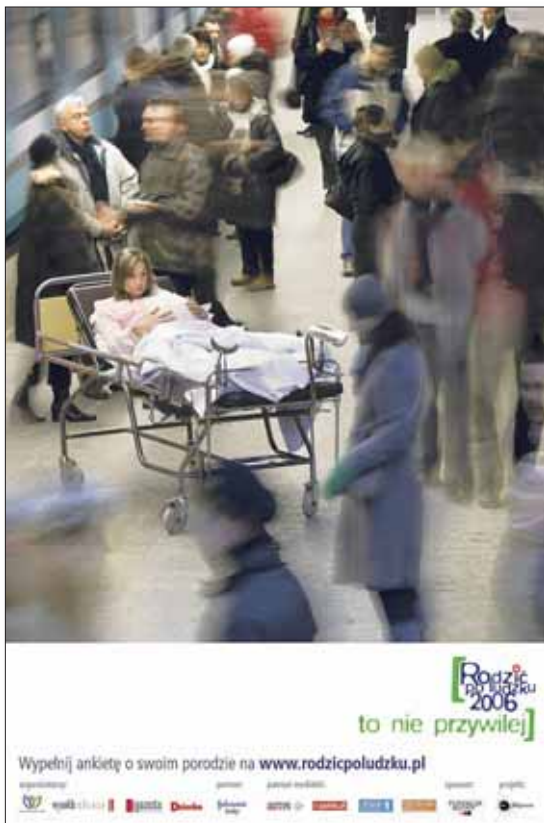
Left: Childbirth with Dignity. A poster for Gazeta Wyborcza's campaign that encouraged 40,000 mothers to review maternity wards in Polish hospitals.

As head of social campaigns at Gazeta Wyborcza in Poland, **Grzegorz Piechota** develops and runs editorial multimedia projects. Currently vice-president of the International Newsmedia Marketing Association in Europe, Piechota began his career at Gazeta in 1996 as a reporter in one of the smallest local offices.

Lessons for Journalists in the Crowdsourcing of Crisis Information

By Patrick Meier

A mapped approach to crowd-sourcing developed in Kenya has provided critical information to humanitarian workers in several crisis situations. Journalists have also begun using the mapping platform, Ushahidi, to track developments in breaking news in such situations as snow storms, earthquakes and political violence.

Just hours after the earthquake on January 12, 2010, the group known as Ushahidi launched an interactive crisis map of Haiti in partnership with The Fletcher School at Tufts University. Together, they crowdsourced the collection and mapping of crisis information.

Ushahidi, which means "witness" in Swahili, is a nonprofit tech company from Africa that develops free and open source platforms for live mapping. The mapping platform allows individuals to report information using a Web form, SMS, Twitter, smart phone apps, and other tools.

Ushahidi launched their first mapping platform during the post-election violence in Kenya in early 2008. The platform has since been used to monitor other contested elections, document human rights abuses, and aid in humanitarian responses in countries like Afghanistan, Sudan, Chile and Pakistan.

As the New York Times reported earlier this year, Ushahidi was also used by the Washington Post to track the crisis created when the American capital was hit by a massive snow storm. Partly because reduced revenue has diminished their staffs, news

organizations are turning increasingly to corwdsourcing as a journalistic tool. But it's also partly because there are so many more people in the crowd than there are reporters in a newsroom. The larger numbers result in a "distributed cognition" that, when aggregated, adds up to more knowledge than could be generated by a smaller group of people – reporters or otherwise.

As important as crowdsourcing may be to journalism in the long term, some of its more immediate and dramatic impact has been felt in the area of humanitarian relief. An examination of what's happened so far in that area can be instructive for news organizations.

Soon after the Ushahidi group launched the mapping platform for Haiti, several hundred volunteers from the Haitian Diaspora, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, the Geneva Institute of Graduate Studies, Lewis & Clark College and hundreds of others around the world sifted through mainstream and social media sites to map relevant information on the live map of Haiti. Just days after launching the crisis map, a dedicated short-code" was set up to crowdsource information on the needs of the disaster affected population in and outside of Port-au-Prince. This project, which came to be known as Mission 4636, allowed anyone in Haiti to send a free SMS to the number 4636 with his or her location and most urgent need. Crowdsourcing was then used to geolocate and translate incoming text messages from Haitian Creole into English so that emergency responders and the wider humanitarian community could understand and act on them. During the first week after the earthquake, it was not possible for the humanitarian community to set up any systematic representative sampling mechanism to carry out rapid needs assessments of the disaster affected population. In this as

Crowdsourcing represents a promising but still largely untested approach for collecting crisis information.
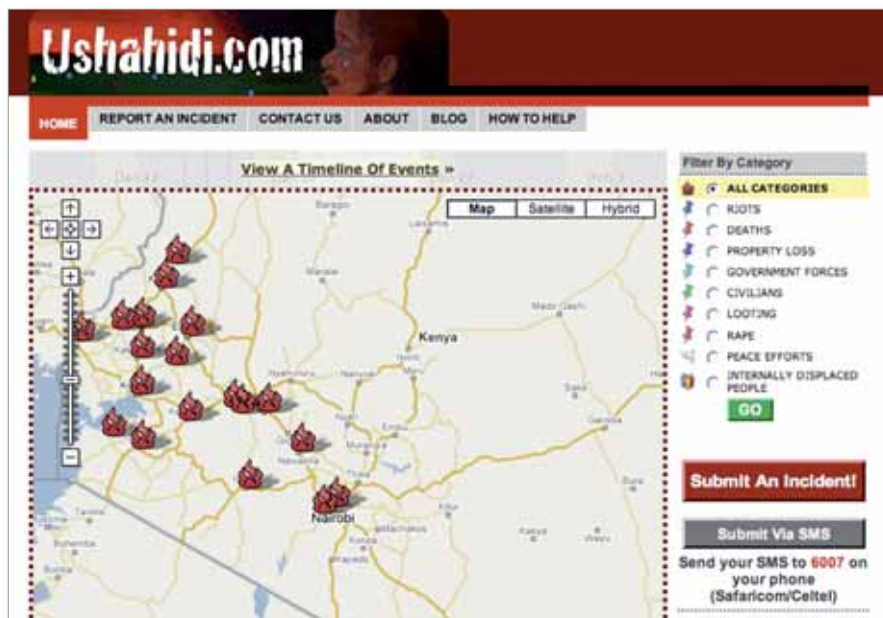
in many situations, the options were either to crowdsource information or have no information at all.

In addition, the humanitarian community continues to face challenges in communicating with disaster-affected populations. While the UN and other groups have made important progress in disseminating important information to local communities in times of crisis, this is largely one-way communication. The Ushahidi platform in Haiti was combined with the 4636 SMS short-code to provide near real-time two-way communication with the disaster affected population. This means that when volunteers at The Fletcher School were receiving some one thousand text messages a day from the ground, they could reply to these if more information was needed, such as precise location information.

According to the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and others, this map became the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on Haiti available to the humanitarian community – even though the information on the map was not statistically representative. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also applauded the use of the these and other tools in a public speech 10 days after the quake noting that, "the technology community has set up interactive

maps to help us identify needs and target resources... And on Monday, a seven-year-old girl and two women were pulled from the rubble of a collapsed supermarket by an American search-and-rescue team after they sent a text message calling for help." There are reports that the Marine Corps and US Coast Guard used the Ushahidi-Haiti map operationally to respond to urgent needs being communicated via SMS.

Crowdsourcing represents a promising but still largely untested approach for collecting crisis information. Jeff Howe coined the term "crowdsourcing" in 2006 and defined the approach as "the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call." Crowdsourcing has already been applied in several sectors and for various purposes including data crunching, translation, geolocation and transcription. But the application of crowdsourcing for crisis information is particularly new and presents

US helicopters drop aid into areas in Port au Prince made inaccessible by the earthquake on 12 January 2010

both important opportunities and real challenges. Crowdsourcing, as a methodology to collect information, is simply an example of non-probability sampling, a well-known and established sampling method in statistics. In probability sampling, every unit in the population being sampled has a known probability (greater than zero) of being selected. This approach makes it possible to produce unbiased estimates of population totals, by weighting sampled units according to their probability selection. Non-probability sampling, in contrast, describes an approach in which some units of the population have no chance of being selected or where the probability of selection cannot be accurately determined. An example is convenience sampling.

The obvious drawback of non-probability sampling is that the sample may not be representative of the population. Probability sampling, also known as representative sampling, also poses some important constraints, however. The approach often requires considerable time and extensive resources, which makes the use of this method difficult in response to fast-paced, real-time operations. To this end, probability sampling is far more conducive to retrospective studies. Furthermore, non-response effects can easily turn any probability design into non-probability sampling. Of course, the advantage of probability sampling is that the resulting sample is representative of the population being surveyed.

Non-probability sampling has some important advantages over representative sampling, however. First, non-probability sampling is typically a much quicker way to collect and analyze data in a range of settings with diverse populations. The approach is also a far more cost-efficient means of greatly increasing sample size in real-time, thus enabling more frequent and up-to-date measurement. In addition, the method is also used in exploratory research, e.g. for hypothesis generation, especially when attempting to determine

whether a problem exists or not. Lastly, non-probability sampling, or crowdsourcing, may actually be the only approach available—a common constraint in many medical studies and in humanitarian crises like the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the massive floods in Pakistan.

One of the main challenges in crowdsourcing crisis information is assessing the validity and reliability of the information being crowdsourced. There are a number of partial solutions to this challenge. For example, "bounded crowdsourcing" can be used instead whereby a known and/or trusted network of individuals – e.g. field personnel – source relevant information. In addition, the explosion in user-generated content means that it is increasingly possible to triangulate and cross-validate crowdsourced. For example, if three different text messages from three different numbers at three different times describe the same incident, then one can assume that three different witnesses are reporting this incident. The rise of integrated mobile technologies means that such witnesses are increasing dramatically around the world. This means that the chances that several witnesses will document the same event in any given time and place is increasing. This documentation is not restricted to text-based information like blogs, Twitter and SMS. Witnesses are increasingly sharing pictures and video footage in near-real time.

This explains why the Ushahidi group has developed another free and open source platform called Swift River. The tool pulls in user-specified content from Twitter, SMS, online news, social media, etc. and seeks to compare how many times a specific event is reported on and by whom. If multiple witnesses report on the same event, then chances are that the event really did take place. So Swift River produces probability scores that suggest how likely it is that an event being reported by diverse

> Partly because reduced revenue has diminished their staffs, news organizations are turning increasingly to crowdsourcing as a journalistic tool.

sources across different media has happened. Future versions will also make use of Flickr and YouTube to compare, for example whether pictures or videos of the same event were captured.

This prompted Anand Giridharadas to ask in a New York Times article whether the triangulated crisis map would become the new first draft of history. While many challenges still remain, the example of Haiti, which was unplanned and ad-hoc, is perhaps the first sign that the humanitarian space is about to be radically transformed in the coming months and years. By the same token, crowdsourcing and the near real-time validation of crowdsourced crisis information may have a similar impact on the future of news.

Patrick Meier is director of Crisis Mapping and Strategic Partnerships at Ushahidi and co-founded the International Network of Crisis Mappers and the International Conference on Crisis Mapping. He is a PhD candidate at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, the Co-Director of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative's Program on Crisis Mapping and Early Warning and is a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Program on Liberation Technologies.

Social Media as a First Draft of Journalism and a Rallying Cry for Democracy

By Endy M. Bayuni

Social media use has changed how people share information in Indonesia, with professional journalists facing challenges from citizen journalists who can provide news more quickly, even if it is sometimes unverified or incorrect.

The Twitter message flashing on the screen of my handset shortly after 7:30 a.m. one Friday in July 2009 was unequivocal: "RT @DanielTumiwa Bom @ marriot and ritz Carlton kuningan jakarta." Someone had re-tweeted a message posted by a man who was inside one of the two adjacent hotels that was bombed that morning. News of the simultaneous blast that killed 14 people was first broken by ordinary citizens with no training in journalism, but with a passion that matched the best.

The bad news for journalists is that in the increasingly wired world, they have lost the virtual monopoly they once enjoyed in disseminating news and information. The good news is that professional journalists have come to rely on the social media to help keep abreast of the very latest news. And even better news is that journalism can improve upon those raw, early reports of social media by scrutinizing them with such traditional journalistic values as accuracy and fairness.

For the next hours that day, Twitterland was buzzing with news of the blasts, courtesy of Daniel Tumiwa and others like him who were tweeting and re-tweeting information in packets of 140 characters or less. Thanks to them, news of the latest deadly terrorist attack in the Indonesian capital was known worldwide, not through the ordinary media like television and radio and not by journalists in the traditional sense of the word. Images and short video clips, ad-

mittedly poor quality but uncensored with gory bodies of victims, were soon posted on Twitter and Facebook, the two most popular social media among Indonesians.

Here are some more messages taken from @DanielTumiwa, who must have thumbed them in haste, but they were pretty accurate and descriptive.

• "2 boms go off inside Ritz Carlton and Marriott coffee shops! Not kidding. Am here."
• "Left location. Shocked. Lots of blood. Breakfast meetings at coffee shops while bombs went off."
• "Thanks for all the concern. Back home. Safe. Shocked. Blood… smoke… glass… everywhere… prayers to the victims…."

It was more than half an hour later before local TV stations, whose crews struggled through the Jakarta morning rush-hour traffic to reach the two bombed hotels, began their live broadcasts from the scene. Prior to this, the stations had put out news flashes, with the protective line "unconfirmed reports" until they were able to verify the news themselves on the ground. Most likely they had picked up the story from the Internet.

There have been many other times since then that Twitter and Facebook became the first media to break important news in Indonesia. As far as speed is concerned, and anyone in this business knows that speed is

> Journalism can improve upon those raw, early reports of social media by scrutinizing them with such traditional journalistic values as accuracy and fairness.

one of the most important elements after accuracy, citizen journalists are beating professional journalists at our own game.

And the public is responding.

With cell phones becoming affordable to most people, and with Internet connection costs coming down dramatically in the past year, more and more Indonesians have come to use social media like Twitter and Facebook as their prime sources of news and information.

Even journalists find them indispensable professional tools.

I learned of the death of Indonesia's former president Abdurrahman Wahid in December 2009 from Twitter only a few minutes after he drew his last breath. The speed was unbeatable. No TV or radio station – you can forget my own newspaper – could have matched the speed with which the news was disseminated, tweeted and re-tweeted,

with constant updates by the minute if not by the second.

There are some downsides to this, however. The nation learned about the death of its most famous composer, Gesang, one week before it happened, and also the passing of former first lady Ainun Habibie a few days too early.

Some overzealous Twitterers, wanting to be first to break the news, couldn't resist the temptation and tweeted the news before Gesang and Habibie were dead. Foolishly, some TV stations, caught in the competition of reporting the news first, picked up both false stories and broadcast them.

Credibility should distinguish the work of professionals, who are trained to put accuracy ahead of speed. Mistakes can be fatal to their integrity and to the credibility of the media they work for. The market will pun-

ish an organization devalued by its own behavior. For citizen journalists, and some of the people who follow them, speed may come before accuracy.

In this increasingly more wired world, professional journalists have to share the field (and the audience) with amateurs and their values. Each group has its place and its role in keeping the public informed. Anyone with mobile and Internet access can be a journalist, or do the work that journalists do any time they update their Twitter or Facebook accounts, for these are disseminated to a large audience online. Everybody is a journalist.

Citizen journalists in Indonesia have shown that they can be just as effective, if not more so, at influencing public opinion. The wide space that the Internet is providing has been widely used for an open public debate on just about anything in Indonesia as people take advantage of the guarantees of free speech. Sometimes out of these debates, a movement emerges and people rally behind certain causes.

For example, there was a petition that garnered more than one million signatures on Facebook demanding President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono release two deputies of the anti-corruption commission who were detained by the police as they were investigating high-profile cases. The president responded by setting up an independent team of inquiry, which sure enough, recommended the release of the two deputies two weeks later.

Another Facebook petition demanded the release of a young mother who was arrested by the police after an email she had written to a friend, complaining about the services of a private hospital near Jakarta, was posted in various discussion groups. The Omni International hospital filed libel

charges against Prita Mulyasari, who had written the email, and since the crime carries a maximum jail penalty of six years under Indonesia's new cybercrime law, the police were obliged to put her under arrest pending the investigation and trial.

Under strong public pressure from Facebook petitioners, the police released her, but when the civil law trial proceeded, she was found guilty and the court ordered her to pay t300 million rupiah ($30,000) in damages. Facebookers were quick off the mark, and organized a collection nationwide, called Coin for Prita, to help her pay that sum. The response was massive and the organizers raised more than 800 million rupiah. They were about to dump the coins, which had been loaded in trucks, outside the Omni International gate when the hospital decided to waive its claim. The money has since been given to a foundation named after Prita to help poor people seek justice.

There have been many other Facebook movements since then, albeit on smaller scales. But in the social media, anyone, poor and rich, powerful and strong, can find their voice. They also find that Facebook, and other platforms like it, can be more effective in airing grievances than taking it to the streets. The next people power movement in Indonesia, if and when the need arises, will be conducted through the 'Net.

In this Internet age, there continues to be a need for the kind of services that professional journalists provide: Gather, collect and sort information, verify, and package it in a way that is easily understandable to the public, using text, sound and still or moving images.

The medium may be different, from print, broadcasting to the digital, but the rules of the game and the ethics that govern the profession are essentially the same. Journalism is one of the oldest professions in the world, and for now at least, it is irreplaceable. With so many more players competing, however, the only way to survive is to improve skills and professionalism, and to practice good journalism.

Democracy is well served to include many more players besides professional journalists. But it is served even better if professional journalists strengthen their role in keeping everyone else in check. The survival of journalism depends on it.

> Citizen journalists in Indonesia have shown that they can be effective at influencing public opinion as people take advantage of the guarantees of free speech.

Endy M. Bayuni is the former Editor in Chief of The Jakarta Post. He also writes columns commenting on Indonesian national politics, political Islam, international affairs and the media scene.

Crowdsourcing Can Turn Fragmentation into Community

By Jeff Howe

The very technologies that appear to be atomizing individuals might be used to bring us together by creating a new form of social capital that can connect people to new friends, new jobs, new action.

There is much to bemoan about the decline of traditional media. I'd prefer not to add my voice to the collective keening, but I will offer a reminiscence: I spent my first year out of college writing for my hometown paper, the Columbus Dispatch. At the end of the year I moved to New York City, but before I left I wrote Columbus something of a Dear John letter, in the form of a column. It ran on the back page of the metro section, beneath my headshot.

It could be that one of my elementary school teachers neglected to read it, or that a colleague of my father's swept right past it on his way to read the latest on the Ohio State Buckeyes. But I doubt it. It was 1994; we were just on the cusp of the digital revolution – everyone in Columbus read the Dispatch. Writing for that paper was the equivalent of carpet bombing the city with leaflets. And so when I think about the Balkanization of the media—the rise of what Cass Sunstein calls "the Daily Me"—I think of that column, and wonder how many people would actually read it if I wrote it today.

The mass audience has acquired an almost mythological quality. Young journalists gather around the veterans to hear of the days when media giants roamed the earth, and Life magazine was read by 40 million Americans. We still gather for the occasional Super Bowl or "American Idol" fi-

nale, but by and large Americans have wandered off to read Sailing magazine or its equivalent.

Technology is often blamed for dispersing the crowd, but the fact is that the process was occurring long before the advent of the Internet. There's no question that the Web, and social media in particular, have facilitated ever greater levels of specialized media. I receive much of my news through an iPad application called Flipboard, which goes out and gathers the articles my friends are reading and displays them to me in the form of an online magazine. This is social media brought to its logical conclusion, and it's worth noting that in the year I've lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts I've yet to read—much less subscribe to—a local paper.

And yet, I'd like to propose a radical thought: The very technologies that are breaking us up might be used to bring us together. This past May I convened what is, to my knowledge, the largest collective reading exercise in history. This summer thousands of people from all over the world read Neil Gaiman's "American Gods."

They then discussed the book using Twitter, a new-fangled technology that is doing for the epigram what the octavo format did for the romance novel. Given the size of this virtual gathering, you'd think that I

had the benefit of institutional support and publicity department pow wows to help organize such a gathering. Au contraire.

How did I do it? First, by adapting to the new rules, instead of trying to impose the old ones. Let me explain. In March I posted the following passage to my blog, crowd-

sourcing.com: "I have a dream. An idea. A maybe great notion. As Auggie March might say, 'I got a scheme.' What if everyone on Twitter read the same book at the same time?" I called it "One Book, One Twitter," and presented it as something of a lark. As it happened, other people found the scheme appealing, and because I didn't try to impose my own rules on it, my scheme metamorphasized into a movement.

Next, I didn't take my inspiration from the "book club," a venerable institution rooted in the lyceums of Victorian-era America. I was inspired instead by a more recent convention—what the National Education Authority calls Big Reads, and what the innovative librarian

> What we miss about the mass audience event is the feeling that for a little while, we're all going through something together.

Nancy Pearl called, "What If Everyone in Seattle Read the Same Book?"

What happens is that a lot of people with absolutely nothing in common suddenly have at least one thing in common. This builds what an academic might call social capital. Social capital is the WD-40 in our lives, the connections that result in new jobs, new spouses, and new friends. It's why George Bailey is the richest man in town. And what social scientists call bridging social capital allows connections to form between people who have nothing in common. Except, perhaps, that they happen to be reading the same book.

Bridging social capital is also the quantity produced

when 36 million Americans watched the finale of the miniseries "Roots." Suddenly everyone at the office or the plant wants to talk about the same thing. And it's what, I think, we miss about the mass audience event—the feeling that for a little while, we're all going through something together. I hoped One Book, One Twitter might replicate that experience, and I'm happy to report that, for those of us who participated, it did.

People have noted, with some disdain, that Twitter isn't conducive to book clubs. This ignores that One Book, One Twitter isn't meant to act anything like a book club, in which people who know each other offer lengthy, personal exegetics about a book, becoming closer to people they already know. In this case, thousands of people who've never met gathered to dish out insights, questions, and commentary in the

machine gun bursts that are Twitter's native form (Twitter constrains each entry to 140 characters.) If someone wrote something especially witty or incisive, it was syndicated ("retweeted," in the jargon of the technology) by others, so that it reached many eyes. In this way, people with nothing in common had — for the eight weeks One Book, One Twitter took place—indeed something in common.

Finally, I cheerfully conceded any ownership over the project. Who started One Book, One Twitter? Me. Who runs it? Dunno. The people reading the book, I guess. That's what this new world, which Clay Shirky aptly calls an age of organizing without organizations, looks like. And One Book, One Twitter is what it looks like for book publishers. A lot of people reading, a lot of people buying books, but doing so according to their own schedule.

The last paragraph in my book on crowdsourcing ends with what I call a cardinal rule: "Ask not what your community can do for you, but what you can do for your community." Replace community with readers, or better, customers, and you have what could be a blueprint for a publishing strategy.

What does all this have to do with journalism? Plenty. We butter our bread every time we reach across racial, social, and ideological lines. As our audience grows, so grow our ad rates and eventually the size of our newsrooms. If there was one common thread to the widely disparate, globally dispersed participants in One Book, One Twitter, it was that they were eager to participate in a project that would allow them to connect with other people. The appetite is there. We only need to learn how to serve it.
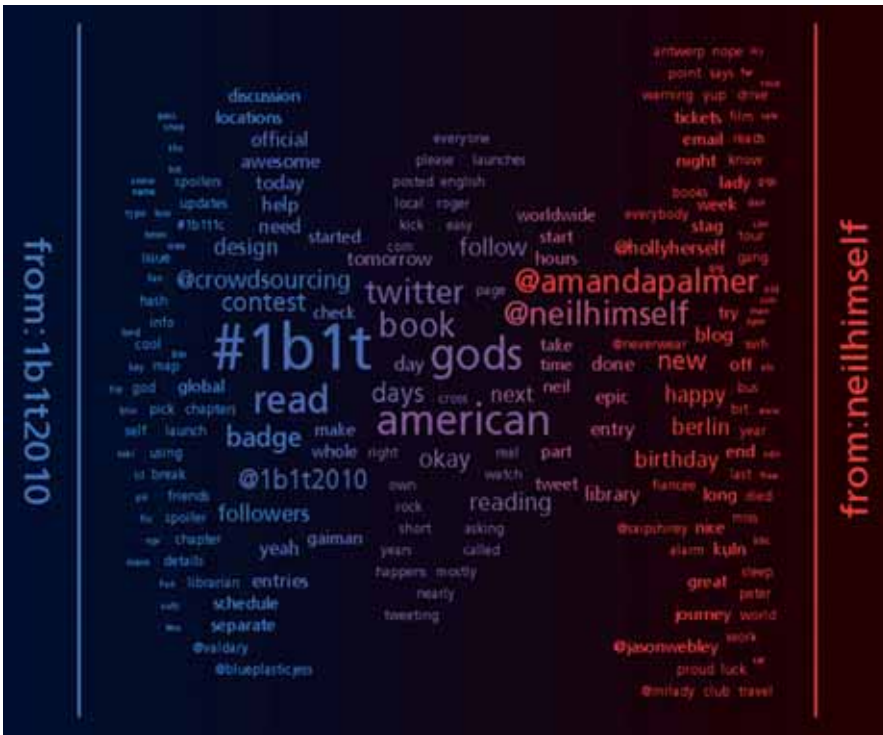
Jeff Howe is a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and a contributing editor at Wired Magazine. He wrote the book "Crowdsourcing: How the Power of Crowds is Driving the Future of Business."

Data and Journalism Form a Powerful Combination

By Paul Bradshaw

When computer processing powers journalism, there are new possibilities and problems for publishers. Cultural movements combine with technology to spread data as a source of information, and journalism is changing as a result.

For the past two centuries, journalists have dealt in the currency of information: We transmuted base metals into narrative gold. But information is changing.

At first, the base metals were eyewitness accounts and interviews. Later, we learned to melt down official reports, research papers, and balance sheets. And most recently, our alloys have been diluted by statements and press releases.

But now journalists are having to come to grips with a new type of information: Data. And this is a very rich seam indeed.

Statistics and numbers in general are nothing new to journalists. When I talk about data I mean information that can be processed by computers.

This is a crucial distinction: It is one thing for a journalist to look at a balance sheet on paper; it is quite another to be able to dig through those figures on a spreadsheet, or to write a programming script to analyse that data, and match it to other sources of information. Computers can also more easily analyse new types of data, such as live data, large amounts of text, user behaviour patterns, and network connections.

And that is potentially transformational. Adding computer processing power to our journalistic arsenal allows us to do more, faster,

Journalists are having to come to grips with a new type of information: Data. And this is a very rich seam indeed.

more accurately, and with others. All of which opens up new opportunities and new dangers. Things are going to change.

We've had over 40 years to see this coming. The growth of the spreadsheet and the database from the 1960s onwards kicked things off by making it much easier for organisations - including governments - to digitise information, from what they spent our money on to how many people were being treated for which diseases, and where.

In the 1990s, the invention of the World Wide Web accelerated the data at journalists' disposal by providing both a platform for those spreadsheets and databases to be published and accessed by both humans and computer programs - and a network to distribute it.

And now two cultural movements have combined to add a political dimension to the spread of data: The open data movement, and the linked data movement. Journalists should be familiar with these movements; the arguments that they have developed in holding the powerful accountable are a lesson in dealing with entrenched interests, while their experiments with the possibilities of data journalism show the way forward.

The open data movement campaigns for important information - such as govern-

ment spending, scientific information and maps - to be made publicly available for the benefit of society both democratically and economically. The linked data movement (championed by the inventor of the Web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee) campaigns for that data to be made available in such a way that it can be linked to other sets of data. That means, for instance, a computer can see that the director of a company named in a particular government contract is the same person who was paid as a consultant on a related government policy document. Advocates argue that this will also result in economic and social benefits.

Concrete results of both movements can be seen in the US and UK - most visibly with the launch of government data repositories Data.gov and Data.gov.uk in 2009 and 2010 respectively - but also less publicised experiments such as "Where Does My Money Go?", which uses data to show how public expenditure is distributed, and "Mapumental," which combines travel data, property prices and public ratings of 'scenicness' to help show at a glance which areas of a city might be the best place to live based on individual requirements.

But there are dozens, possibly hundreds, of similar examples in industries from health and science to culture and sport. We are experiencing an unprecedented release of data - some have named it 'Big Data' – and yet for the most part, media organisations have been slow to react.

That is about to change.

The data journalist

Over the last year an increasing number of news organisations have started to wake from their story-centric production lines and see the value of data. In the UK, the MPs' expenses story was seminal: When a newspaper dictates the news agenda for six weeks, the rest of Fleet Street pays attention - and at the core of this story was a million pieces of data on a disc. Since then, every serious news organisation has expanded its data operations.

the Guardian created a special online interface (mps-expenses.guardian.co.uk/) for more than 400,000 pages of documents and (as of August 2010) had enlisted more than 23,000 readers to review and help categorize more than 221,000 of the pages.

In the US, the journalist-programmer Adrian Holovaty has pioneered the form with the data mashup ChicagoCrime.org and its open source offspring Everyblock, while Aron Pilhofer has innovated at the interactive unit at the New York Times, and new entrants from Talking Points Memo to ProPublica have used data as a launchpad for interrogating the workings of government.

To those involved, it feels like heady days. In reality, it's very early days indeed. Data journalism takes in a huge range of disciplines, from Computer Assisted Reporting (CAR) and programming, to visualisation and statistics. If you are a journalist with a strength in one of those areas, you are currently exceptional. This cannot last for long: The industry will have to skill up, or it will have nothing left to sell.

Because while news organisations for years made a business out of being a middleman processing content between commerce and consumers, and government and citizens, the Internet has made that business model obsolete. It is not enough any more for a journalist to simply be good at writing
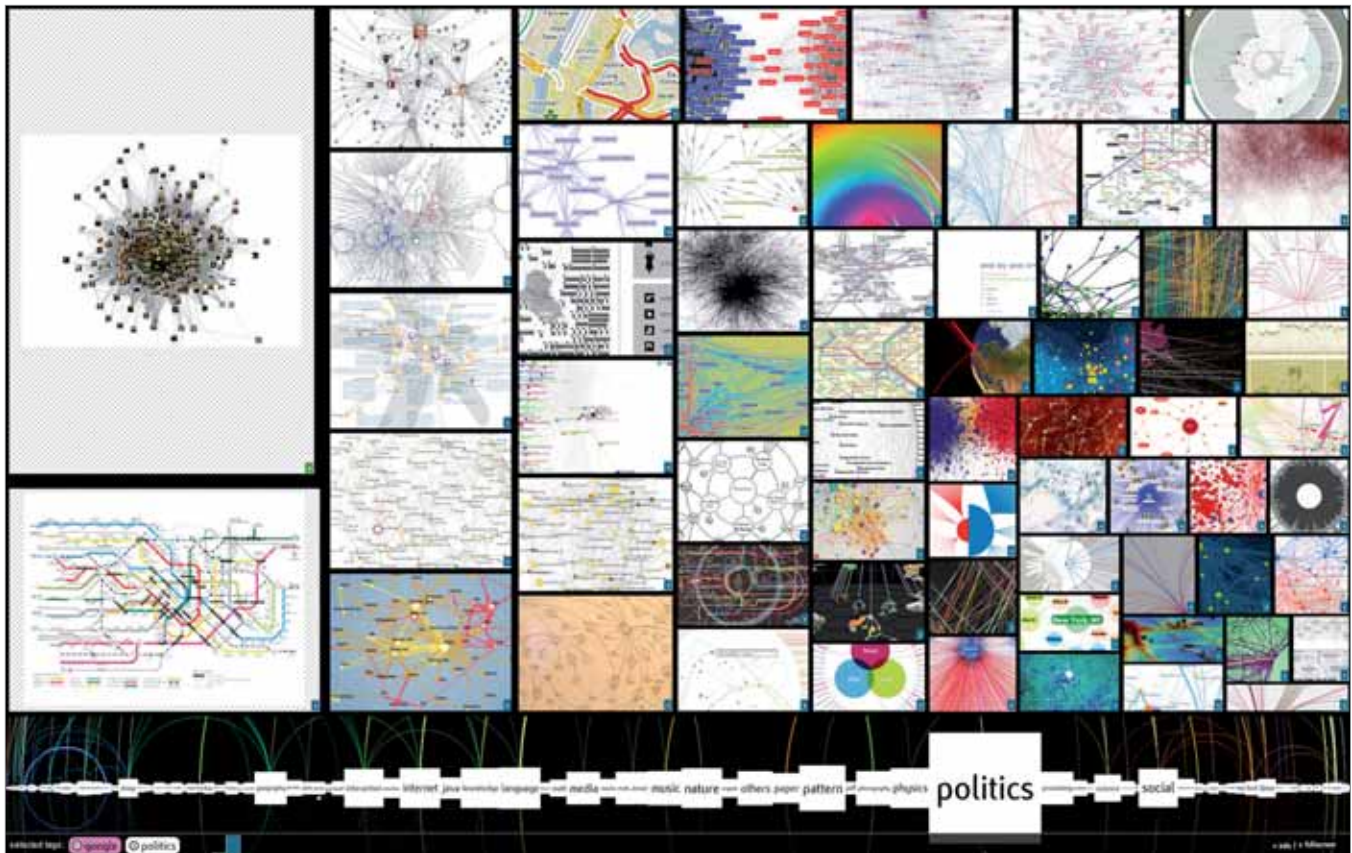
or rewriting. There are a million others out there who can write better - large numbers of them working in PR, marketing, or government. While we will always need professional storytellers, many journalists are simply factory line workers.

So on a commercial level if nothing else, publishing will need to establish where the value lies in this new environment, and where new efficiencies can make journalism viable. Data journalism is one of those areas. With a surfeit of public data being made available, there is a rich supply of raw material. The scarcity lies in the skills to locate and make sense of that - the programming skills to scrape it and compare it with other sources, the design flair to visualise it, the statistical understanding to unpack it.

The technological opportunity is massive. As processing power continues to grow, the ability to interrogate, combine and present data continues to increase. The development of augmented reality provides a particularly attractive publishing opportunity: Imagine being able to see local data-based stories through your mobile phone, or in-

deed add data to the picture through your own activity. The experiments of the past five years will come to seem crude in comparison.

A collaborative future
I'm skeptical of the ability of established publishers to adapt to such a future but, whether they do or not, innovative online-only startups will. And journalists' training will have to change. The profession has a history of arts graduates who are highly literate but not typically numerate. That has already been the source of ongoing embarrassment for the profession as expert bloggers have highlighted basic errors in the way journalists cover science, health and finance; it cannot continue.

We will need more journalists who can write a killer Freedom of Information request; more researchers with a knowledge of the hidden corners of the Web where databases - the 'invisible Web' - reside. We will need programmer-journalists who can write a screen scraper to acquire, sort, filter and store that information, and combine or compare it with other sources. We will need designers who can visualise that data

in the clearest way possible, not just for editorial reasons but distribution too. Infographics are an increasingly significant source of news site traffic.

There is a danger of 'data churnalism' – taking public statistics and visualising them in a spectacular way that lacks insight or context. Editors will need the statistical literacy to guard against this, or they will be found out.

And it is not just in editorial that innovation will be needed. Advertising sales will need to experience the same revolution that journalists have experienced, learning the language of Web metrics, behavioural advertising and selling the benefits to advertisers.

And then there is the commercial opportunity. Most publishers, after all, are in business not to sell content but to sell advertising. And here also data has taken on increasing importance. The mass market was a hack. As the saying goes: "We knew that only half of advertising worked; the problem was, we didn't know which half."

But Google and others have used the measurability of the Web to reduce the margin of error, and publishers will soon follow suit. It makes sense to put data at the centre of that - while you allow users to drill into the data you have gathered around automotive safety, the offering to advertisers is likely to say "We can display different adverts based on what information the user is interested in," or "We can point the user to their local dealership based on their location."

And as publishers of data, too, executives will need to adopt the philosophies of the open data and linked data movements and take advantage of the efficiencies that they provide. The New York Times and the Guardian have both published APIs that allow others to build Web services with their content. In return they get access to otherwise unaffordable technical, mathematical and design expertise, and benefit from new products and new audiences, as (in the Guardian's case) advertising is bundled in with the service. As these benefits become more widely recognised, other publishers will follow.

I hope that this will lead to a more collaborative form of journalism. The biggest resource a publication has is its audience. Until now publishers have simply packaged up that resource for advertisers. But now that the audience is able to access the same information and tools as journalists, to interact with publishers and with each other, they are valuable in different ways.

At the same time, the value of the newsroom has diminished: Its size has shrunk, its competitive advantage reduced; and no single journalist has the depth and breadth of skills needed across statistics, CAR, programming and design that data journalism requires.

A new medium and a new market demand new rules. The more networked and interactive form of journalism that we've already seen emerge online is likely to become even more conventional as publishers move from a model that sees the story as the unit of production, to a model that starts with data.

> It is one thing for a journalist to look at a balance sheet on paper; it is quite another to be able to dig through those figures on a spreadsheet.

Paul Bradshaw publishes the Online Journalism Blog and is the founder of the investigative journalism crowdsourcing site "Help Me Investigate." He is described by UK Press Gazette as one of the country's "most influential journalism bloggers" and by The Telegraph's Shane Richmond as "The UK's Jeff Jarvis."

The Tablet Innovates News Presentation as Color Did in 1970s

By Mario Garcia

Tablets like the iPad allow newspapers to innovate storytelling and presentations so they can attract new audience and satisfy traditionalists interested in immersion reading.

One after another, newspapers worldwide are making their entrance into the world of tablets, which in the second half of 2010 is more likely to involve developing an application for the iPad than for any other product. With more than 3 million of those small and efficient iPads already sold, Apple seems confident that its small and multi-talented new product will continue to be a favorite among people of all ages who want to be informed, play, be entertained or simply write an email to a friend.

Publishers and editors, too, share that confidence, and I have to admit that I have not seen this level of excitement, optimism and zest for innovation since the arrival of color presses in the late 1970s.

The excitement is justified, as the iPad – and probably the many other tablets that are surely going to make their entrance into the market in the next few months – is truly a game changer for newspapers.

Tablets allow for an immersive experience

Online editions hijacked newspapers into a format of scrolling up and down, depriving them of their most familiar elements, such as recognizable typefaces and the overall look and feel that are brand giveaways. But iPad editions are brother/sister to the newspaper, allowing for intuitive methods of reading and perusing, and also duplicating and reinforcing a newspaper's brand. It is as if a page of your newspaper jumped from the coffee table and into the black frame of the iPad and it can now play a video or sing a song.

The iPad has a widespread appeal, from the very young to the oldest and most traditional readers, allowing newspapers to start attracting new and elusive audiences to their brand, while allowing those precious traditional readers who love their newspapers to start sampling them in a new platform.

The iPad is likely to bring about a renaissance of the best that journalism has to offer, as it will encourage the publishing of long-form journalism. This is not to say that long stories are back, or that mediocre ones should be encouraged. However, I believe that the tablets offer an opportunity to relax with a story – the way books always have – and when we add to that the many multimedia possibilities, then I can see why enterprise journalism will find the tablet to be its best ally.

Tablets are a platform to relax with, offering the experience we associate with reading

printed newspapers, magazines, and books. As we become more aware of the need to disconnect, the tablets offer us the opportunity to do so.

Photographically, the tablets are a magnificent platform. We know that photo galleries are the most popular features of any multimedia offerings online – more popular than videos. On tablets, photos shine.

This, of course, will raise the bar for the quality of photos we get, as well as the type of stories that we write around them. With active fingers touching every possible detail of a photo, those inquiring minds that move them will want "mini stories" to go where their fingers stop. If your newspaper has coasted along with a mediocre photo department, it is time to start shopping for new equipment, hiring star photographers, and training editors to forget the boring, simplistic captions and start writing "mini stories" that enhance details of a photograph.

Economics of the tablet are untested

It is still too early to tell whether – or to what extent – the tablet will be the financial saviour that many in the industry are hoping it will be. However, early returns tell us that advertisers like the new platform, especially the fact that sponsorship gives them top display for their products and laces the contents of the advertising more closely with editorial content, a long held wish of advertisers.

When Rolex sponsors a newspaper's iPad edition, it feels as if the diamonds on the face of that watch shine a little more brightly, and when United Airlines accompanies the evening update of the tablet edition, it reaches higher altitudes. The publishers are hoping their bottom lines will be uplifted, too.

Revenue potential is one of the centerpieces of any tablet planning discussion, so develop strategies and form partnerships. The advertising potential for the tablet,

both at the creative and revenue levels is virtually untapped. Create partnerships and think of advertising/content synergies.

But, most importantly, create content that users will value. Dig into your archives for material that has potential value as an app. You will be surprised how much people are interested in – and are willing to pay for – the historical and pictorial records that sit in so many newspaper "morgues" worldwide.

Early challenges include proper staffing

Remember, tablets are in their infancy and we are the creators of their future for journalism. Our models will have the historic opportunity of being the first templates, with potentially iconic longevity, and that entitles us to experiment, to learn as we go, and to make the inevitable mistakes that all learning processes involve.

If a newspaper has coasted along with a mediocre photo department, it is time to start shopping for new equipment and hire star photographers.

enhanced and respected print edition is the mother's milk of the tablet.

The most solid and robust newspaper brands in the world will create a strong quartet of platforms: Mobile phones, on-line, print, and tablet, each with its distinct characteristics, catering to the specific needs of a highly demanding, sophisticated audience that has an insatiable appetite for the information they want, when they want it, how they want it. Feed that appetite and all will eat well.

Mario Garcia is CEO and Founder of Garcia Media, which has worked with more than 500 news organizations from its offices in Tampa, Buenos Aires and Hamburg.

The tablet is not a newspaper, it is not a magazine, it is definitely not an online edition, and it is not television, although it is a little of all of these. It must be given its own identity.

To do that, tablet editors are essential. They are, indeed, the next source of creativity in the newsroom. The ideal tablet editor is a person well versed in traditional journalism, but also tech savvy, with an inclination to consume information digitally, and most of all, a great storyteller.

Storytelling has found its next best ally in the tablet. We will see a need for excellent narratives and photos, with the enhancements of audio, video and interactivity.

But, remember, you can't simply transfer the entire contents of your newspaper into a tablet edition. Instead, find that one unique, value-driven element of your publication that should open the door to the tablet. That first app will engage your

readers, extend your brand, and give your team the laboratory it needs to take those first baby steps.

Your keys to early success tap into that which your newspaper does best: Make it local, personal, essential, exclusive, and simple. Don't be afraid to experiment.

Print edition remains critical element in multi-platform success
A challenge that remains at the top of the list: Make your print edition relevant. Use the grand opportunity that the planning of a tablet edition offers to look at your print edition carefully and thoroughly.

Indeed, print is eternal, and there is likely to be a printed edition of most newspapers for years to come.

However, it is part of the responsibility of every innovative tablet team to identify creative ways to take print to its next stage of evolution. Remember, a stronger,

From Adversaries to Allies: Professional and Citizen Journalists Need Each Other

By Solana Larsen

Global Voices Online creates an international community of local bloggers who cover the world from their own backyards to then be used by the wider global media.

When wildfires in Russia's western region began to spread uncontrollably at the end of July 2010, Russian bloggers began discussing what they could do to help. On Livejournal, which is the most popular blogging platform in Russia, people were documenting tragic losses of life and property, and also self-organizing to assist victims.

As the fires kept multiplying and their epicenters constantly shifted, one blogger, Gregory Asmolov, suggested that it would be a good idea to use an online mapping software from Kenya called Ushahidi to facilitate communication between those who needed help and those who were able to provide help. Another blogger, Alexey Sidorenko, installed the software and launched the website the very next day. A team of bloggers adopted the project, and in little more than a week Russian-fires.ru received more than 80,000 unique visitors. On Facebook, Sidorenko joked that he had wanted to be a firefighter as a kid. "It turns out, the Internet made me some kind of a virtual firefighter," he wrote.

A volunteer from Moscow, who refused to be identified, tries to extinguish a forest fire, which came close to a village of Kovrigino, some 74 km (about 46 miles) east of Moscow early Friday, 13 August 2010.
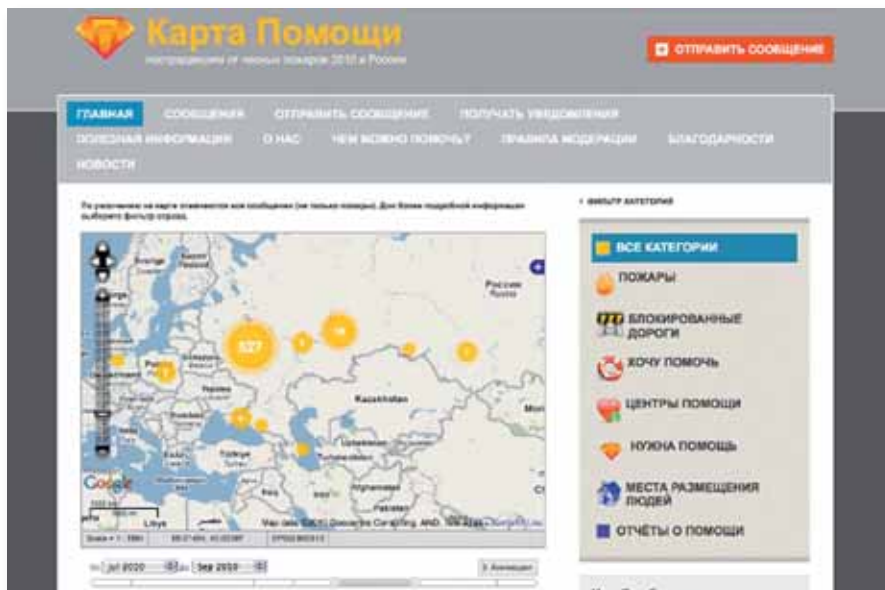
Somewhat unintentionally, many bloggers similarly become "virtual journalists" or even "virtual ambassadors" for their countries when their websites or blogs become hubs for international information gathering in moments of crisis.

In Iran, Madagascar, Uganda, Puerto Rico, and many other countries, bloggers are often surprised and delighted when journalists contact them for interviews. It's an opportunity for them to help communicate what is happening in their country. Very few people think of their own blogging or crowd-sourcing projects in terms of journalism, but the media often label it "citizen journalism" anyway.

Journalists often imagine it as an (inferior) imitation of their own craft, performed by unknowning amateurs. But it, in fact, often involves communities of intelligent and committed people.

The most successful citizen media projects are rarely styled after traditional news writing. But they often arise in reaction to gaps in mainstream media coverage of a certain event or perspective. In the five years since Global Voices Online began, it has has always emphasized parts of the world that are usually ignored by international media.

The site was founded by two fellows at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University, Ethan Zuckerman and Rebecca MacKinnon, as an effort to expand global media attention and cross-cultural dialogue by (among other things) connecting bloggers in the developing world with mainstream media journalists.

The international news agency Reuters was an early partner, and MacKinnon was a former CNN bureau chief in Beijing and Tokyo who later turned to online media. Global Voices, which I help manage, has become a vast international community of "citizen journalists," with more than 300 bloggers who report and translate stories daily.

Every month a few hundred thousand visitors pass through our multiple language websites. Many more have seen our authors' work referenced in mainstream media.

When we surveyed more than 100 Global Voices authors earlier this year, 44 percent said they had seen links or mentions of their stories in media from the United States or Europe, and nearly the same degree of attention from local and national media in their own countries. Considering

we are more likely to have a story from Trinidad and Tobago, Armenia, or Pakistan than from anywhere in Europe or the United States, this is no small feat.

What often happens is that journalists or television producers will be on the lookout for an alternative angle to an ongoing foreign news story and will do a story on "what bloggers are saying." In other cases, a project like the Russian wildfires website, or say, a website to monitor irregularities during the Brazilian election, will demonstrate there's enough material for a story of its own.

In Madagascar, young bloggers who covered a government coup and riots in the streets said they were compelled to risk their safety to tell these stories, because local mainstream media were deeply biased by pressure from both government and opposition. Before international journalists began to call for interviews, Malagasy citizens of the diaspora were finding these blogs through search engines and thanking them for updates. Once the streets had calmed, the bloggers convened a public meeting to gather their thoughts. They were surprised to see several journalists in attendance. It turned out there was a degree of competitive resentment and envy. A few months later, the bloggers began offering new media training to journalists.

This is just one example of how citizen journalists have worked together beneficially with mainstream media even though

The most successful citizen media projects arise in reaction to gaps in mainstream media coverage of a certain event or perspective.

they began as counter-voices. Citizen journalists and traditional media help each other. Only rarely have online citizen media projects gained notoriety without local or international media coverage or cooperation.

Russian-fires.ru depended on mainstream media and larger blogs to spread the word about its website. For the same reason, Julian Assange from WikiLeaks kept tens of thousands of leaked US military documents about Afghanistan a secret for weeks until he had secured an agreement for simultaneous media coverage by the New York Times, the Guardian (UK) and Der Spiegel on 25 July 2010.

WikiLeaks could have published the documents on the Web directly, but even with an international story of potentially massive significance, one would have to be naive to assume that the same newspapers would have devoted such resources to covering a story that was not exclusively theirs.

Stories keep asking whether WikiLeaks is "a new model of citizen journalism." In an interview in a Wall Street Journal blog, Jonathan Zittrain, a co-founder of the Berkman Center at Harvard, says WikiLeaks is "just a new intermediary." There have always been leaked documents, and newspaper stories about them. The difference now is that technology makes it easier to move the data, and also that whistle-blowers have new alternatives to mainstream media.

Again, this is an example of a kind of "journalism" that is not centered on writing news articles, but is inspiring people to reconsider where the boundaries of journalism begin and end, and who should be trusted or expected to perform the role best. Rather than waiting for professional media to communicate something, citizens will often simply take matters into their own hands.

In the past few years, I've attended more than a dozen media and journalism conferences. I often "defend" citizen journalism to those who argue that it's useless, or only good in dictatorships and poor countries. Countless times, I've seen journalists assume a defensive position. At one recent conference in Berlin the co-editor-in-chief of the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper in Germany, Werner D'Inka, challenged me directly, asking whether I would, "want to live in a house built by a citizen architect?" He said journalism is not "just storytelling" and asked whether I thought his five years studying journalism had been a waste of time if "anyone" could be a citizen journalist.

I too have studied and taught journalism at a university. And I know that journalists (in their spare time at least) are citizens too. The idea that professional journalists should somehow have a monopoly on public communications is strange to me.

In the case of Global Voices, the majority of our contributors each speak three languages and have post-graduate degrees. They may not all be journalists, but they are still serious people. If they had nothing of value to share, they would not be able to mobilize virtual communities of supporters.

Successful citizen media requires a community of support from inception to implementation. Alexey Sidorenko said he would never have launched Russian-fires.ru if it weren't for his involvement with Global Voices and the fact that he attended the Global Voices Summit in Chile in May.

"I know for sure I would never otherwise have known to use the Ushahidi software," he said. "First of all, I didn't know the technology. Second, I couldn't have imagined it would be a success. And finally, it was in Chile that the developers of the software became 'real' people to me."

> The idea that professional journalists should somehow have a monopoly on public communications is strange to me.

Bloggers or citizen journalists often work as members of virtual or online communities who identify a need and a collaborative method for meeting that need.

Professional journalism is crucially important to our societies and democracies. Wonderful new communication forms are sprouting up online to enhance it, by diversifying sources and the stories people share.

Journalists should embrace citizen media, as many already do, and not be so concerned with how to fit it into media categories of the past. Innovation and collaboration with citizens will long serve journalism and the public interest.

Solana Larsen is the managing editor of Global Voices and the former editor of OpenDemocracy.net

How Niche Journalism Works for POLITICO

By Bill Nichols

US political website and newspaper POLITICO thrives by limiting its focus and offering exclusive saturation coverage within its niche, modeling a growing media trend away from being "all things to all readers" and toward being "one indispensable thing to many readers."
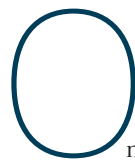
On June 25, 2009, there was a bit more than the usual ruckus in the POLITICO newsroom just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC: Michael Jackson was dead and POLITICO's managing editor wasn't quite sure what to do.

Said managing editor would be me – a veteran of over 20 years as a reporter at USA Today, a general interest news dynamo where Jackson's death would have instantly wiped the news budget clean and prompted an immediate frenzy of news-gathering activity. But as I don't work at USA Today any more, fellow POLITICO editors quickly convened to offer counseling. Dreams of a "Goodbye Jacko!" headline on the Web were dashed, as was a pictorial retrospective of Bubbles the Chimp.

Finally, a group of young Web producers took pity on me and put together a slide show featuring MJ with presidents and political leaders over the years. And at last, I settled down.

I exaggerate; but only a little. And my almost comic level of distress that June day vividly illustrates one of the founding principles of POLITICO and a concept we believe will become a foundation for a majority of news organizations as we move into the media's uncharted future.

Rule No. 1 for us is bracingly simple, yet revolutionary in practice: **We don't cover everything.** We cover politics, lobbying, Congress and the White House and executive branch. Outside that, from Tiger Woods to Britney Spears, from Lindsay Lohan to World Cup results and back again, we are perfectly comfortable knowing our readers will seek that coverage somewhere else.

Niche journalism, as this selective form of specialized coverage has become known, is one of several phoenix-like trends gathering strength out of the ashes of the old media order. These are some reasons it makes sense for us – and likely will make sense for many of our colleagues going forward.

It's pointless – and economically insane – to provide news that readers can get 1,000 different places.

There is an immediate caveat to this thought; there will be general interest news sites that survive into the future. There will always be a New York Times, a CNN, a BBC, a Spiegel Online and hopefully even a USA Today.

But there will be precious few such sites because the rest of us don't have the resources to blanket the globe and field a staff that can be competitive across news/sports/business/entertainment lines.

And beyond the question of staffing, there's an equally pertinent editorial question to

be answered about trying to build a general interest news site: can you do that and differentiate your work, your brand? That is the core goal all media organizations share in today's new world order.

Producing content that is different, exclusive and revelatory in some way is one of the essential ingredients for success in today's cluttered media landscape, and it's self-evidently easier if you're doing that covering topics that you bring you some advantage, be that geographical or intellectual.

On this score, niche journalism allows you to increase your journalistic power by acknowledging your limitations. A local paper can't cover the World Cup like the New York Times or the BBC, but it can completely dominate local and statewide sports coverage. The same goes for local politics or for blanketing larger topics on a national scale. Niche journalism means going where the readers are – and where the competition may be more successfully engaged.

Readers no longer want to consume news as a single entrée – they want a buffet of sites that give them specialized, in-depth content on topics that they are interested in.

Another way to put this is: Why not embrace niche journalism, as readers are going to demand it anyway? The days of a handful of newspapers and television networks dominating the news business and offering readers a one-stop shopping experience for information are already gone. Successful enterprises like ESPN and CNBC, the Food Network , Global Post, Marketwatch and many others demonstrate that readers and viewers want to use the new possibilities of the media and the new, almost unlimited freedom they have to seek out information to explore topics that interest them in much greater detail.

Our view, at POLITICO, is that readers increasingly may use one site as a home page base, but will graze the Web to delve into more detail on topics that appeal to them, be it sports, financial news, foreign news (and I think that's an area of real possibility in the years ahead), arts and entertainment, gossip, etc.

Readers revel in the inversion of the old journalistic paradigm where we told them what news was important and when they should access it. Now, instead, they create their own news accessing experience with a smorgasbord of sites they can access whenever and however they choose.

POLITICO, among other newcomers on the media scene, has proven a theory that should have been self-evident; if you break stories, people will come to your site to read them. The easiest way to do that is to flood the zone in covering a particular subject area on which you can regularly stay ahead of your competition.

Niche journalism, by definition, requires a news organization to own the limited terri-

and provide the kind of depth and context that would normally get left on the cutting room floor.

Readers create their own news accessing experience with a smorgasbord of sites.

tory it covers and also allows reporting and editing resources to be deployed in a way most likely to produce news. If you don't have to staff an event you know is destined for page A13 or a distant Web subpage because it's part of your mission as a general interest site, you can instead focus that reporter on a story that actually means something to your audience.

When John Harris and Jim VandeHei hatched the idea for POLITICO, one of the goals they wanted to achieve was to only do stories that were interesting, as opposed to stories that were covered out of some sense of obligation, even with the knowledge that few, if any, readers were clamoring for them.

While it can require significant self-control and discipline – as in "Oh my God, we don't have Lebron James going to Miami anywhere on our site!" – niche journalism, almost by definition, results in more sharply focused stories that meet a standard we feel

is key to success in this new age: If it's not exclusive, revelatory or unique in some way, we shouldn't be doing it.

We have to fight for readership each and every day and prove to readers each and every day that we have something insightful to say that can't be found in any other corner of the Web.

Niche journalism may seem an oxymoron in a world of limitless possibility on the Web. Similarly, it is, I suppose, an admission of at least partial defeat to acknowledge that the days when the philosophy of general content journalism ruled have come to an end for most of us.

Our experience at POLITICO, however, is that niche journalism actually broadens our journalistic possibilities by allowing us to break more stories, be a regular part of the national conversation on politics, lobbying, Congress and the White House, and allow our writers and editors to dig deeper

Bill Nichols has been managing editor of POLITICO since January 2007. He spent the previous 24 years at USA Today, where he covered the White House, State Department and was a senior Washington correspondent. He has covered six presidential campaigns, 12 national conventions and emerged undefeated from two presidential golfing outings with Bill Clinton.

Building a Cabin and a Blog Create Foundation for Community

By Louis Ureneck

This cabin builder, editor and professor learned about journalism's future while building a blog and a foundation of interested readers, who taught him and one another, as they participated in the construction of a second home and a virtual community.

In the fall of 2009, I set about building a cabin in the hills of western Maine. Apparently, a lot of other people had the same urge. I wrote a column about it for the New York Times, and the column triggered a cascade of letters and emails from people around the country who were interested in cabins and country life.

At about the same time, I was feeling the need to learn more about Web publishing. I am a journalism professor at Boston University, and I had spent most of my life awash in newspaper ink, most recently as the page-one editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

I was conscious of lagging behind my students in the world of podcasts, blogging, and social networking. So, when the Times said it was interested in publishing a blog about my work on the cabin as I was actually doing the work, I seized the opportunity. I saw it as a way to learn the tools and techniques of blogging and multimedia production.

The blog ran under the title, "From the Ground Up," in the newspaper's online Home Section. From time to time, it was featured on the Times' homepage. It began in November of 2009 and ran for 15 months – essentially the time it took me to

build the cabin from clearing the land to pounding the last nails.

At the end of the cabin project, I not only had a pleasant writer's retreat in the White Mountain National Forest with a wood stove, front porch and sleeping loft. I had learned an enormous amount about blogging, simple audio-video production, and the creation of a worldwide community of like-minded people - in my case, cabin builders and cabin dreamers.

My work in narrative journalism also benefited. The blog taught me a few things about serial writing and managing the development of multiple story lines that unfolded real time.

The Times' edition of the blog has now ended, but I keep the blog going, though with less intensity, because I enjoy the interaction with the community I have built and the steady accretion, diary-like, of the cabin's progress. I have moved from cabin building to planting an apple orchard and building a barn. My latest cliffhanger involves a moose's assault on my young apple trees and my efforts to fend him off. It is not clear yet who will prevail.

My first experiences with the Web actually came early. As editor of the Portland (Maine) Press Herald, I put the paper online in 1995. It was among the first with a website. But I drifted back to print, and while I was an active user of the Internet, I was not an active contributor.

The cabin blog changed that. Among the lessons I have learned:

Blogging is not news writing, but accuracy and information remain essential. As is a personal voice. I wanted my posts to be packed with useful information about cabin building. I described building techniques, listed the costs of materials and indicated the sources of products and materials. Readers wanted this information. But they also responded to my views and feelings as a cabin builder. Among the most popular posts were those in which I talked about why I wanted a cabin and how my brother and nephews were willing to pitch in to build it.

Blogging benefits from editing. I was fortunate to be blogging for one of the world's great newspapers. Not only was I paid a modest sum for my work, I got good editing.

Times' editors asked me to double check names and facts, and sometimes they asked me to pursue a particular angle on the cabin's construction. I was not out there on my own. The expense involved in editing blogs may not be possible for every news organization, but as the blogger who received it, I can assure you that the result is better work.

Blogging is a two-way – actually a multi-way – conversation, and this makes for a much richer report. Many of the readers who followed my blog were far better and more experienced builders than I. They spotted problems in the design and construction and were willing to post comments that offered tips and solutions. I adopted some of them. The cabin plan actually changed as a result of reader input. In one phase of the construction, I even had readers submit design plans.

The conversations in the comments section of the blog are not just between the blogger and the audience. Several times readers began conversing with each other over the best ways to handle an element of the cabin's construction. In these instances, I sat back, enjoyed the chat and learned from

my readers. It was a hard analogy to resist: at times, the cabin blog seemed to be the cracker barrel in the country store over which people talked and exchanged information.

Readers like to be invited in. One of best set of posts involved publishing photos and short stories about readers' cabins.

Adding audio and video to a blog is simple and even fun. I borrowed a video camera from the college locker. With about 10 minutes instruction from one of our technicians, I was shooting video. It wasn't perfect, for sure. I took some kidding from my colleagues in the Film Department, but it was good enough to get my points across and show key parts of the story.

I shot scenes and offered commentary on Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond, and I taped the walk that I took with a wildlife biologist over a frozen beaver pond near the cabin. I also produced audio slideshows, which were often more appealing and "finished" than the video segments. In one, I showed photos of the timber frame being constructed, with banjo music playing in the background. In another, I showed pho-

tos of the winter landscape with Mozart playing behind. I also learned to use Twitter along the way. Each time, I put up a new post, I sent out a tweet.

Blogging is good for writing. I got into the habit of sitting down immediately after returning from the cabin and writing a post of about 200 words, some times more, some times less. I wrote easily and without strain. The result was a conversational style and personal touch. I usually filed twice a week and always met my deadlines. I also found that I could juggle three story lines at a time – sometimes about the cabin; sometimes about the animals; sometimes about the people involved in the project.

The act of blogging – if taken seriously – deepens the writer's experience of the events he or she is reporting. I was creating a journal of my experience, and I was reflecting on the experience as it moved along. The result was a much more satisfying experience than if I had just built the cabin and never sat down to remember the day's events.

The final piece of this project now is the writing of a book. I have gone from newspaper essay, to multi-media blog to book

project. The good people at The Viking Press in New York have given me a contract to tell the cabin's story in even greater emotional depth, detail and texture. I am at work on it now, and from time to time, I go back to my blog to remember the journey that I have just completed.

This assertion may set me apart from most journalists, but I am a proponent of writing in the first person. I think it is honest, direct and usually more vivid than writing in the third person. This doesn't mean that all or even most pieces should be written that way, nor do I advocate gratuitous or indulgent point-of-view writing. If the writer, speaking in the first person, asserts a conclusion, then it needs to be backed up with evidence.

My guess is that first-person writing would close the gap between writers and readers and might even augment credibility by being upfront and honest by declaring that a piece of reporting is, in fact, something that has been put together by a real person with eyes, a mind, emotions and principles. The objective, or clinical, voice in journalism – combined with a distressing willingness to quote discredited points of view to achieve balance – is one of the sources of journal-

ism's loss of confidence among young people. It also is a source of much satire directed journalism's way by people such as Jon Stewart. There is a long and serious tradition of first-person journalism for us to draw on, in both Europe and the Americas.

> The blog taught me a few things about serial writing and managing the development of multiple story lines that unfolded in real time.

Louis Ureneck, recently chair of the Journalism Department at Boston University, is a former Nieman fellow at Harvard University and winner of the National Outdoor Book Award for his memoir, "Backcast." He was editor of the Portland Press Herald and deputy managing editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. At BU, he is also director of the graduate program in Business and Economics Reporting.

Here are my answers to some common questions about blogging.

How can journalists work blogging into their schedules without sacrificing the time they need to get their main jobs done?
Blogging takes time, for sure, but it can also be a way for reporters to get their ideas written and organized ahead of their plunge into the longer and more developed story they intend to compose. This is especially true on a running story where there are a series of minor episodes that precede the main news event (such as legislative hearings in advance of a vote).

These preliminary episodes need to be captured and synthesized by the reporter for him or her to eventually find and convey their full significance in the more developed piece. Blog entries can be a way of sorting out and making sense of what is happening, as it is happening. The act of writing brings coherence to the material, which, of course, is an aid to the writer.

There also is a discipline that comes out of blogging. The writer needs to tell himself something like this: I will give myself 10 minutes to get down the morning's events, and I will post my blog entry by noon. At the same time, ironically, the bar on writing quality is lower, typically, so the writer can get words down faster without the torment of trying to get the polish sometimes demanded.

In time, the writing for the blog becomes relaxed in the way a conversation is relaxed –- or perhaps more accurately, the blog entries shape up in the same way that spoken answers might be given by a reporter who is being interviewed about an event or issue. In an interview, a reporter does not write out his answers. He simply speaks them as best he can. So it is often with a blog entry.

In some cases, over time, blogging blends with the main job and become inseparable from it.

Doesn't blogging invite journalists to focus too much on themselves as opposed to subjects of their coverage?
This is a matter of mission and self-control. By that, I mean the reporter and editor need to agree up front on whether the blog is principally a running news story with a series of "new leads" (as the wire services have been doing for decades) or whether the blog is a blend of writerly voice (or opinion) and information. If it is the latter, then the rules of column writing more or less apply. Editors and reporters have learned how to manage these differences effectively in print. They can simply transfer those rules and agreements to the Web.

What are some good examples of blogs maintained by journalists in ways that supplement their coverage and grow their audiences?
I go to Paul Krugman's column in the New York Times for a bold and informed take on economic news. He has the instincts of a news reporter, I think, in that he seems to sense the forward edge of a story, and that's where he goes his work. In other words, he seems to know what matters. Consequently, I also turn to his blog for additional information and insight – all in the inimitable Krugman voice. I also have enormous respect for the reporting and news analysis of Floyd Norris of the New York Times. His grasp of financial reporting is an inspiration to reporters who aspire to expertise in their work. His blog offers more straight analysis but also adds personal touches, including a very moving recent entry on his battle with cancer.

The Future of TV News Belongs, in Part, to Multi-Platform Video

By Steve Herrmann

The popularity of online video and TV-on-demand will help reposition broadcast news for the future.

Asking an online editor to write about the future of TV news is perhaps a slightly risky thing to do. We might be tempted to take the provocative approach by way of reply, to spell out the bad news to our TV colleagues: 'What future? Long-term, TV news doesn't have one, I'm afraid. You need to join us in online, multimedia news instead.'

But I don't happen to think the end is nigh for TV news. And I'm not just saying that because I work for a large broadcasting company, or because my boss is a TV news editor (actually she's not).

I'm saying it because, in the UK, audiences to the BBC's flagship TV news bulletins are stable and the numbers of viewers of its continuous News Channel, or its breakfast news program, for example, are actually on the rise.

However, I do think TV news will have to adapt to changes in the ways people are watching news. So I'll try to outline some of those changes here, and maybe pass on a few of the lessons we've learned about how people watch news on digital, on-demand platforms. That means on mobile devices and interactive TV, but mainly on websites, at the moment, where the proportion of users watching video on the BBC News site, for example, is usually about 10 percent of the traffic to the site overall.

Short news clips online work, if they show something visually compelling (not anchors or reporters outside buildings, but action, key soundbites, rare moments). But keep them short. Or very short. This works best when they're embedded alongside or within related text stories. It works less well when videos are offered as a destination – people won't necessarily go there just because it's video, you have to try and explain in a label or headline why they should invest, say, 1 minute 20 seconds of their time to watch (so tell them what they'll get and exactly how much time it'll take too). When the BBC News site launched embedded video clips a couple of years ago, it led to a doubling of traffic to video within a year. News and sport video clips now tend to get more traffic overall than long-form news programmes on the BBC's live and on-demand online TV service iPlayer.

Live streams of major news events are a hugely important part of on-demand, video news. Sometimes (in the BBC's case often) that means we are basically streaming the live TV news coverage. A growing proportion of the audience for major live events on the BBC's continuous News Channel now comes from online viewing via the BBC News website.

Longer-form news video is not - for now anyway - proving that compelling for news consumers online. It's worth linking to

these programs and formats even from a fast-moving news site, though, and writing a story or providing a clip as a way into the program can work well. Distinctive documentaries and news-making programs do best; a good example was a particularly controversial edition of the BBC's "Question Time" programme last year, which featured a prominent British far-right politician.

On mobile, so far, video usage is small compared with desktop PC use – for news at least. The broader commercial market for mobile video has been slow to pick up, with slow speeds on anything less than 3G, and with data charges and plans expensive and confusing. But the market is changing as smartphone penetration increases and packages get more accessible. And applications on devices like the iPad may hasten the change.

There are already some exceptions to low uptake of mobile news video – major breaking news does well, for example (David Cameron's first speech as UK Prime Minister was popular viewing on the BBC's mobile browser), as does news about mobile technology, and clips which are quirky, funny or just plain surprising (think runaway bears, prophetic octopuses – or compilations of both).

TV-on-demand is worth thinking hard about in the context of news. Not just catch-up services like TiVo and Sky+ that let you record and time-delay your viewing, but Internet-connected TV platforms like Project Canvas (in which the BBC is a shareholder).

Exactly what the right mix will be between news in text, short and long-form video is something we are still experimenting with. One thing seems vital, editorially: Every single TV news package needs to be a piece of great storytelling because each will have to stand – or fall – on its own. There will be no bulletin to carry it. The navigation to it has to be simple to use and the labelling crystal clear. If someone has selected to watch it, the report has to be clear, strong, and self-contained.

And any individual report could become a jumping-off point for related on-demand content – more video, or text, or graphics on the same topic.

So think about the depth of reporting you'll need in order to sustain this on the big stories. In fact, the linear broadcast could become a bit like a trailer for the fuller, more detailed and potentially richer treatment of the story, which can be made available in the space which on-demand platforms can offer.

Traditional TV news skills will, in my view, still matter in the future. The ability to recognise and gather great pictures, edit them skillfully, write concisely and clearly and tell compelling stories will be as important as ever. But in addition, as TV news evolves into new forms, it will require skills like developing clear labelling and sign-posting, simple navigation, concise headlines and summaries, balancing video and text, content that can stand alone, not as part of a linear sequence, and integration in the right places of short, sharp, unpackaged clips.

The familiar formats we currently know - the flagship bulletins, the rolling news channels - may change. New technologies do not always replace old ones, but sometimes they do evolve and enhance them. I believe TV news is about to get much richer and more diverse as it becomes news in video, across many platforms.

Every TV news package needs to be a piece of great storytelling because each will have to stand – or fall – on its own.

Major video news stories on the BBC News website - story title number of plays and date originally posted:

Major news video stories	AV Plays	Date
Election 2010: Live (Hung Parliament)	5,250,585	07/05/2010
Election 2010: Live (Cameron)	2,511,114	11/05/2010
Shoes hurled at George Bush	1,362,500	15/12/2008
BNP Candidate, Asian men clash	1,223,529	06/05/2010
Sri Lankan cricketers under fire	1,073,286	03/03/2009
Brown 'bigoted' jib caught on tape	957,557	28/04/2010
Obama's victory speech	929,743	05/11/2008

Steve Herrmann is Editor of the award-winning BBC News website (bbc.co.uk/news), a role he has held since January 2006. As Editor, he is in charge of BBC News editorial coverage online and oversees operations across the website and other on-demand services.

New Online Tools Usher in Golden Age of Global Muckraking

By Sheila S. Coronel

Investigative reporting has grown outside of traditional media, with citizens using technology to uncover and share information about people in power and the organizations that support them.

On the spring of 2010, Alexander Malyutin caused a public outcry when he revealed that the Russian interior ministry was buying an $800,000-bed overlaid with 24-Carat gold for one of its guesthouses. He found proof of the extravagance while combing through government tender documents posted on the Web.

In Tunisia, Astrubal trolled amateur plane-spotting websites and discovered that the presidential plane had been photographed in the airports of Europe's shopping capitals. How could that be, he asked, when the president had never taken an official trip overseas? The answer: The First Lady was an avid shopper.

Satellite images from Google Earth helped Mahmood's Den plot the vast expanses of land that had been awarded to members of the royal family in Bahrain. Google Earth also enabled Burmese exiles to locate Naypyidaw, the secret capital built by the country's ruling junta. They uploaded the images onto YouTube, a short clip that showed the palatial homes of junta members and the gigantic swimming pool built by the dictator Than Shwe. Few Burmese have Internet access, so the video was copied on discs and smuggled into the country.

Is this the dawning of a Golden Age of global muckraking?

Since the 1980s, there's been an explosion of exposure journalism in countries that until recently did not even have a free press. The fall of authoritarian and socialist regimes has opened up spaces for accountability reporting, allowing journalists in many new democracies to become one of the most effective checks on the abuse of power.

In the last decade, new tools like blogging software, Twitter, Google Earth and YouTube have become widely and freely accessible. These have democratized muckraking in ways previously unimagined. Empowered by the Internet, bloggers like Malyutin, Astrubal and Mahmood Nasser Al-Yousif of Mahmood's Den are piercing the veil of official secrecy. Like the nameless Burmese exiles who commit occasional acts of journalism, they show that the watchdog function is now no longer the sole preserve of the professional press.

In Europe and North America, there's been much wringing of hands about the uncertain future of investigative reporting. This is especially true in the US where, since Watergate, newspapers have been the keepers of the investigative flame. With many newspapers at death's door, there's worry about whether they can keep the flame alive.

But elsewhere, democracy and technology are prying open previously closed

> Muckrakers will plod on even in the most inhospitable environments because wherever power is abused, the compulsion to expose wrongdoing remains strong.

societies and providing citizens with information that would not have been available to them in the not-too-distant past. From Bahrain to Burma, from Russia to China to Zimbabwe, the new muckrakers are using blogs, mobile phones and social media to expose the predations of those in power.

The truth is that, in most of the world, there has not been much watchdog reporting until recently. In these places, therefore, the concern is not so much the business model that would sustain investigative newsgathering. It's whether journalists and citizens who expose wrongdoing can stay alive or out of prison. Muckraking journalists and citizens have been sued, jailed, beaten up and killed.

In Russia, contract killers have gunned down investigative journalists in their homes or on busy city streets. In Mexico, journalists have been murdered by drug cartels; in the Philippines, the assassins have been rogue cops and soldiers linked to local bosses. As watchdogs breach the bounds of what's possible to publish, the backlash will surely be fierce.

Yet, a return to the Dark Ages no longer seems possible. The openings we see today are here to stay and provide us a glimpse of a possible future for accountability reporting.

In an increasingly global and networked world, watchdog reporting will cease to be the monopoly of professional news organizations. It will be a much more open field, which journalists will share with individuals, research and advocacy groups, grassroots communities, and a whole slew of Web-based entities like WikiLeaks, for which a category and a name have yet to be invented.

As commercial media search for a business model, professional, high-quality investigative reporting will increasingly be subsidized by foundations and the public, and in some countries, even by taxpayers. Freed from market pressures, nonprofit investigative reporting centers will be doing groundbreaking reporting. There are already a few dozen of them in Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Technology will enable news organizations to produce increasingly sophisticated investigations using large amounts of data and presented in amazing new ways, especially as governments, companies and international organizations make more and more data publicly available.

The future of investigative news will be collaborative. Strapped for resources, news organizations will be forced to cooperate, rather than compete. Joint investigations involving several news organizations, for

profit and nonprofit entities, professionals and amateurs, across media platforms and across borders will be commonplace. Crowdsourcing will be the norm, with audiences initiating and taking part in investigations.

Like elsewhere in journalism, investigative reporting will divide into niches. Communities of interest will form around various areas of watchdog reporting. These could be consumer concerns or national security or something more specific, like watchdog sites to monitor the whaling industry or the safety of bridges.

The future of investigative news will be local, as communities drill down on local concerns. Web-based local watchdogs will set up small newsrooms specializing in accountability reporting and funded by a mix of commercial revenues and community support.

But the future will also be global. There will be much more transnational reporting on such issues as crime, corruption, the environment, and the flow of goods, money and people across borders. Journalists and citizens will be collaborating across borders like never before, using the tools of the networked information age.

Such collaborations are already taking place; in Europe, Africa and the Arab world,

recently formed regional investigative reporting centers are bringing journalists together to work on cross-border projects. An international consortium of investigative journalists has created reporting teams to probe issues like tobacco smuggling and asbestos use.

Watchdog reporting will also likely take on new, unorthodox forms. In China, journalists are resorting to microblogs, posting sentence fragments, photos or videos online, often through mobile phones, in order to break controversial stories and evade censorship.

In the US, advocacy groups are developing mobile phone apps that enable users to have easy access to data, such as Google-mapped government-funded projects or hazardous ingredients in everyday products. Various ways of providing information will likely emerge, sometimes in unexpected places, like video games. Innovation and experimentation will characterize this new era.

But the future also bodes more intense clashes between watchdogs and wrongdoers.

Yet muckrakers will likely plod on even in the most inhospitable environments. Wherever power is abused, the compulsion to expose wrongdoing will likely remain strong. But so will the determination to quash exposés. If not violence, watchdogs will be subjected to legal bullying. In China, dozens of reporters and bloggers have already been jailed for a range of offenses, including libel and exposing state secrets.

In the geography of threats, cyberspace is the new frontier. Already, the Internet has encouraged libel tourism, the practice of suing journalists in overseas jurisdictions where laws are more onerous, on the grounds that what's published locally has a global audience online.

The great battles between secrecy and transparency will be fought on the 'Net. As watchdogs expose individual and institutional wrongdoing, there could be a backlash against openness, with governments clamping down while invoking the need to protect privacy, public safety or national security. There could be some public support for a crackdown if muckrakers report irresponsibly, but it would be difficult to sustain such support once citizens have tasted the benefits of openness.

The emerging terrain is one suited to guerrilla warfare. The Internet provides many safe havens. And as the Chinese have shown, savvy netizens find ways to outwit government restrictions. With the ubiquity of mobile phones, proxy servers and other devices, a total clampdown is no longer possible. Moreover, technology makes it easier to mobilize protest.

Like all journalism, the landscape of watchdog reporting is being radically altered. It will be a contested and uneven landscape. Powerful governments and individuals will try to muzzle watchdogs. Vested interests may fund pseudo-watchdogs to counter those who would hold them accountable. Some places will have a thriving community of muckrakers; others will be bereft. Some voices will be lost in the wilderness of cyberspace. But many watchdogs will have impact, becoming influential voices in their communities and around the world.

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Government Support Obliges Australian Broadcasting Corporation to Innovate and Diversify

By Mark Scott

The history of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation shows the public broadcaster role can enable innovation.

The ABC has been Australia's national public broadcaster for almost 80 years.

Both its creation and its funding reflect the way in which public policy was shaped in Australia during the 20th Century. Britain and the United States provided two dominant and different influences. A distinctly Australian solution was often found by determining what Australia had in common with these nations and the ways in which it was unique.

This led to the development of a vigorous mixed economic model, where both public and commercial services provide a range of services in health and education, for instance, and broadcasting as well.

By contrast with the BBC, which for three decades enjoyed what John Reith candidly called "the brute force of monopoly," Australians had, from the beginning, a choice of public and commercial broadcasters.

ABC Radio was created by an Act of the Federal Parliament in 1932. While it was, at first, funded by licence fees collected by the Government, from 1948 on it has been funded – along with other public goods – directly from the annual federal budget. Due to this long identification in the minds of both the public and politicians as a public good, the ABC's experience is, therefore, unique.

In 1956, when television belatedly arrived in Australia, the mixed model was again chosen. ABC Television began broadcasting alongside two commercial television services whose owners had existing print and radio interests.

Direct funding from the federal government, with no need to demonstrate profit, confers both opportunities and obligations on the ABC.

Unlike commercial broadcasters that are obliged to link content costs to advertising revenue, often to produce returns quickly, the ABC is able to wait longer, for instance, for talent and programs to develop and grow. There is a corresponding expectation that the ABC, free from this pressure, must therefore actively innovate, experiment and lead the way.

Its funding arrangement also sets it apart from public broadcasters in the UK and USA, and grants the ABC certain advantages over the BBC in establishing goodwill with the public. The shift to direct funding in 1948 freed the ABC from a system in

freedom from government than commercial influence – which is understandable given the United States' history and the different view of the role for government in daily life that prevails there.

The accent on independence from government has been expressed by limiting the levels of public funding made available to public broadcasters, and making them reliant on far smaller alternative sources. Without the income to produce programming capable of completing for mass attention, public broadcasters in the United States have been unable to acquire critical mass and exist as a marginalized, rather than mainstream presence in national life.

Yearly polling indicates that the ABC has continually proven worthy of public support, with an average of 9 in 10 Australians believing it does a good job. The ABC has retained this relevance in Australian life (reflected in its continued funding) in a variety of ways.

It has safeguarded its credibility and the trust placed in it by remaining clearly independent of government, and is both more trusted and more popular than politicians.

As well, by adhering to the ABC Charter which demands that it broadcast a mix of specialist content and content of wide appeal, the ABC has attained critical mass, playing a part in the life of every Australian. This range of content enables it to appeal to a broad constituency – from traditional media consumers to those more interested in innovation, from children through to older Australians, to people in the countryside and those in the cities.

In doing so, the existence of the ABC has been assimilated into a commonly held expectation about the Australian quality of life, and a distinguishing aspect of the national culture.

which its income was subject to the usual vagaries of consumer sentiment or resentment that went with the licence fee.

The BBC remains funded as it always has been, by a licence fee which is now determined during the 10 year Charter renewal process. As a consequence of the fee – payable by every household with a television - the BBC has felt obliged, while not being exposed to the same risks, to compete with commercial rivals in almost every aspect of broadcasting. What the ABC does have in common with the BBC, though, is that two areas of independence – from government and commercial influence – have become of primary importance in valuing, validating and distinguishing public broadcasting.

By contrast, in the United States, public broadcasters have put more emphasis on

Finally, by focusing on continual innovation, the ABC has not just kept up with but anticipated public demand for new services. Innovation also has strategic importance to every long established public institution, in that any perception that the organisation is part of the past rather than the future must inevitably lead to declining public support and therefore, funding.

As a public broadcaster, the ABC has continued to position itself not just where the public is now, but where the public is heading. And this future proofing has become part of the institutional DNA.

When the ABC started in radio, just six percent of Australians had licences. When television began, just two percent of Australians had TVs. When the ABC established itself ABC Online, Internet use was not even measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

In recent years, the ABC has been swift to move into mobile, podcasting and vodcasting, digital television, radio and social media for the same reasons it moved swiftly with radio, television and online, when they were once "new" media. These are new ways of making content and services available that the public would come to expect of the public broadcaster.

A burst of fresh innovation has been made possible in the digital age. Again, the opportunities that have arisen also often carry with them obligations.

News and current affairs is a prime example. There has been a substantial, long term public investment in the ABC, which has provided it with news resources unparalleled in commercial media.

No one employs more journalists. No other media organisation in Australia has a more broadly based infrastructure of newsrooms at local, national and international levels.

And by combining some significant reforms in work practices with new technologies, the Corporation has been able to resource a new digital TV news channel with no additional government revenue.

Given the opportunity now available, it is quite clear that it is the ABC's responsibility - as the national public broadcaster - to provide such a service. News and information are essential to a more meaningful

democratic life, and should therefore be available for all.

While there is an existing news channel, a pay television service SkyNews, it is restricted to the three out of 10 Australian households that can afford it. ABC News24 is available everywhere, and free.

As well, two distinct, related trends within Australian media in recent years underline how essential public broadcasting is in informing the democratic process with freely and universally available news and current affairs programming.

In commercial media, current affairs programming – through which those in power are held accountable – has been unable to compete with less expensive and more popular programming. The gap between the cost of the programming and audiences sizes has meant advertising revenue make it neither profitable nor sustainable.

This has led to the decline, if not disappearance, of authentic current affairs programs from the free-to-air television services. This trend has been accelerated by the disappearance of the "media mogul" model of ownership in Australia – owners who were prepared to wear the losses such programming incurred to win political influence.

As a result, this responsibility has devolved exclusively to publicly funded broadcasters. The ABC redresses this imbalance in the free-to-air television market.

The debate about the future of quality journalism and how to fund it continues.

It is one of many similar challenges faced by public broadcasters around the world. Responses to those challenges, though, must be localised rather than universal, affected as they are by different historical precedents, degrees and methods of funding and varied political and economic climates in which public broadcasters now operate.

What is clear however, is that in every media market, audiences have never had a wider choice of content, nor has the competition for attention faced by both public and commercial broadcasters been more intense. The competition is not simply limited to choices of media consumption, but increasingly to choices about use of time, alternative activities and spaces such as social networking.

This disruptive effect, where fragmentation of audiences leads to reduced advertising revenue is making it increasingly difficult for the market alone to satisfy all needs. The provision of particular kinds of content which constitute a public good – such as news, and expressions of indigenous, local and national cultures – will be difficult to sustain.

In such a market, the expectation that public broadcasters should provide these genres will increase. Without the immediate pressure to maximise audiences, there will also be an expectation that public broadcasters will take greater creative risks and introduce young, innovative, fresh talent to audiences.

> An average of nine in 10 Australians believe the ABC does a good job. It is more trusted and more popular than politicians.

Meanwhile, the ABC's experience – its continuing relevance in the lives of all Australians, the diversity of its programming, its liberty from pressures faced by commercial broadcasters, the BBC and public broadcasters in the USA – has been made possible by its unique method of public funding.

It continues to prove not just the necessity of public broadcasting in the digital age, but its vitality and viability.

Mark Scott is Managing Director of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Under his leadership, the ABC has dramatically expanded its services and its reach and now operates on an annual budget of over AU$1 billion ($910.3 million).

Nonprofit Ownership is No Panacea; New Models Needed for New Times

By Karen B. Dunlap

The St. Petersburg Times exemplifies independent ownership by a nonprofit school. Buffered from some challenges but exposed to others, the Florida-based organization offers lessons in business ownership models.

Nelson Poynter's most quoted maxim said ownership of a publication or broadcast property is "a sacred trust and a great privilege." But in the 1960s, Poynter's thoughts moved from ownership to succession. He wondered how to keep his newspaper independent and locally owned long after he was gone. Poynter rejected the models for media ownership of his time, including publicly owned companies and chain ownership, and he had doubts about long-term family ownership.

His lawyers explored various options and after years of searching he made a choice: He gave away his newspaper.

The St. Petersburg Times was his father's newspaper when Poynter began working there. The younger Poynter bought the newspaper in 1947 and guided it to economic and editorial strength. A change in the law in 1969 said a church, hospital or school could own a newspaper. Poynter gave the Times to a school that he created and called it the Modern Media Institute. Trustees re-named the school in his honor after his death.

Events in 2009 confirm the wisdom of Poynter's great experiment. During an economic downturn and while some media companies collapsed, the St. Petersburg

> The nonprofit model offers much to recommend as a form of media ownership, but the structures also present challenges.

Times observed its 125th anniversary and won two Pulitzer prizes: one for traditional, long-form feature writing, the other for an innovative online truth-gauge of political statements. Paul Tash, CEO and chairman, has said the ownership promotes the newspaper's commitment to journalistic excellence.

In 2010, the Poynter Institute observes its 35th year. The Institute offers seminars and conferences for professional journalists and media leaders, journalism teachers and students and also other citizens interested in news. It is a nonprofit owner of a for-profit news organization. Dividends from the Times Publishing Company provide the majority of support for the school, along with tuition, grants and contributions. The school and the newspaper operate separately but with important connections. The CEO of Times Publishing Company is also chair of the board of the Poynter Institute. Nelson Poynter believed in vesting leadership in one individual who then selects his or her successor.

Other experiments and models: Others have created ownership models with some of the same protections Poynter's provides.

Schools: The Nackey S. Loeb School in New Hampshire is most like the Poynter model. In 1999, Mrs. Loeb founded the nonprofit communications school that now bears her name. She was the granddaughter of publisher E.W. Scripps and the widow of William Loeb, president and publisher of the (Manchester) Union Leader and New Hampshire Sunday News. After her death in 2000 her two daughters donated her controlling stock to the school.

Trusts: Owners of several newspapers devised forms of trusts for sustainability. The Toronto Star's publisher, Joseph E. Atkinson, willed his newspaper to a charitable foundation he'd established in 1942 to be run by trustees familiar with his policies and beliefs. Canadian law interfered with his plan and after conflict and compromise "his trustees were given court permission to buy the paper in 1958, after promising to uphold its longstanding traditions," according to the newspaper's statement of history. The Day newspaper of New London, Connecticut operates with a split-trust that sends most of the dividends back to the news operation and a portion to a community foundation. Publisher Theodore Bodenwein created The Day Trust, which was

in his will when he died in 1938. The newspaper's history says this plan influenced Nelson Poynter.

The Guardian maintains one of the most respected legacies in The Scott Trust created in 1936 by John Scott. Following the death of his father and brother between 1932 and 1936, John Scott found himself the sole owner of the Guardian. He devised a plan that required him to give the newspaper away to a trust that would "secure the financial and editorial independence of the Guardian in perpetuity."

Foundation support: A slew of recent startup news operations in the US rely on grants from foundations. ProPublica leads the group. Launched in 2008, it is largely funded by a three-year, $30 million grant from the Sandler Foundation. Established news operations, including the CBS network's "60 Minutes," carry its investigative stories, and in April 2010 the organization won a Pulitzer Prize for a piece of theirs published in the New York Times Magazine. The Knight Foundation and others also fund new news channels but few see foundation support as a long-term financial solution. Most startups seek contributions but gain far less than the amount needed for a solid operation. Grants and contributions also raise questions about the influence of major funders.

Government intervention: Some look to a change in US tax laws to allow newspapers to become nonprofits based on their educational value. Senator Benjamin Cardin of Maryland introduced legislation in 2009, but it has not moved forward. Questions include whether such a change would require newspapers to eliminate editorial pages and whether it would open a door for the government to interfere with news media independence.

Reasons to think twice about the nonprofit route: The nonprofit model offers much to recommend as a form of media ownership, but the structures also present challenges. Here are the some of the major ones.

You may have to give away your publication. Tash and his predecessors have been regularly approached by news executives lusting after Poynter's model until they are told they would have to transfer ownership of their newspapers to a school. Even owners who are willing to take that step face heirs (or stockholders) who might have other ideas.

The model still requires revenue. This is the most important point in light of current financial challenges. The nonprofit owner removes the burden of market pressure, but the for-profit news operation still requires significant revenue to report and deliver the news and provide dividends to the owner. The core problem of a business model for news remains.

It calls for trust. Nelson Poynter called ownership of news media "a sacred trust."

Maintaining the system that he created calls for extraordinary levels of mutual trust. The leaders of each organization must believe they are served by their own success and the success of the other. The school relies on the news organization for dividends and the newspaper benefits from the ownership structure.

Legal ground must be tread carefully. In some cases precise wording in a will determined whether an ownership agreement was upheld. Changes in law undermined other efforts. The Poynter model calls for clear regard to the law, including living up to the precise legal requirements involved in maintaining both a school and nonprofit status.

Nonprofit ownership is an important form for news media ownership, but it is not a panacea. Generally the model seems to inspire a keener sense of journalistic mission and a pride of history. It allows for less focus on quarterly returns and market ebb and flow. But owners still face tough challenges in generating revenue and finding new financial methods.

Future ownership models for news: We will see more nonprofit models in the near future. A few grants can jump-start a business. The reduction of news staffs in the US means a lot of journalists are looking for a space to practice their craft, and many will choose the nonprofit route. Owners will continue to turn to donors and foundations, as philanthropy remains strong.

Change will come in new forms of news services that we can't imagine now. Citizens will want to know what's happening around them and what's going on around the world. More and more citizens will assist in reporting, and along the way they will focus on ownership and be willing to provide direct support. That will help some nonprofits find paths to sustainability, but many others will run out of funds and stop operating.

Government might provide some tentative relief, but concern about political pressure will prevent significant support. There will remain, then, a role for for-profit models, even though they are taking a beating now as audiences and technologies change. The rebirth of a profit model offers the possibility of a strong, steady income stream. To the degree that commercial models more readily draw broad audiences, this could help keep the masses turning to news media.

And that leads back to Nelson Poynter's model, one that combines the mission focus of a nonprofit and the marketplace focus of a for-profit. Future owners would do well in drawing on the best of business models and, like Mr. Poynter, create new models that fit the times.

Karen B. Dunlap is the president of the Poynter Institute. Portions of this piece first appeared in "A Study of Nonprofit Ownership of News Media" by Karen Brown Dunlap; "News in the Public Interest: A Free and Subsidized Press," The Breaux Symposium of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 20 March 2004.

Time to 'Skill Up' on 10 Promising Paths

By Bill Mitchell

If your newsroom is anything like places I've worked, your colleagues will be bracing themselves for an onslaught of new work once they spot you reading this report, circling and underlining ideas you believe require their immediate attention.

Here's one that I hope makes your list:

"The industry will have to skill up," argues Paul Bradshaw, who produces the Online Journalism Blog, "or it will have nothing left to sell."

Bradshaw is referring to the need for newsrooms to increase their competence in handling the torrent of raw data now available about the ways governments spend our money, the ways our economies soar and dive, the ways we live and die.

In a world where data once was scarce but now is abundant, journalists need to get good at what's scarce: "the skills to locate and make sense of (the data) – the programming skills to scrape it and compare it with other sources, the design flair to visualize it, the statistical understanding to unpack it."

But his point about "skilling up" applies equally well to the areas that, combined with data journalism, make up the list of 10 promising paths I've drawn from chapter two:

• Crowdsourcing: Poland's biggest newspaper, Gazeta Wyborcza, has its roots in the popular Solidarity uprising that helped topple Communism. The paper's Grzegorz Piechota describes how the paper's readers are fueling some of its most effective coverage of the democratic, but imperfect civic society of current-day Poland.

• Social media: Tweets from non-journalists often put speed ahead of accuracy, notes Endy M Bayuni, reflecting values quite different from those of a professional. The trick, he argues, is recognizing that each group "has its place in keeping the public informed."

• Citizen journalism: Sure, journalists have a lot to teach readers who want to commit acts of journalism. But Solana Larsen recounts how bloggers in Madagasgar taught local reporters a thing or two about getting the news out fast in a crisis.

• Innovation: Addressing the potential for the tablet platform, Mario Garcia reports: "I have not seen this level of excitement, optimism and zest for innovation since the arrival of color presses in the late 1970s."

• Multimedia: Understanding what users actually appreciate and spend time with is critical to a successful multimedia strategy. Steve Herrmann reports that "short video news clips online work if they show something visually compelling," as do live streams of major news events.

• Niches: "It's pointless – and economically insane – to provide news that readers can get 1,000 different places," argues Bill Nichols. So pick your shots.

• Personal journalism: First-person writing, suggests Lou Ureneck, can "close the gap between writers and readers …(by) declaring that a piece of reporting is something put together by a real person with eyes, a mind, emotions and principles."

• Investigative reporting: Digital tools "have democratized muckraking in ways previously unimagined," writes Sheila S. Coronel.

• Ownership: The best funding models for journalism probably don't exist yet, maintains Karen Dunlap, who says it's time to "create new models that fit the times."

Which of these require the immediate attention of your newsroom?

Chapter Three offers a glimpse at what's happening on these fronts in several newsrooms around the world.

Media Face Different Difficulties in Less Mature Markets

By Fernando Samaniego

In developing countries, media may be freer to adapt during a time of rapid change, but they also face unique challenges in their country's infrastructures, economies and capacities.

Media companies across the globe are encountering the same fundamental issue; that is, how to map out their futures to adapt to the social and business transformations which have shaken the industry.

Developing markets pose specific problems, in some cases derived from their lack of resources, notwithstanding the fact that in many of them circulation and advertising revenues are growing fast.

The importance of tackling media shortcomings in developing markets is paramount if we wish to see them create well-formed and informed citizens, the premise of a healthy democracy. Media companies have a role to play in providing the basis for good governance via adequate control of public life and informed debate of crucial decisions, to mitigate the distorting effect of powerful self-interest groups which may collide with the common good.

Most difficulties can be traced back to their environment or to internal factors.

Environmental difficulties
External censorship and internal "precaution." Even in Western Europe we witness instances of powerful individuals exerting pressure on media. Recently, Italy passed a law that severely restricts police wiretapping and would fine or jail journalists for publication of wiretap transcripts. If this can happen in Europe, we can only imagine the pressure suffered by media wishing to avoid threats to ownership.

Legal limbo. In some countries, lack of a clear framework for the work of editors means uncertainty for journalists who are thus recommended to be cautious and align closely with the established powers. This lack of regulatory environment also discourages the creation of solid media organizations since investment is insecure and only recommended for those close to government.

Language barriers. The main language barrier for media development in some emerging markets is illiteracy, where it can reach 50 percent (there are some 60 countries beyond 20 percent). The situation is improving fast but the obstacle remains. Another language barrier has to do, paradoxically, with the linguistic richness of some regions. UNESCO believes that there may be 2,000 languages used in Africa (Arabic being the largest, with just 17 percent of speakers) and several hundred in India; there are 250 in Nigeria alone.

In places where languages are very fragmented it can represent a barrier to growth. On the other hand, the diversity of languages is leading to the creation of new newspaper editions in places like India. Moreover, language barriers may protect a local media industry from international competitors, or at least buy time for it to develop. After all, wouldn't the Canadian media industry be stronger if it did not have to compete with its neighbor for the attention of the local market? Would Korea's local Internet industry be so strong if the country were an English speaking territory?

Limited mobile usage (but real creativity). The poorest markets have a long way to go in deploying basic tools such as premium SMS, which is not widely available in Africa and often limited to promotions by the telecoms (e.g, Etisalat in Nigeria may ask customers to guess the winner of a Champions League match, in exchange for a prize), but it's also true that in other developing markets things have been different, despite limitations. Take the Philippines, where phone service is overwhelmingly prepaid and average revenue per user (ARPUs) is low. That has not stopped innovation there, such as the transfer of credit between customers and subscription for content access by the hour or less, a flexibility unheard of in more mature markets.

Mobiles have managed to partially compensate for the lack of infrastructure to solve basic issues having to do with health care, farming or education. For example, Vodafone's M-pesa money transfer service in Kenya enables migrant workers to send cash home. While Japan was experiencing its successful iMode in the very early years of the century, many Chinese portals were facing financial ruin until the establishment of a similar revenue-sharing platform for content providers, Monternet, allowed them to survive and prosper.

"Among the three top revenue generators in 2004, the first was mobile value-added services, reaching as high as $763 million," according to Huawei.com. In China, there is a before and after Monternet and its mobile value-added services since it helped transform the local Internet and shape new industries. And all of that happened in a so-called developing market. On the other hand, it's also true that older, developed markets have taken the definitive lead in fundamental mobile innovation since the launch of the iPhone.

Internal Difficulties
Owners with a different agenda. No newspaper or mass media lives isolated from the world, but in developing markets there are owners who vaguely understand the challenges of the media they own or consider them secondary to their main objective, be it to convey a certain public image (if already in office), or to access power, or to gain leverage when talking to government officials. Losing audience in the process is just collateral damage.

Lack of experienced professionals. Whether in Eastern Europe, Africa, or some countries in South America and Asia, attracting and retaining seasoned professionals remains an issue. In some cases, disbursing international level salaries is a problem. In others, the cultural issues make it hard for good professionals to really affect the transformation of the media. Language is another difficulty, even though English is becoming the common tongue. While some jobs can be performed using a basic set of words, in other cases, marketing for instance, subtleties make a difference.

Lack of talent. Some countries have been better than others at developing their own skilled workforce. The case of China stands out since its ability to train vast amounts of people, in foreign or local universities and institutions, is unique and explains many of the developments taking place there.

Emerging countries which possess extraordinary economic resources and have not been able to train their workforce so fast have attracted expats. In fact, they find themselves with many foreigners and few locals at the top jobs. In some cases, the understandable desire to push local citizens to control the main areas of the business has been too abrupt and important knowledge has been lost. Making these transitions gradually, as we have seen across corporations present in less developed markets, has proven the best way to go.

Mimetic operations of established world players. Once I visited a client who had acquired a sophisticated piece of software to replicate Norweigan media company Schibsted's experience regarding the introduction of information sent by the users into the workflow of the newsroom. The problem was that the mimetic company was far from being able to include that sophisticated piece of software into its own primitive CMS. It was as useless as a Ferrari's steering wheel in an oxen cart. The project had to be scrapped at a cost to the editor.

Expensive and inflexible technical solutions. I have seen companies try solutions which, apart from being too expensive, ended up creating new problems. I am referring to software solutions based in Western environments and depending on Western experts offering technical assistance during inconvenient hours or days of the week (e.g. Saudi Arabia works on Saturdays and Sundays). There is nothing wrong with being captivated by good products, but the solution has to be inexpensive, manageable locally and flexible.

Limited reach. Because of the limited access of many media beyond the principal metropolitan areas, well-meant efforts do not reach rural zones. Apart from depriving large segments of the population from that input, the media just focus on the issues and problems of the large cities and ignore the important contribution of the rural economy to the development of the country.

Chicken and egg problem. Because of the limited geographical reach of media in developing markets and because of its limited ability to reach larger audiences in favor of the high-end individuals, some consumer industries cannot properly reach their target

> Traditional media are in an enviable position in developing markets, where reading newspapers is seen as a symbol of status.

groups, which limits the amount of money going into media investment and development and in return also limits the ability of media to move "down" to a broader audience.

Poor quality of journalism. Take the Indian case where newspapers are sold for a couple of rupees but cost several times that, and one understands the tremendous pressure to attract ad revenues. Not infrequently, papers mix editorial content with advertising, which eases short term financial situations but builds hurdles for the future. One should not assume that the abundance of new titles is improving the situation since very often they do not contribute to the flourishing of journalism.

Overlooking growth possibilities. In some markets, newspapers are a recent phenomenon and other products have been quicker at capturing classifieds, for instance. Some dailies reacted by acquiring these players. Others have tried launching their own franchises, but all too frequently newspapers are not exploiting the dominant position traditional media have in developing markets to build bridges to their future online. And it's a shame because some dailies already have an established network of stores and outlets where they capture ads.

Conclusion

In many respects, traditional media are in an enviable position in developing markets. Reading newspapers is seen as a symbol of status and their distribution and ad figures are growing steadily thanks to improved financial situations and higher literacy rates. In contrast, the unstable political situation of some markets entails difficulties which translate into scarcity and failure of investments. In other cases, though, the existing problems are typical of the earlier stages in the maturity of a product and media companies would do well to solve them and move on to the next stage before it's too late.

Top media managers often say, "We have time to react; our traditional media will last for years because things in this country move much slower." I always tell them that they are dead wrong because their readers have discovered the Internet, and despite existing limitations of broadband, they are surfing pretty much like many Westerners and will bypass traditional media if they are not offered quality content.

In fact, in some countries, users are bypassing the lack of local content by surfing in other languages, which often they barely speak. According to the latest Arab Media Outlook, 38 percent of Arab users surf in English or French mainly because their needs are not met by localized content. In countries where the press has not been renovated or is not free enough, the Internet represents an even greater concern.

Fernando Samaniego is the founder of International New Media Consulting and a specialist in multimedia strategy in the Middle East and Spain. He is based in Dubai, UAE.

Old-School Storytelling Using New-School Tools

By Steve Buttry

As journalism evolves, news organizations like the Washington, DC-based TBD represent the idea that the future of digital news is to be determined in wider collaboration than ever before.

When I started my journalism career in the 1970s, I learned quickly how to cover a breaking news story: You hustled to the scene to find eyewitnesses to interview. You knocked on doors and asked neighbors who saw the incident. You checked police reports and interviewed any witnesses listed there.

That was an essential task of journalism: collecting people's stories.

At TBD, a news organization launched 9 August 2010, we still send journalists to the scene of a breaking news story. When severe weather hit the morning of our fourth day online, our reporters raced to the neighborhoods with the worst flooding and wind damage.

At the same time, our community engagement staff started collecting stories people were already telling with words and pictures. We posted links to neighborhood blogs with stories, photographs and videos of flooding and storm damage. We aggregated tweets in the Washington area with keywords such as "flood," "storm" or "power outage." We developed a slide show of photographs people had posted. We asked a member of our blogger network to appear by Skype on our cable newscast as a storm blew through his neighborhood.

TBD still gathers people's stories. But we use more collection tools than just note-

books and cameras. We are an organization geared to collecting stories as people share them in the digital age.

Our name comes from the acronym for "to be determined." It reflects the nature of digital news: Just as the story is continually unfolding, our model is continually unfolding and updating. We launched in August, but already had plans under way for new projects and features in September and October. We chose our name and have geared our culture to reflect the understanding that success in digital media demands continual improvement and determination.

From the time plans for TBD (then unnamed) were announced in October 2009, our project has drawn curiosity, praise and skepticism throughout the news business. Our founding brought together some big names in journalism: Our owner is Allbritton Communications, which already stirred up the field of political journalism with the 2007 launch of POLITICO; TBD's general manager is Jim Brady, former executive editor of WashingtonPost.com and slated to become president this fall of the Online News Association. As we launched our site, media analysts have speculated that Allbritton was developing another "game changer."

While it's too early to say whether and how we will change the game of local news, we are happy to share our game plan.

Web operation must be strong, not dependent. Most Web news operations affiliated with traditional media become a digital version of the legacy medium. Even in organizations that recognize the need to cover breaking news quickly online and to use digital tools such as databases and multimedia, the newspaper or TV station gets the bulk of the staff and drives coverage and content. For many TV stations, the website is largely a promotional vehicle.

TBD is affiliated with the two Allbritton stations in Washington: ABC7 and the former NewsChannel 8, a cable news station. The importance of the digital operation is reflected in the naming: Rather than taking the name of one of the stations (their old sites both went away), our website launched with a new name and NewsChannel 8 was rebranded as TBD TV.

We're neither dependent nor independent. We're not a TV station's website. We're a Web operation and two TV stations working closely together. We get the stations' video content for the Web, but we're not just a dumping ground for TV stories. We have a strong, web-focused news staff to develop original content that starts online but is available to TV as well. Each platform makes the other stronger.

"Do what you do best and link to the rest," as Jeff Jarvis says. The BuzzMachine blogger and author of "What Would Google Do?" was almost giddy over the TBD launch because we are linking aggressively, even to the competition. The Washington area has lots of local news sources: the mighty Washington Post, several TV and radio stations, dozens of community newspapers and hundreds of blogs. By aggregating content from those sources, we become a place where you can find all the day's local news in one place, whoever produced it.

This approach lets TBD minimize repetitive coverage and provide our own unique coverage. We don't have a beat reporter covering City Hall. But we have a reporter working full-time to fact-check statements of local public figures. So we can link to the beat coverage of other news outlets and provide exclusive local fact-checking. We don't duplicate others' coverage of the Metro rail system; we link to their coverage and have the area's only blogger focusing on pedestrian issues.

Focus on mobile. Your mobile presence can't just be a

smaller (and slower) version of your website. TBD launched with an Android app already available (and getting strong reviews) and an iPhone app submitted to Apple, awaiting approval for the App Store. Both apps are designed for mobile usefulness. They provide weather, traffic and Metro rail information for users on the go. They also provide our news feed, customized by ZIP code, and a simple tool for submission of text or visual content.

In recognition of the fact that people's use of news content shifts among home and office computers and mobile devices, TBD apps allow easy porting of saved stories from one platform to another. If you see a story that's too long to tackle at work, you save it to read on the subway.

People in Washington spend lots of time in cars, trains, buses and airports or in conference rooms waiting for a meeting to start (or to get interesting). TBD's mobile experience is designed to be useful and engaging for this audience. Slate's Jack Shafer praised the "tabloidy goodness" of TBD.

Customize content. Everyone gets the same top stories, those of interest and importance throughout the metro area. But TBD's community news varies by the consumer, tailored to their neighborhood. We ask users for their postal codes, so we can give them the news and information that is most relevant to them. A user can save up to five ZIP codes, so he can easily flip back and forth, checking the news where he lives, works, plays and shops. Weather information is zoned, and we enable users to tailor commuter information to their particular route.

Engage the community. The technology of print and broadcast enabled one-to-many communication that fostered the traditional forms of gathering and

> Our name comes from the acronym for "to be determined." It reflects the nature of digital news, a story continually unfolding.

spreading news. But digital publishing and mobile devices enable people to tell stories themselves. News organizations have spent too much time and energy focusing on what they perceived as weaknesses in these new publishers: They don't follow journalistic notions of objectivity; they sometimes get their facts wrong; they permit typos and encourage odd acronyms and deliberate misspellings; they have funny names like Blogger and Twitter.

What these arguments forget or ignore is the value these stories have, value we have long recognized by sending out reporters to collect the stories of many of these same people. TBD collects those stories more efficiently in a variety of ways: We have recruited a network of more than 140 local blogs, covering individual neighborhoods and topics such as sports, dining and transportation; we host live chats and invite submissions of photos and videos; we ask people to help us fill the holes in our stories; we engage on Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, YouTube and Flickr, inviting and collecting stories and visual content in the social media.

The Saturday after launch, nearly the whole TBD staff was taking it easy, relaxing after a couple of intense weeks. After I returned from a dinner with my wife, I opened Twitter and quickly saw that an underground transformer fire had forced evacuation of two downtown Washington hotels. In a lot of ways, our scramble to cover the fire felt like the old-school journalism I learned in the 1970s: TBD reporters scrambled to the scene to interview officials and people at the wedding reception that evacuated but partied on.

But our breaking-news scramble was also new-school: collecting the tweets, blogs and photos of people who were already telling the story.

Steve Buttry is Director of Community Engagement for TBD, an online news operation that launched in August 2010, covering community news in the Washington, DC, metro area. He has been an editor, reporter, writing coach, blogger and innovation coach for seven community and metro newspapers, most recently Editor of The Gazette in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Competition Over News Intensifies in China, as Internet Offers Alternative Coverage

By Yuen-Ying Chan

Media in China is growing, thanks to a healthy economy, technological opportunities and state investment, while some are using the Internet to circumvent or resist censorship and government control.

Unlike the doom and gloom of Western media, Chinese media are growing and expanding, driven by state investment, technological change, and a robust economy. While economists and political scientists debate the viability of a "Chinese model" of development, the Chinese media industry is forging ahead with a unique mix of conflicting characteristics: Intensifying authoritarian state control, leap-frog adoption of digital technology; and fierce competition among the major players, including central state media, provincial media groups, and Internet companies listed inside China and overseas.

Caught in the intricate media landscape, Chinese journalists, managers, producers and frontline reporters are working under intense pressure to perform. Yet they enjoy little institutional support or clear career paths. Even CEOs at state-directed market enterprises serve at the pleasure of the Chinese Communist Party.

In the newsrooms, editors are torn between conflicting demands from two masters, the party censors and news consumers who increasingly thirst for the truth. Most reporters are paid at piece rates according to the number of articles or characters they produce, on top of a modest stipend. Reporters must also navigate the thicket of government rules and regulations that restrict their ability to do their work professionally.

Wang Keqin, China's foremost investigative reporter, said China's media have become much more open than they were 10 years ago, but state control has also become stronger and more sophisticated. He is optimistic about the future of journalism in China in the long term, but feels pessimistic about the current state of affairs for reporters. "It's not too bad and not too good," he said.

His pessimism is shared by Peter Herford, journalism professor at Shantou University in southeast China and formerly of CBS's "60 Minutes." "Until the government shows signs of divorcing media from its use as [a] tool of state control, it is hard to be optimistic. Every Chinese reporter knows that his or her first obligation is to support the Communist Party and help build China," he said. "These limits cripple the ability of reporters to give citizens the independent information needed to grow an effective civil society."

The commercial "news" contenders

All news media in China are state owned, but commercial Internet companies have emerged as an alternative source of news.

Under the government policy of "the party must govern the news" the portals created by the Internet companies are barred from reporting current events and breaking news. To circumvent the ban, the portals aggregate news stories from multiple local newspapers that are licensed to report. They also produce "news" with creative formats such as round table discussions, on-camera interviews and debates. Each of the major portals hosts blogs and micro-blogs, and offer multiple sites on entertainment, sports and education issues.

Even with the state restrictions, the portals have posted formidable challenges to state news sites, attracting far more traffic and visitors. Below is a ranking of the news portals of the respective Internet companies and the two state media sites, Xinhua.com and People.net.cn. QQ.com, of Tencent, ranks second in China, after top-ranked Baidu.com, the search engine. Both Xinhua and People Daily trail far behind.

As providers of news, the commercial portals are in a position to challenge state news sites by virtue of their reach and revenue size. Supported by revenues from non-news activities such as online games and ring-tone downloads, some newsrooms at the Internet companies hire as many as 400 producers, aggregators and writers to design and deliver "information" packages.

During the World Cup, Sina produced a live talk show about the games, which was re-broadcast by about 40 local TV stations and five outside media players, covering about 248 million TV viewers. Another 44 million watched the program online, bringing in CNY20 million ($6.7 million) of advertizing revenue for Sina, according to a report by Morgan Stanley analysts.

Many of the best editors at newspapers have taken charge as newsroom managers at the commercial portals. They are ready to take on the party-state media. It is also likely that companies like Tencent – China's largest Internet company by market capitalization, and the third-largest in the world – will dabble more in the news business.

Technology the empowering force
Technology is another driving force for Chinese media's growth. By the end of June 2010, the number of Chinese Internet users reached 420 million, making China the largest online community in the world. A whooping 80 percent of Internet users access the Internet via broadband, according to a report from the state's China Internet Network Information Center (see table below).

Internet use in China	June 2010
Number of Internet users	420 million
% of population using the Internet	31.8%
Broadband users Broadband coverage	363 million 98.1%
Mobile access to the Internet	277 million
Bloggers	2.31 million
Users of social network sites	210 million

Source: 26th report of the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), www.cnnic.net.cn.

Over the years, the Internet has opened up space for expression, dialogue and reporting for Chinese journalists and ordinary citizens. While the Chinese Internet is one of the most controlled, it is also a most active community of writers, bloggers and citizen advocates. The Internet has offered journalists a venue to post articles when they are censored by the printed media. In China, blogs and micro-blogs more recently have become a prime driver of news events. Many activists also use tools

Company	Portal	China traffic rank	Worldwide traffic rank
Tencent	QQ.com	2	10
Sina	Sina.com.cn	4	18
Netease	163.com	6	28
Xinhua News agency	Xinhua.com	30	212
People's Daily	People.net.cn	32	220

All news media in China are state owned, but commercial Internet companies have emerged as an alternative source of news and self-expression.

to bypass the Great Fire Wall to create Twitter accounts which, unlike home grown micro blogs, are uncensored. When reporters or activists are detained or harassed by the police, they quickly tweet to spread the word.

Hu Yong, journalism professor and Internet researcher, said micro blogs have empowered individual citizens. " 'Micro' is about every ordinary citizen. 'Power' is about translating language into action," he said. "Through 'micro-information' and 'micro-conversation' we can together exercise 'micropower' and influence the development of conscience in Chinese society."

Alarmed by the quick rise of social media, officials have blocked social networking services such as Twitter, Facebook and lately Foursquare, as well as YouTube. The government is perfecting control policies and mechanisms even as officials openly endorsed the Internet's role in China's economic and social development.

In June, more than 100 blogs by leading commentators were removed by Sohu.com. The government is also watching the micro-blogs warily, getting ready to crack down. In July, micro blogs at the commercial sites were shut down with no explanation. When the micro blog platforms returned a week later, they had become a "beta" version. At some micro blogs, the search function has been eliminated while others have imposed limits on links to outside the site. The portals have also requested new users provide real names for registration, a move that is seen as a method of control.

Direct control
State control is enforced in the real world by the central and provincial propaganda departments and a network of agencies. Every day, sometimes numerous times per day, propaganda authorities send orders to editors and producers around the country about banned topics.

In August, officials put the lid on covering natural disasters around the country, including the deadly mudslide that buried and killed more than 1,000 people in the Northwestern Chinese province of Gansu; a flood in northeast China that caused 50 deaths and an out-of-control fire, also in northeast China. Dozens were killed. For each of these incidents, local and regional media were told not to send reporters to the scene but only to use government press releases or dispatches by Xinhua, the state-news agency.

The media are explicitly barred from probing into the underlying causes of the disasters and alleged abuses by government or business that could have led to the destruction and deaths. For example, in Gansu, experts have warned that a state-run lumber company has cut down hundreds of thousands acres of forests, making the area vulnerable to heavy rains.

There are other banned topics: Advocacy activities by gay groups, protests and demonstrations, the attack and killing of children in a kindergarten in the Northeast province of Shandong, and Western media reports that Li Lu, student leader in the 1989 Tiananmen protests, could succeed Warren Buffet at Berkshire Hathaway. Li, who fled to the U.S shortly after the crackdown, has since reinvented himself to become a noted hedge-fund manager.

Commercial pressure
Journalists are coming under increasing pressure from businesses. Business and financial journalism, areas where government control is relatively less restrictive, are beats where reporters have probed allegations of insider trading and commercial fraud. These investigations have drawn the wrath of their targets.

In July, Qiu Ziming, a reporter who wrote a series of articles alleging insider trading by a local company, had to flee after police issued a warrant charging him with "fabricating and disseminating false information" that damaged the company's reputation.

The same month, Fang Xuanchang, an editor at Caijing magazine, was attacked by two men wielding metal clubs near his home. A noted science writer, Xuanchang often exposes fraudulent health products manufactured by domestic companies.

Journalists in China are inspired by the many story opportunities offered by a country in the midst of constant and rapid

change. But they also are working against huge odds. While many are soldiering on, some got corrupted and became "whorespondents," a new term coined by critics to describe reporters who take bribes from news sources in exchange for covering up industry malfeasance.

The news industry is also plagued by the proliferation of "red envelopes," with which news makers pay reporters for their coverage of news stories, to interview some businessmen and not others, or just to suppress news.

Many younger reporters have dropped out of journalism to work in public relations for the companies they have covered. There are others like Zhai Minglei, a blogger and writer, who quit a paper in Guangzhou to protest the self-censorship at his newspaper. He now publishes his own reporting on a site know as ibao, which means one man's newspaper.

Thanks to the Internet, camaraderie among journalists is growing. Six days after a warrant was issued for a reporter's arrest, sparking an outcry in the Chinese blogosphere, it was withdrawn with an unprecedented apology from the police. When two of its reporters were detained by police in a remote province, Nanfang Metropolitan Daily, a news tabloid, reported details of the police action on its website. Three hours later, the reporters were released.

For now, the future for Chinese journalists remains both promising and perilous. The

Chinese Communist Party has made clear that it will not relinquish control of the news media. But both commercialization and the empowering forces of technology demand greater openness. Somehow, the government will have to resolve the contradictions inherent in its grand strategy of gaining credibility worldwide while suppressing dissent and critical thinking at home.

Yuen-Ying Chan is the founder and director of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at Hong Kong University. She is also a Nieman fellow, and winner of the George Polk award for excellence in journalism.

Chinese Government Eyes Huge Investments in Media at Home and Abroad

In early August, a little known Chinese private equity fund made headlines around the world as it announced the purchase of News Corp's major stake in three television channels in China. Founded in 2009, the fund, known as China Media Capital (CMC), counted among its founders the China Development Bank, created directly under the State Council of the Chinese government. The other founder is Shanghai Media Group, a media powerhouse under the Propaganda Department of the Shanghai city government. CMC, which raised 2 billion yuan ($294 million) in its first round of financing a month before the News Corp purchase, is China's first buyout fund specifically focused on the media industry. Other similar funds targeting media ventures are in the wings, launched by the cash-rich central government or provincial governments, and provincial media conglomerates.

In early 2010, the Nanfang Media Group in southern China made a quiet bid for Newsweek, then on the block, but was rebuffed. Nanfang's partner in the attempt was another media conglomerate in Szechuan. Both groups are related to their respective provincial governments. The bid and acquisition are signals that the Chinese government is ready to expand internationally and will be looking for distressed media properties. Another fund, the Chinese Cultural Heritage Investment Fund (CCHIF), is backed by Bank of China and China Television International. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Finance, CCHIF claimed that it will raise 20 billion yuan ($3 billion). These numbers lend credence to a 2009 report in the Hong Kong South China Morning Post that the Chinese government has set aside $6.6 billion to support state media's expansion overseas.

Independent Malaysian News Site Shores Up its Pay Wall with Innovation

By Premesh Chandran

Free startups and social media undercut a break-even subscription site in Malaysia. But Malaysiakini.com is pursuing four strategies aimed at winning financial security for the independent news it provides.

The question of who will pay for journalism continues to haunt media companies as they watch the erosion of advertising revenues in tandem with print circulations. With every new technology gadget and digital channel, the Darwinian pressure to evolve gets stronger, ever surely accompanied by the thesis that only the fittest will survive.

If only the path forward was better lit and the fog of change settled. Instead, the industry wades through murky discussions, fluctuating between the promise of growth in online advertising and the ultimatum of asking readers to pay for content. It is hardly a choice for a proud industry that has checked the powerful, walked with the weak and given society the pulse of the nation, all while being reasonably rewarding for shareholders.

As the fork in the road grows closer, some signposts and signals would be helpful to media owners, journalists and the audience. Maps of pioneers are a precious guide, defining dead ends and pointing to possible options ahead.

Malaysiakini's Journey

Malaysiakini.com is one of those pioneers. Launched in 1999, the daily news site had the benefit of being a completely online effort, undistracted by a legacy print or broadcast operation. The Internet was then very much in its 1.0 incarnation. Absent were terms such as User-generated content, blogging and social media.

Malaysiakini also had a domestic advantage. Strict government regulations meant that traditional media was generally owned or aligned to the government, and hence toed the ruling party's line on most issues.

However, the government saw the Internet as a vehicle of growth and agreed with foreign investors that the Internet would be free of censorship and controls. This provided a window of opportunity for Malaysiakini to establish itself as the country's first free and independent media, albeit online.

In the wake of the controlled print media, Malaysiakini grew exponentially, reaching 100,000 unique visitors within eight months of its launch. Malaysiakini quickly became the site to go to for political news, and was termed "probably Malaysia's most important political journal". The then prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohammad would label Malaysiakini "a pain in the neck".

Despite becoming one of the most visited sites in Malaysia, advertising revenue did

not grow for several reasons. Advertising did not migrate quickly online, and much of the digital ad market was dominated, in the early days, by companies linked to the government – hardly ideal sponsors for the site. Malaysiakini's political reporting did not help, as businesses stayed away from any appearance of supporting the radically independent site.

With little advertising revenue in sight, Malaysiakini was forced to consider alternatives, including subscriptions. The closest business analogy was the co-existence of free to air and paid (cable or satellite) TV. Examining the model, it was clear that the audience would pay for some content, if it was compelling and part of their daily diet of information or entertainment, even if something similar was on offer for free.

Malaysiakini believed that its unique content would attract a subscription base. We hoped that 10 percent of our 100,000 daily unique visitors would subscribe.

We also believed that if and when more news sites decided to adopt a paid model, there would be a market for aggregated access, closer to the paid-TV model whereby a user gets multiple "channels" for a single fee.

Preparations for a Pay Wall

In order to prepare for launch, Malaysiakini faced three major challenges. The first barrier was internal, to convince our staff that this was the right approach. Close to the entire staff dismissed the idea, arguing that Malaysiakini would lose most of its audience.

The management argued that there was little other option to generate revenue. Without advertising, the only other channel was to rely on donation. If we were to rely on donors, donor fatigue would eventually set in. Also, donor drives are extremely uncertain, hence Malaysiakini could hardly plan and strategise based on donor contribu-

tions. It was clear that Malaysiakini would have to develop a revenue base or fold.

The second major challenge was to build a reliable and secure subscription management engine. Most such systems on the market then were priced at above a million dollars, built for major companies. Malaysiakini started to build its own system, now called Manage4me.com. Apart from subscription management and online payment, the system also supports aggregation of subscription content across channels.

The third challenge was developing anonymous payment methods. As Malaysiakini was a politically sensitive site, our subscribers demanded a system that would not require their identity to be revealed, even via a payment such as credit cards. Malaysiakini developed its own pre-paid

card and managed to get support for a convenience store chain to retail it.

Launch

After nearly a year of preparations, Malaysiakini launched its subscription service in early 2002 at the rate of RM 100 ($30) per year.

Subscribers trickled in at a much slower rate than anticipated. An early mistake we made was giving away too much of the content for free. We allowed non-subscribers to read up to five paragraphs of a story. Subscriptions improved once we reduced the free content, but we only managed to attract 1000 subscribers in our first year.

As expected, the subscribers were generally from the higher income category, with a

penchant for news and politics. Demographically, over 70 percent were from within Malaysia, from the 30-45 age group. Surprisingly, there were a high number of retirees. Although this group had great trouble using the Internet and making payments, perhaps the extra time of their hands gave them more incentive to subscribe.

In the early years, readership and subscription was tied to political events in Malaysia. The 2004 general elections saw the number of subscribers jump close to 3000. 2004 was also the first year that Malaysiakini broke even, with subscription contributing over 70 percent of income, the balance coming from grants.

The subsequent election in 2008 witnessed a doubling of subscribers as the political opposition won in five states, signaling the first major breakthrough toward a two-party system since independence. In discussing the political tsunami, prime minister Abdullah Badawi said that his biggest mistake was "underestimating the Internet".

Since 2008, subscription numbers have plateaued. It was obvious that the Internet had become a major influencer and as a result many more online media sites were launched, providing so-called independent news. With major investors, these sites were able to offer content for free. What used to be a 'blue ocean' was now a bloody red ocean. Nevertheless, given their lack of revenues, it may be a matter of time before investors' funds run dry, and some will close.

Twitter's ability to spread breaking news fast was also a major blow to Malaysiakini's positioning. Twitter provided newsmakers, especially politicians with a direct route to the audience, reducing their reliance on news media.

As a subscription site, Malaysiakini has also been cut off from social media. Users are

> Malaysiakini is keen to trade access with other subscription sites. We believe in the mantra that everybody will pay something but would like to access other interesting sites occasionally.

more likely to share links on Facebook and Twitter that their non-subscriber friends can read. Malaysiakini's stories continued to get shared in private over email, but integrating with social media has become a key challenge.

Saving the Subscription Model
The challenge going forward is to preserve and increase the number of subscribers. Malaysiakini has a few strategies in mind.

Firstly, Malaysiakini is developing a technology that allows users to share stories with friends. A unique link will allow users to click on links and access the full story without being blocked by the pay wall. The number of friends visiting will be limited, but the subscriber can pay more to be allowed to share with a larger number of friends. In a sense, a subscription now includes limited sharing rights. This strategy will allow Malaysiakini to grow its presences within social media as well as attract new subscribers.

Secondly, Malaysiakini is keen to trade access with other subscription sites. We believe a simple technology can be created to allow Malaysiakini subscribers occasional access to other sites along a micropayments model. We believe in the mantra that everybody will pay something but would like to access other interesting sites occasionally. Sites can trade "views" just as mobile phone companies trade "minutes" under roaming agreements.

Thirdly, the move towards multiple platforms such as smart phones and tablets will also generate new revenue opportunities for news sites. Platforms that integrate payment for specific applications, such as the iPad, provide new opportunities for revenue.

Since the Web is also accessible via these devices, however, it's difficult to protect content offered through a paid app without also charging a fee on the Web.

Fourthly, it is clear that new media economics do not support large scale traditional media organizations. The new media organisation has to be lean, flat and innovative in its structure and revenue streams. Media organization 2.0 is an organization that has a distinctive editorial strategy and is geared to continuous adaption to new technologies. It is looking ahead at technologies 3.0, just as it builds its current distribution and content strategies. An adaptive media organisation is amphibian by nature, prepared to thrive in the murky waters ahead.

Premesh Chandran is the co-founder and CEO of Malaysiakini.com, the leading online media in Malaysia, reaching over 300,000 readers per day in four languages (English, Malay, Chinese, Tamil). He is also the founder and program advisor to Malaysiakini's nonprofit training organisation, the Southeast Asian Centre for E-media.

Citizen Journalism Project Offers Case Study in Collaboration

By Steven Lang

Cell phone journalism offers access to untold stories in this South African city. The Iindaba Ziyafika project – run by a journalism school and news organization partnership – demonstrates how trained informers can reflect their communities.

At Grocott's Mail we are interested in citizen journalism because it broadens our coverage of issues and events that are of immediate relevance to our target readership. Through citizen journalism we have more sources of information and we also have greater depth in our articles on issues that we would normally cover only superficially.

We have had some significant successes based on cell phone journalism. For example, pupils who had gone through our training course alerted us to a problem in one of their high schools where teachers would not come to class, but would instead go drinking at a local tavern.

The pupils texted information to us that we could not have received from any other source. We then published some of these messages in our newspaper, provoking the school authorities to ban pupils from using cell phones and preventing them from speaking to the media when we sent a reporter. But they were too late because we already had the story.

As our citizen journalists are receiving recognition within the community, we have found that local residents are more likely to alert recently qualified citizen journalists that they know and trust rather than regular newsroom staff who are not so familiar.

For example, in June, Luvo Gcule (a citizen journalist) was walking down a dusty road in one of the most impoverished suburbs of Grahamstown when he heard a woman wailing. He rushed over to the woman's corrugated iron shack and found her standing there spattered with blood and a knife in her hand, at her feet a man was lying in a pool of blood. A neighbor called the ambulance services, but no medical help arrived. Gcule called the police, who eventually arrived to arrest the woman and confirmed that her boyfriend was dead. While waiting for the police to arrive, Gcule used his cell phone to take photographs of the woman and her deceased partner. He also spoke to the woman, who told him that they had both been drinking heavily and that she stabbed her boyfriend when he wanted to go out to continue drinking with his friends.

We had a full confession from the woman and dramatic photographs of the murder scene, thanks to a citizen journalist. Without his first-hand account, the newspaper would probably have carried a two-line report from the police.

Grocott's Mail has also benefitted from untutored citizen journalists who do not want to have their names publicized, but who feel that it is worthwhile putting news out for public consumption.

Left: Shireen Badat, the Editor of Upstart, is shown here with a group of pupils from a local high school. She has taken on the Upstart project in an effort to constructively channel energies of high school pupils.

At our newspaper we believe it is important to maintain close contact with the community we serve. Citizen journalism – and innovative use of new media technology - is helping what was essentially an old media organisation to achieve this goal. We have found that by developing a citizen journalism component to our newspaper we are strengthening our relationship with our readers. This is good for the community and naturally good for the newspaper. An interesting aspect of citizen journalism is that by publishing articles about issues that are important in the community, that same community is able to put pressure on the local authorities. This works very well with respect to the municipal authorities and even has significant influence on the provincial administration.

There was a specific case during a recent municipal workers' strike when a citizen journalist took a series of photographs of strikers who trespassed on private property to collect garbage. The strikers subsequently threw all the garbage onto the town's main street in order to disrupt traffic and highlight their cause. The citizen journalist then wrote an article and demanded that the municipality take action against the strikers who had been publicly identi-

fied. Following the article's publication in Grocott's Mail, the municipality took disciplinary action against at least one of the three offenders.

Citizen Journalism Training
Iindaba Ziyafika is a citizen journalism training project run by the Rhodes School of Journalism in conjunction with Grocott's Mail. The project operates on the premises of Grocott's Mail, a community newspaper that celebrated 140 years of business in May 2010.

The newspaper has been owned by the Rhodes School of Journalism since 2003, and besides providing news and information for the community, Grocott's Mail is also used as a platform for experiential journalism.

The citizen journalism project, funded by the US-based Knight Foundation, is only one of several experimental journalism projects at Grocott's Mail.

Grahamstown – in the Eastern Cape Province – is renowned as an educational center because it hosts Rhodes University and several prestigious private schools. It is less well-known that with an unemploy-

ment rate estimated at over 50 percent, the town also has some of the most impoverished schools in the province.

Iindaba Ziyafika, which means the 'news is coming' in isiXhosa – is the title of the project defined by two major thrusts:

• Firstly, the innovative use of mobile phones to democratise news and information within the community of Grahamstown;
• And secondly, to equip media producers in the town, and more broadly in the country so that they can fully utilise new media technology in journalism.

In order to become media contributors, residents needed to learn how to do this. We therefore set up a training newsroom with 10 computers on the premises of Grocott's Mail, where we can train prospective citizen journalists and also provide a space where the students can practise what they have learned.

One of the main objectives of Iindaba Ziyafika is to teach people, mainly residents from the under-privileged sections of our community, how to become citizen journalists.

> By developing a citizen journalism component we are strengthening our relationship with our readers. This is good for the community and for the newspaper.

Initially we focused our training on young people – high school pupils – because many of them already use cell phones for texting and other social media. We believed the younger generation would be far more amenable to new ways of using technology. For our first training group we selected a number of high school pupils who were already involved in a social upliftment program called Upstart.

This group, chosen from various high schools in Grahamstown, produces a monthly newspaper called Upstart for and about young people in the area.

Since the beginning of 2010 we have run four more citizen journalism courses, mainly teaching unemployed adults free of charge.

The course work is very practical and hands-on. After explaining techniques on how to conduct an interview, we bring in a guest so that the students can try out their newly acquired skills on real subjects.

We teach our students how to do basic research and how to access sources of information by doing Google searches or finding local experts. In many cases, we have to teach people how to use a phone book because they have never had access to one before.

As the cell phone (a smartphone is a rare luxury item) is the most basic tool available to citizen journalists, we spend some time explaining how to get the best results from low-end cell phones. We teach students how to use the text facility and if they have cameras we teach basic photography skills as well.

The course work includes basic journalism skills such as using the inverted pyramid to structure a story and fundamental principles of journalism ethics.

Our plan is to identify students with the best potential during their courses, and when the course ends, we invite them to begin participating in some of the activities of our regular newsroom.

Money Matters

When we made our funding proposal to the Knight Foundation, we expected the new citizen journalists to be motivated by civic activism. We thought they would generate multimedia content because they wished to expose problems in areas that do not usually receive media attention.

We have, however, found that the driving force for citizen journalists in our area is the prospect of gainful employment. They are almost all unemployed and eager to reach out for any prospect of a job, whether on a part-time basis as a stringer or as a step on the way to full-time employment.

This expectation has distanced citizen journalists from covering grassroots issues and moved them to cover issues that they believe are more likely to be published and consequently to generate income for them. Some academics argue that what we are doing is not citizen journalism at all, but rather a cadet training school or "journalism-lite."

Conclusion

Grocott's Mail and Grocott's Online are benefitting from the additional content generated by the citizen journalists, who are acquiring marketable skills in an area where unemployment is high. It is not certain whether we will be able to sustain this project once the external funding runs out.

Steven Lang is the Editor of Grocott's Mail in Grahamstown. He has worked for most of his career in radio and television at the News Division of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Telling the Stories Left Untold by Gaps in Wealth and Bandwidth

By Ferial Haffajee

Despite a shortage of diverse public affairs reporting that's crucial for developing democracies, media across Africa are displaying some of the enterprise and innovation it will take to deliver essential coverage.

You would never know it from reading South African newspapers, but the wealth gap in my country has resulted in the highest Gini co-efficient in the world. This grotesque disparity has been normalised in a society where all the metrics of poverty wear a female face. Take HIV/Aids. Now in its death hump, Aids has robbed us of a generation of mostly women. This has left a generation of older women – or gogos (grandmothers) – taking up the caring work of a generation of Aids orphans, conservatively measured at over one million children and young people.

If you read our media, you would assume that the normal family structure in South Africa is the nuclear family. You'd be wrong. In fact, the most common form of family in South Africa is the single female-headed household. And this universal woman is struggling with unemployment, relationships, the cost of school and transport costs that take up nearly 40 percent of the wage of working women.

I could go on. Sexual violence, be it rape or gender violence, is an ever-present horror and some studies suggest that one in three woman will know its cruelty once or more in her life. But even as an editor-in-chief, I struggle to get this kind of reportage into my newspaper.

While newspapers in South Africa are not yet at Ground Zero as many in Europe and the United States, our journalism is sub-

ject to the same risks and challenges of losing the news. In August, Women's month, I sat in my paper's news conference and looked at a news diary wondering where the gendered stories were. The news editor asked: "Why? That's not a story." This was his response until he saw my face (and his rapidly disappearing performance bonus) and quickly composed a set of ideas.

I'd rather not do things by diktat, but in a country where a new generation of journalists is snared by the vacuous trap of celebrity, lifestyle and scoop journalism, it often feels like the only way to get the important stories of gender, race, race relations, constitutionalism and other subjects important to a young democracy onto my agenda.

Our owners with an eye on the media's commercial bloodbath in the Northern hemisphere are trying to anticipate a crisis. Investment in newsrooms is generally on the decline (though there are notable and welcome investments in graduate training programmes and investigative journalism across most of the industry) and journalism is practiced as a craft of town not of country. That makes our media, generally, a handmaiden of urban elites, with insufficient attention paid to the issues faced by the millions of South Africans living in rural areas and on the margins of big city life.

We are losing news that is vital to the crafting of new democracies. This includes

> Investment in newsrooms is generally on the decline, and journalism is practiced as a craft of town not of country.

news about the state of the commons – of public health care, education, local government, the state of human rights – and replacing it with the preoccupations of celebrity, wire news, of lifestyle, personal finance, all the interests of the emergent middle-class that is the darling of the advertising industry.

As I contemplate the global debates of free versus paid content (awful word, I prefer journalism) and study the various projects to save our craft, hard questions burble to the surface of my mind. Who will pay for the snoopers who keep investigative journalism alive? Who will fund the long, hard and expensive work of keeping teams at parliaments to hold the flame of democracy burning bright? Who will pay people to read books and review them for our pleasure? Who will keep the arts editors in paycheques so that we have informed commentary on culture rather than the blogs that are so often based first on the reportage of old-style journalism? Nobody knows.

With just over one in 10 South Africans with Internet access and Twitter still an elite toy, I find that new media is even more a world that bares very little resemblance to the real South Africa. If we are to phrase it within the topic, then it is losing news even more quickly than the relatively old form of print.

The focus on the urban over the rural, the quick over the complex, press release over original reportage means we fall short of the role of a fourth estate that will be so important as we South Africans and Africans begin to shake off our miserable path and seek a place in the new world. But the African Journalism of the Year Awards, of which I am a judge, generally reveals to me a story of vitality and growth and of a cadre of people across the continent who speak fearlessly and are relishing their job of keeping power on its toes. On our continent, there is still a happy tale to tell in the private media because the liberalisation of print, radio and television means it is just hitting its stride.

In Nigeria, Next is an experiment worth watching in one of the globe's more interesting (and most challenging) nations. Next, published by Pulitzer prize-winning editor Dele Olojede, started as an online site and then migrated into a daily and Sunday newspaper. Its journalism is excellent and is beginning to attract advertising. (See www.234next.com)

K24 and KTN are two new television channels in Kenya producing high quality work; a startup in Nigeria called NN24 is gaining audience share. Private radio is the true growth story on our continent with two excellent examples being Joy FM in Uganda and Talk Radio 702 in South Africa. The African media institutions like the Nation and Standard groups, Monitor, Punch and Next and the four South African media houses Avusa, Independent, Media24 and Caxton still have substantial investment budgets.

But on the whole, the print landscape is of media with tiny budgets and fractured readerships (but for notable examples like The Nation, Monitor, Punch and Next), this journalism is losing news through other risks. These include payola and factionalism. In Uganda earlier this year for the awards, at a seminar I was aghast to find that most journalists earn their money through payola. They are employed as freelancers with little or no basic pay, so they rely on handouts in brown envelopes at press conferences. It's the great elephant in the room of African media and it distorts news (or loses it) in ways we had better face

Ultimately, long-form and investigative journalism that escapes the city sophistication and spin will become a nonprofit enterprise so that it does not lose its essence and its soul and does not become the flotsam of a necessary and inevitable revolution. That will come with its own set of governance issues: Do we simply trade the profit motive for the vested interest of the philanthropist; what happens when the funds run dry; is it truly independent?

But new and multi-dimensional ways to secure the future of journalism are essential if we are to ensure that as we lurch forward, we are not so enamoured with the growth story and with a new African middle-class that we forget the essential stories of development, employment, health, welfare and education and indeed of democracy that are so vital, still.

head-on. The other way in which political reporting (still the biggest and most important story on our continent) is distorted is through ownership by political interests.

As journalists, we live in revolutionary often disturbing times and not knowing what the future holds is part of the challenge that must make us innovate to protect our craft. There are emerging examples of how we can use the tools of new media and also ensure that African journalism remains on its growth path.

• The Daily Maverick (wrenched from the ashes of its print sister magazine which floundered) is like the Huffington Post of South Africa and its publishers and writers work virtually for free.
(See www.dailymaverick.co.za.)

• Amabhungane, a project of the Mail & Guardian, is an effort to train a generation of South African and African investigative journalists. It is like a cross between ProPublica and the Centre for Investigative Journalism. Amabhungane are dung bee-

tles and is the word used to describe its journalists.
(See www.amabhungane.co.za.)

• The Taco Kuiper awards for South African investigative journalism. Philanthropist and publisher Taco Kuiper left a sizable portion of his estate to the awards, which fund good investigations with some impact.
(Accessible via www.journalism.co.za.)

• Richard Kavuma, the award-winning Ugandan journalist with joint funding between his newspaper and the Guardian of London lives in a local village and through micro-observation documents the process of development.

• Open Society fellowships. Across the world, George Soros' fellowships are keeping good journalism alive.
(See www.soros.org.)

• Emergent blogging platforms that are harnessing new platforms for news and news analysis. (See www.kubatana.net and www.ushahidi.com.)

Ferial Haffajee is the Editor of City Press, a national South African Sunday newspaper. In 2004 she became the first woman editor of a major South African newspaper when she took over the editorship of the Johannesburg-based Mail & Guardian.

Telling African Stories, the African Way

By Salim Amin

Africa 24 Media enables journalists and others to publish content online that covers the Continent from a local perspective, accurately and with context.

Over the last 20 years, the media industry in Africa has grown by leaps and bounds. More TV and radio stations, as well as print media, are being introduced, while the entry of new media in the journalism landscape has transformed the way stories are told. State ownership and control has been radical reduced.

However, with this growth, media freedom has been abused in many countries where journalists have been apprehended, their equipment confiscated, and in worst cases, some have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Stringent legal, political and economic environments have restricted most institutions from operating freely as independent media outlets, and journalists continue to face perennial harassment and violence from many of the governments in Africa.

Nevertheless, the expansion of the democratic space, vociferous campaigns from civil society and increased international and regional pressures on respecting human rights has witnessed greater improvement from some countries within Sub-Saharan Africa.

Edwin Soy, Mark Kiptoo and Vincent Yator take first, second and third place in the men's 5,000 meter event in the just concluded African Athletics Championship.

The entry of new media and social networking sites has substantially improved the storytelling abilities of most journalists. With forums like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, the African journalist can now speak, albeit vigilantly, using an alternate platform.

But with these advancements, huge challenges still remain in the scramble to tell the African story the African way. Prohibitive constitutional and legal frameworks, as well as suspect ownership, have really hampered the media from playing its role as independently as it should. Although media journalists are guided by ethical standards that need to be adhered to, some governments do not have trust in this and, as a result, end up enacting legislation that is damaging to the media industry.

International broadcasters like the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera still have better access in many African countries and continue to tell Africa's story from their perspective, which is often biased. As they are not invested in the countries they cover, and usually send in 'parachute journalists' to cover African stories, they can sensationalize many of the stories they cover and then leave without having to face some of the more serious fallout that their African counterparts face as they continue to live in those countries.

African stories being told by parachute journalists tend to lack the background, perspective and context that allows viewers, readers and listeners to really understand the stories and their significance. The "30-second soundbite" has taken over, especially in TV, and this has led to a very distorted and negative picture of Africa.

Africa 24 Media (A24) made a groundbreaking entry into the African media arena with its pilot initiative of establishing and providing African journalists with an online platform where they can tell their own stories, their own way. A24 is Africa's first online delivery site for material from journalists, African broadcasters and NGOs from around the Continent.

The launch of the online platform (www.a24media.com) revolutionized the African media environment and the company boasts of over 2,000 videos stories collected from all over Africa in just two years.

The stories being told by A24 cover a range of topics from business to sports, fashion and art to the environment, health and education, as well as current affairs and profiles on leaders around the continent.

The content A24 receives is checked and rechecked by our editorial team to ensure accuracy and objectivity, as well as to make sure we are telling the story from an African perspective – often using the vast historical archive we have at our disposal to add context and background to our features.

We have looked at the amazing story of East African Athletics and how they have set new standards for the world, and have become role models for a whole generation of Africans. Some of our other success stories include the advances made in the mobile phone and ICT sectors in East Africa and the great success mobile banking has been in Kenya.

With our ground-breaking documentary on the history of corruption in Kenya that came out in July 2010, we demonstrated that there have been huge advances in press freedom in a country like Kenya. As early as five years ago, we would have

Left: Mzee Kimani Maruge sits outside during recess and takes a class picture with his fellow students. He was the oldest student in history to enroll in primary school at the age of 84 years and died two years shy of sitting for his National exams.

Below: An El Molo boy poses for a picture on a motorbike.

found it almost impossible to do this documentary and to show some of the examples of corruption and poor governance in Kenya.

However, journalists still find it difficult to submit their content online due to inadequate Internet speed and the lack of bandwidth in most African countries. But, with the entry of the undersea cables into the African telecommunication system, the future seems to be getting brighter for the African journalist.

Internet and social networking sites look to be more relevant to the way African journalists will tell their stories, while the role of the mass media in developing countries is slowly losing its grip. Still, the more sta-

ble countries have their foundation firmly rooted in a free press.

There is still a long way to go. With independent journalists fighting a losing battle on censorship every year, with increased violence and deaths being reported more often in countries like Somalia, Libya, Madagascar and even South Africa and Kenya, exercising the right to information is still a challenge.

A24 Media is trying to bring a little hope and opportunity in a changing media landscape. Our unique model is empowering African journalists across the continent, giving them better revenue for their content, a wider audience and, most importantly, ownership over their work.

African stories as told by parachute journalists tend to lack the background, perspective and context that explains their significance.

Salim Amin is the Chairman of A24 Media, CEO of Camerapix, and founder and Chairman of the Mohamed Amin Foundation. A24 is Africa's first online delivery site for material from African journalists, broadcasters and NGOs. Amin was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Peeking Behind Burma's Bamboo Curtain

By Soe Myint

Mizzima News relies on people inside and outside the country to cover Burma and provide its citizens with independent information about their government and communities. Underground reporters and their editors use encrypted technology for security as they subvert restrictions using broadcast, the Internet and other means to inform citizens.

Nobody questions that reporting from military-ruled Burma is a difficult undertaking, but there are those who have rallied to the call and met with success in the dissemination of independent news from the isolated Southeast Asian country.

Mizzima, derived from the Pali word for 'middle' or 'moderate,' was founded in August 1998 by three Burmese in exile in India with an aim of restoring media freedom in dictatorial Burma. Initially, severely resource strapped, Mizzima could only afford to involve itself solely in the dissemination of news and information to an international audience via email and fax. However, with the passage of 12 years, Mizzima has realized its position as a widely turned-to multimedia outlet on Burma and related topics, maintaining a network of reporters and stringers inside the country.

With headquarters in India and branch offices in Thailand and Bangladesh, Mizzima utilizes websites, TV, podcasting and print to disseminate information on Burma to both those inside and outside the country. The road to media freedom, however, remains fraught with obstacles and dangers, as Mizzima News seeks to constantly develop new means of overcoming official designs aimed at silencing the press.

Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index 2009 ranks Burma 171st out of 175 countries, recognition that Burma continues to be one of the most closed societies in the world. The military uses official censorship to check all publications, while utilizing state-controlled television and newspapers as propaganda weapons against those criticizing the regime. It further blocks websites of independent news media organizations, including those of Mizzima, while closely monitoring activity at the country's Internet cafes. The few private publications operating in the country either have to publish what the junta allows or risk punitive actions.

A serious challenge Mizzima faces in its daily operations is ensuring the safety of reporters working inside Burma, as well as those in exile. Burma's military government sentences reporters to long prison terms for disseminating uncensored information. A Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) reporter working inside the country was recently sentenced to 27 years for sending information to her organization.

Because of this repression, there is growing cooperation among journalists inside the country and those in exile. They share information, conduct joint investigations

and share proxy server numbers and website information when the junta blocks communication channels.

There are also a growing number of citizen journalists and video journalists working to expose the truth. More young people are using new media tools such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, mobile phones and SMS to write about the country's situation. Mizzima has done stories on how these new media tools are being employed to spread information and news on Burma by Burmese both inside and outside the country.

Security measures taken by Mizzima to safeguard its reporters in the field include the use of Internet technology, as well as old-fashioned communication techniques such as employing human couriers.

Mizzima's network of underground reporters rely on digital communication systems to collect information and disseminate it through multimedia outlets both in Burmese and English, producing regular publications, television and radio programs, all of which are used on Mizzima's Web-based platforms. Especially since the 2007 Saffron Revolution, digital communication has been a vital part of Mizzima's work.

Mizzima's external editors maintain daily communication with reporters inside Burma via the Internet and mobile phones. Additionally, reporters have access to satellite phones and BGAN (Broadband Global Area Network) technology as alternative avenues of communication when other options become less viable or unsuitably dangerous.

Information is generally sent to external Mizzima editors via the Internet by means such as the sharing of email accounts, meaning that a file is saved in draft form and can be accessed by Mizzima personnel outside Burma.

Mizzima reporters have also taken advantage of expanded opportunities provided by the military government's Global System for Mobile Communications and CDMA phones (Code-Division Multiple Access protocols used in so-called second-generation (2G) and third-generation (3G) wireless communications) to strengthen the restricted but crucial free flow of information.

Video files are sent through SEND6, Send-Space or YouSendIt. Mizzima uses a FTP (File Transfer Protocol) for transferring large files from reporters inside the country to editors outside Burma. However, a generally slow Internet connection means this method cannot always be relied upon. Encryption as well as the frequent changing of accounts and passwords are additional security steps taken to try and ensure the safety of Mizzima personnel when making use of digital communication.

When Mizzima organizes a training program outside the country for reporters who work in Burma, attendees, mindful of security, are often kept separated. All participants are connected to the lecture through the GoToMeeting program, an online feature that hides the face and identity of participants. In this way, Mizzima safeguards the identity and security of reporters coming from Burma. Other significant obstacles confronted in bringing Mizzima staff the training they need include a lack of English language skills and budgetary restraints, making it financially prohibitive to provide the necessary training.

The work of Mizzima and other exile news organizations is today widely available to the citizens of Burma. Burmese can watch foreign television broadcasts such as CNN and the BBC with the assistance of satellite dishes. People can also watch 24-hour Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) televi-

Mizzima's growing network of journalists has been able to successfully challenge restrictions on the free flow of information and images.

sion or listen to Burmese overseas radio via readily available short-wave radio sets. Mizzima provides TV stories and programs to DVB TV for broadcast.

Even rural areas of Burma at times have access to satellite dishes smuggled from China, with authorities unable to clamp down on this easily available commodity. Burmese inside the country are additionally adept in using proxy servers and other means to beat Internet censorship.
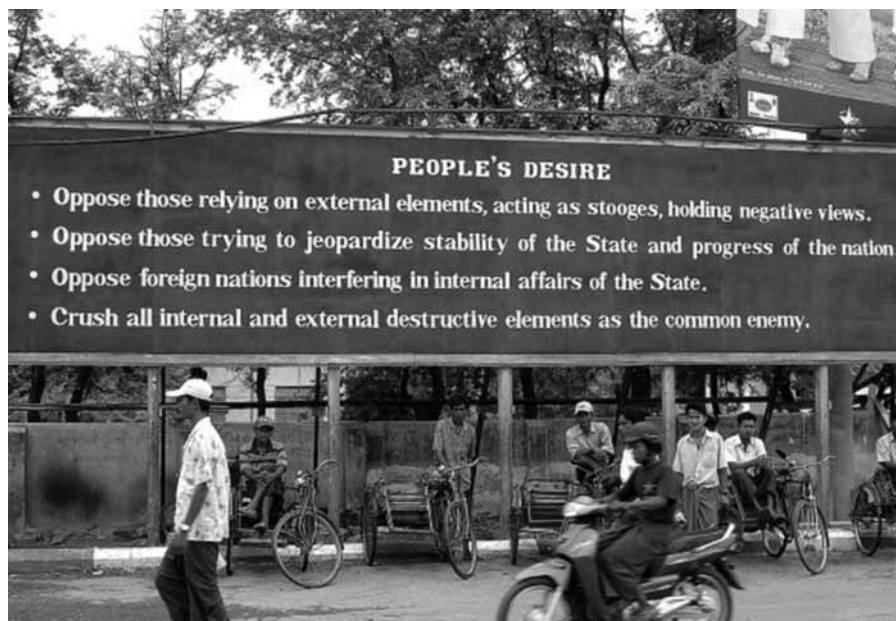
Through the methods described, Mizzima's growing network of reporters, new media units and stringers have been able to successfully challenge the restrictions of the regime in the battle for the free flow of information and images.

Over the years, Mizzima has covered a wealth of stories that have gone on to garner international attention. Regional and international media are known to pick-up Mizzima stories and quote the information in their news.

When Burmese people led by Buddhist monks hit the streets in 2007, Mizzima introduced live reporting on its websites. Similarly, Mizzima utilized live reporting during the junta's Constitutional Referendum in 2008, while also providing comprehensive coverage of the devastation wrought by Cyclone Nargis.

Going forward, Mizzima plans to broadcast live streaming TV of the anticipated general election at the end of 2010. The primary purpose of Burma's first general election in two decades is to further legitimize military rule and entrench the military's political role. The National League for Democracy, victors in the 1990 elections but not allowed to assume power, has decided not to contest the forthcoming elections in opposition to what it considers unjust electoral laws.

PEOPLE'S DESIRE
- Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views.
- Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation.
- Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State.
- Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy.

International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) and partner organization of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), in 2007 Mizzima was honored with the International Press Institute's (IPI) Free Media Pioneer Award.

Mizzima's ultimate ambitions revolve around developing innovative ways of using digital communication to evade authoritarian controls, both in gathering information and delivering it to those who need it most. The target audience is people inside Burma and the Burmese in the Diaspora.

There is an established thirst for knowledge about what is happening inside authoritarian Burma. Mizzima is one institution playing a central role in providing this service while also active in the Burmese freedom and democracy movements, as it produces a new generation of Burmese media personnel capable of playing an instrumental role in a post-military ruled Burma.

Since its modest birth in a small niche along New Delhi's crowded streets, Mizzima has developed mechanisms to increase both its network and output. And, despite the official censorship and regular clampdowns on independent reporting, Burma also possesses some unique conditions and "opportunities" for the free flow of information. It is hoped that following the election, with some civilians involved in power sharing arrangements and a growing civil society sector, media organizations like Mizzima can exploit this newfound "scope" to improve networks and activities inside the country.

As Mizzima grows in capacity building, journalism skills and equipment, the possibilities of an emerging culture of enhanced media freedom at this critical juncture of Burmese history grows with it. Today, Mizzima has over 80 reporters/staff based in India, Thailand, Bangladesh, China and Burma.

To strengthen Burma's free media, Mizzima actively works in association with other Burmese media groups. A founding member of Burma News International, a network of Burma's independent media organizations, as well as a member of the

Soe Myint is Editor-In-Chief of Mizzima News, which he established in August 1998. He has worked for the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), Radio Free Asia (Burmese Service) and Voice of America (Burmese Department). His book, "Burma File: A Question of Democracy," was published in 2003.

Media in India Poised to Grow Rapidly

By Rajesh Kalra

Media in India is on the verge of a major shift, as literacy increases, and computers and connectivity penetrate rural areas and citizen journalism rises.

It is never easy to gaze into the future unless, of course, you are Paul the Octopus and get it right time and again. But to gaze into the future and predict what will happen to news is relatively simple, I think, and it may not necessarily need Paul or his luck. The march of technology, innovation and newer media is collaborating to give a clear idea of what the future holds for news.

Let us look at India first. The country is uniquely placed in the world of media and in terms of how news is disseminated. The print media in the developed world might well be into its sunset stage, but in India it is still growing.

The reasons are aplenty, the main being India's growing literacy rate. Currently, India's literacy rate hovers around 71 percent, up from 12 percent when it gained independence in 1947. This is skewed in favor of urban areas, and men in particular.

While most in urban areas have access to education, it is still an aspirational thing in the rural areas. Once a person has the ability to read and write, he wants to show the world that he is now literate. There aren't many better ways to do so than reading a newspaper sitting in the village centre, surrounded by an envious and appreciative bunch. Of course, the fact that India has some of the cheapest newspapers available off the shelf in the world helps.

But all that notwithstanding, even the most hardened print supporters can see the writing on the wall. Realization is quickly dawning that the current growth is not sustainable in the long run, a slow but certain shift to other media has begun, and the trend will only gather pace.

Television is already a staple source of information for many and that number is growing, aided in no uncertain terms by the use of satellite-based distribution networks even as distribution through cable gets more organized. This will see a further fillip though IPTV and mobile.

India has another challenge - multiplicity of languages. English alone will not suffice, and for one clear reason. Only 10 percent of the population is English-literate. While that may translate to over 100 million people, which in itself is huge, there are still almost 900-plus million who read, write and understand other languages.

The effort to target this non-English-speaking population, take computers to them, and then the Internet, has gained speed. Most of the big names are investing considerable sums in developing computers that can be used in multiple Indian languages.

Microsoft, for example, has embarked on a project called "Bhasha" (the Hindi word for language) to push computers in the Indian hinterland. It is Microsoft's belief, along with that of a number of other IT biggies, that a major reason for the huge digital divide in India is the unavailability of computers in local languages. Computers alone will not help in the absence of

proper connectivity. Connectivity in the rural areas is poor, but some serious effort is now going into addressing that issue. The nation has just issued WiMax licences. That and some homegrown solutions – which provide wireless connectivity in remote areas using solar energy (a key resource in an otherwise power-efficient nation) – are all happening simultaneously. Put together, this means that India is on the threshold of a major information revolution, which would change the way the country receives and shares information, be it news, views or anything else.

Not surprisingly, there is huge interest in news and information websites in regional languages. The Times Group's own Hindi language website (Navbharattimes.com), for example, has seen its traffic surge over 50 times in just three years. And if all goes as per script, this will perhaps just be the tip of the iceberg.

Changes in India are not occurring in isolation but as part of a global phenomenon and some may prove to be revolutionary.

We have all heard of citizen journalism and one can notice the emphasis that most media are putting on this. At a time when costs were forcing media to cut manpower, and stationing correspondents all over the

> The print media in the developed world might be in its sunset stage, but in India it is still growing.

world was a challenge, some actually used the opportunity to beef up their citizen journalism presence.

The results may not have been spectacular, yet the potential cannot be underestimated. The best of media houses can have no more than a few thousand correspondents to file news and information; with proper citizen journalism, that number can theoretically be in the millions. Even if you count only the number of highest quality, you can get thousands of citizen journalists.

With greater emphasis on local and hyper-local news and information, anyone who efficiently delivers such information will leapfrog over their competitors.

Of course, there would be quality concerns and also questions about who is authorized to share certain types of information, particularly pictures and videos. But all these can be addressed, and if handled well, I have little doubt citizen journalism can be the biggest tool in building not only a great content stream, but also great loyalties.

I have also heard arguments that when editors lose control and we choose to depend on what citizen journalists have to offer, we lose track of real news. There might be some basis for this apprehension, but as citizen journalists mature, things may ultimately look up. Perhaps big media groups could invest some time and effort into training citizen journalists. This would not only ensure that the selection of topics is relevant, but the quality can be maintained.

However, the way technology is revolutionizing information dissemination, we would do well to recognize that if the majority wants to know something other than what editors want to publish, we have to accept the majority may find a way.

Even without any training, some of the biggest news, and even some exceptional follow-ups, are breaking on Twitter. In India, for example, during the Mumbai attacks, it was thanks to tweets that most got their initial information and even follow-ups from various vantage points.

In India's capital, New Delhi, the traffic police alert drivers about traffic jams through tweets. So they are informing the public directly and in the process bypassing the FM or TV channels. In fact, it is these channels which sometime follow tweets and report.

The other major benefit of digital media is that it allows users to customize content. Users now have the capability to choose between short stories or deep-dive into a subject, whether they want to access commoditized stuff or opinions.

The rapid pace of transformation in the field has reduced the product lifecycle to just a few months, if not weeks, which has aided the shift from print to desktop to mobile devices. As for mobiles and other handheld devices, it would seem they can now perform every function except make popcorn. Of course, they can also be used to have voice conversations.

It is interesting to see how some have taken the lead in developing content deliverable exclusively for these devices, including the sync systems that allow one to get feeds tick-marked on a desktop to fly in to their handheld devices to be then read at leisure.

The iPad, its clones, and other e-readers, will continue to evolve to make the reading experience easier, faster and better. Once the battery life is improved, the number of those who rely on these devices to stay in touch will catapult into a different league.

While all this is very exciting, it is also a cause for concern. Readers have got so used to free content online that getting them to pay for it is a challenge. Can this be sustained on advertisement support alone? No one is sure.

Initial experience has been that the change in the advertiser's mind is slow in coming.

More importantly, the digital media's ability to be measured in a relatively more accurate manner than other media is a double-edged sword. While you can easily see who is getting the numbers and who is not, it also means the advertiser is now not satisfied easily. He wants to dig deeper and is willing to pay for results and not just on the number of ads being served.

I believe advertisers will continue to use digital media, and even if content is to be offered free, quality websites will get readers, and as a result, advertisers.

The future of news is evolving. Those who consume news may finally get to have a greater say in what, where, when and how they are informed. It is an exciting period. The media has to make the right moves, make itself more relevant and useful for its consumers. The next 10 years will see a rapid march in India towards digital media even as print will grow then plateau.

Rajesh Kalra is the Chief Editor of Times Internet Ltd, the digital arm of India's largest media house, The Times of India Group. He also heads the languages initiatives of the Internet arm.

Digital Publishing Empowering a New Technology in Russia, but is it Journalism?

By Andrei Soldatov

Lack of newsroom resources has left most Russian news sites unable to provide substantial independent journalism. Instead, they're limited to aggregation of news produced by the country's newspapers. The Supreme Court recently provided some legal protection to online operations, but the Kremlin is relying on legislation and regulations to limit the freedom of journalists and bloggers alike.

On 28 June 2010, the Russian Supreme Court issued its first-ever guidance for courts to follow on issues related to the mass media. Experts welcomed the resolution, mostly because it guarantees certain degrees of freedom to the online media. Under its provisions, online media cannot be liable for the readers' statements made on their forum pages, as long as the site editors do not moderate comments before they're posted. Thus, the guidelines stipulate that online media, which is not very loyal to the Kremlin, cannot be closed down by the government simply because an agent-provocateur published an extremist statement on their forums.

For optimists, this resolution was a clear sign of a positive trend to develop the legal conditions for freedom of expression, since the online media in Russia is considered to be the last stand for democracy. It is the only part of the media that was able to operate freely since television came under government control and the newspaper industry fell into the hands of oligarchs loyal to the Kremlin. But the true reason of the adopted soft line might be simpler. The Russian new media are overwhelmingly dependent for their content on the few surviving independent newspapers in Moscow and the regions. These sites provide a means of disseminating the news stories produced by those papers and facilitating discussions about the coverage.

Almost all the most prominent news websites in Russia were launched between 1999 and 2001 by the oligarchs – Newsru.com by Vladimir Gusinsky, Grani.ru by Boris Berezovsky and Gazeta.ru by Mikhail Khodorkovsky. At the same time, the think tank the Fund for Effective Politics (FEP), headed by Gleb Pavlovsky, a pro-Kremlin spin doctor, launched a number of ambitious projects: Lenta.ru and Vesti.ru, both Internet newspapers, and Strana.ru, a Russian national news service, which was presented as a new kind of media. Its websites succeeded in taking leading positions from the outset.

In the late 1990s, there were very few people who understood the Internet, and not surprisingly those responsible for advising oligarchs and new media editors were often recruited from the same circle. Suddenly they found themselves in the unusual position of being asked to invent the rules and then play by them.

Their first task was to define the criteria for assessing the impact of the new market. These methods of assessment remain obscure to outsiders. A new industry was born to provide the online media with the number of customers deemed appropriate for its investors: Methods ranged from close-to-pornographic banners to programming tools to increase hits. Not surprisingly, the quality of the journalism was the last thing to be considered. News aggre-

gators quickly became the most visited sites in the country.

Not surprisingly, in the early 2000s the online media were not considered a threat to the Russian authorities' control of information. The turning point was the Nord-Ost theater hostage crisis in October 2002 and the disastrous subsequent storming of the theatre. The Kremlin found itself overwhelmed by hundreds of news messages critical of the official version of events, circulated on the Internet and promoted by news aggregators. This time, the lack of in-house reporters was not an issue, for the hostage crisis took place in Moscow and some editors personally followed the events. This time, the online technologies enabling the flow of information turned against the Kremlin.

To counterattack, the authorities had to rely on the same technology as the news aggregators, but strengthened by the vast resources of the state-owned media. As part of its strategy, FEP's projects Vesti.ru and Strana.ru were sold in 2002 to the All-Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK), a state-owned corporation building its online media empire. As an attempt to spin public opinion, it clearly failed. Critical stories of Russian and foreign origin kept circulating on the Russian Internet, and even a direct counterattack could not help.

By then, the special project of Inosmi.ru had been launched to translate stories favourable to Russian policy and to compete with Inopressa.ru. The project was established by Pavlovsky's FEP and then handed over to the state-owned RIA Novosti.

Over the next two years, the online media market was affected by a new development. In the mid-2000s, more and more print journalists were losing their jobs. For many, the Internet was the only area where it was possible to express their opinions.

The problem was that online media had no resources to pay for investigative journalism and reportage; instead, reporters turned into columnists. And the overwhelming number of online columnists turned out to be highly critical of Russian domestic policy.

In turn, the Kremlin recruited a new generation of experts, headed by the young Internet guru Konstantin Rykov. He proposed a new and more aggressive formula for success – a combination of the same technology of news aggregators plus irreverent, patriotic columnists, lined up to attack liberals Fox News-style, strengthened by the direct and shameless buying of traffic.

Some ends were achieved – the news websites loyal to the Kremlin were promoted to high-ratings positions, and Rykov was made a member of the State Duma. At the same time, the new patriotic media gained neither the popularity of liberal news aggregators such as Newsru.com, nor the influence that Ej.ru, created by journalists of Ezhednevny Journal, a weekly traditional magazine closed down in 2004, enjoyed with the elite and the intelligentsia.

Losing to the competition, the Kremlin turned to other means already proven to be effective in dealing with newspapers: The

buying of media by loyal oligarchs and the introduction of new laws controlling the press.

In 2006, Gazeta.ru, then the only news website with a fully staffed team of reporters, was sold to Alisher Usmanov, an oligarch and founder of Metalloinvest, thought to be close to the Kremlin.

In 2007, Vladimir Putin, then the Russian president, signed a package of amendments expanding the definition of extremism. It was the second set of amendments focusing on extremism to be adopted in Russia since mid-2006. The amendments broadened the definition of extremism to include media criticism of state officials and required news media to label as 'extremist' any organisation that the government has banned as such.

Another amendment expanded the definition of extremist activity to include 'public justification of terrorism or other terrorist activity'. It did not, however, define the term 'justification'. Other amendments regulate the production and distribution of 'extremist' material, without specifying what constitutes such material, and introduce new penalties for journalists, media outlets and printers found guilty of the offence. Penalties range from fines and

> Almost all the most prominent news websites in Russia were launched between 1999 and 2001 by oligarchs.

pressure, but because of a lack of resources to sustain original journalism. The most popular online media do not have in-house journalists; instead they continue to reproduce stories from wire agencies and print media. The oppositional political projects remain in a minority, possibly the best guarantee for survival. Russia's online media continues to be essentially a new technology – not a new journalism – at best a means of distributing news already published in blogs or traditional media.

Andrei Soldatov is Co-founder and Editor, Agentura.Ru, Moscow which covers developments related to terrorism and the security services in Russia and the former Soviet Union. He is the co-author of the book "The New Nobility: the Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB" to be released in September 2010.

confiscation of production equipment, to the suspension of media outlets for up to 90 days.

Bloggers were among the victims of the new law over the next two years. Savva Terentyev, a 22-year-old blogger from the Komi Republic, faced charges of inciting hatred after posting a comment on a blog in March 2008, criticising the police. In July 2009, he was found guilty and received a suspended sentence of one year.

At the same time, the Kremlin kept trying to find new methods for dealing with the blogging community. In May 2009, the 'Kremlin school of bloggers' was launched, headed by Alexei Chadayev, an associate of Pavlovsky. Their graduates are supposed to organise pro-Kremlin information campaigns online.

The biggest industrial catastrophe of 2009 was a striking illustration of the new government strategy. On 17 August, Sayano-Shushenskaya hydroelectric station, the largest in Russia, suffered an accident that caused flooding of the engine and turbine rooms and a transformer explosion; 74 people were killed. On 20 August, local journalist Mikhail Afanasyev, editor of the online journal Novy Focus, was charged with slander for distributing 'intentionally false reports' about the disaster. Afanasyev had been charged less than 24 hours after a journalist suggested on his site that officials were shifting their efforts away from the search for survivors too quickly.

Two weeks later, a journalist from Interfax wire agency was expelled from the area of the Sayano-Shushenskaya station for his critical reporting. Instead, the popular blogger Rustem Adagamov, aka 'drugoi', was invited to report on the relief operation. So he did, reporting favorably for the authorities. In October, Adagamov was invited to join the Kremlin press pool, a proposal that he accepted.

Today, the Russian online media looks vulnerable not only because of government

La Silla Vacía Models How the Internet Encourages Press Freedom in Colombia

By Juanita León

The first investigative political blog of this South American country, La Silla Vacía demonstrates how the Internet lowers the barrier to entry and can make it easier to produce journalism that informs and engages.

Colombia has changed a great deal in the last 30 years, in no small part because of the social mobility spurred by drug trafficking. The entertainment, business and political worlds have evolved and democratized in ways that have surprised even the more skeptical on the Left. The media world remains one of the last bastions of the old elite.

The family of the new president owns – with the Spanish Planeta company – the largest (and until last year the only) national newspaper, El Tiempo; the local TV channel, Citytv; and soon will most surely get the license for a new private TV channel. The nephew of the president-elect is the director of the only big news magazine, Semana. And the current vice president and cousin of Juan Manuel Santos will be the news director of the largest radio station, RCN.

The second national newspaper, El Espectador, which became a daily a year ago, belongs to the biggest economic conglomerate, the Santodomingo Group, which owns the other big radio station, Caracol, and one of the two national TV channels.

This media concentration creates a high-level entry barrier for other competitors, making it seem 'impossible' to create an alternative successful media.

But La Silla Vacía, the first investigative political blog in the country, demonstrates to young Colombians that in the digital era, when open-source platforms bring down the news production costs, it is possible to break that monopoly, and create an information source that is not linked to the economic or political elite.

La Silla Vacía is an information-based, interactive site run by journalists. It uses new technologies to build – with the audience – better knowledge about how power is exercised in the country. It also aggregates the most interesting new voices about the political present and future of Colombia.

La Silla Vacía is a startup, with seven full-time, paid employees. Its audience is mainly young, professional Colombians between 25 and 45 years old, college-educated, and interested in public affairs. In our first year, we have been able to consolidate an audience that grows steadily week-by-week. We now have an average of 370,000 unique users, 860,000 visitors, and more than a million page views a month. Our average time on site is five minutes 28 seconds.

In many ways, La Silla Vacía represents a model of the media of the future and a good example of how the Internet encourages press freedom. The democratization of

the distribution channels on the Web has created a more fair competition in the marketplace of ideas.

Because there are few media outlets in Colombia and they are all owned by a small group of powerful families who share similar interests and views, the opportunities are scarce to air diverse opinions in mainstream media. With this project, we have demonstrated that in the 21st Century, ideas and compelling voices have as much influence as voiced on our site as when they are voiced by a traditional outlet. There is no way to shut someone up.

Take what happened to columnist Claudia Lopez. She was one the most influential columnists at El Tiempo, and the leading investigator of the parapolitics scandal. As a Semana.com columnist four years before the scandal, Lopez was the first to denounce links between members of the political establishment and the paramilitary groups. She then moved to the newspaper, where she had a huge readership. She became a nuisance for the Uribe government and his coalition in Congress. While most of her writing was against politicians, one day she criticized El Tiempo's coverage of the agricultural subsidies program Agroingreso Seguro scandal, saying that it was so biased that they seemed to be favoring Juan Manuel Santos's political aspirations. She also said that the newspaper should make its conflict of interests explicit.

Lopez voiced a criticism shared by many, but her writing outraged the editor-in-chief of El Tiempo. He wrote an addendum to her column, firing her. "If you think this of this newspaper, we understand that you are resigning," he said. And all her columns were deleted from the newspaper. In that moment, Colombians lost a courageous columnist. She wasn't offered another space by El Espectador or Semana. Hiring her would have broken the tacit pact among media owners to not step on the other's toes.

But in the digital era, social networks are the media. Lopez opened up her blog in La Silla Vacía, and all her readership was able to follow her online.

With the Internet, it is almost impossible to expel someone's views from the public arena, because at least for young generations in Colombia, their media is Facebook and all the important information circulates there. And it's just as difficult to prevent some issues from being covered.

The partial demobilization of paramilitary forces, important victories against a diminished guerrilla force, and a booming economy have created an optimistic atmosphere in the last five years. The downside, after decades of violence perpetrated by guerrilla, paramilitary and government forces, is that until recently – when the scandals surrounding government were too big to hide – there was an open hostility toward anyone that could potentially "ruin the party."

Only Semana and Cambio magazines were brave enough to go against the tide, but Cambio folded last year. In that context, La Silla Vacía quickly became another important site of reference about politics.

It offered not only facts but also an interpretation of what the facts meant. When so many things happen in a country in transition, explanations are sorely needed. Because in Colombia there is a big story every day, it's easy to miss the fact that most of them are episodes of the three or four same big underlying stories. And, without the restrictions of time or space, the Web is the perfect place not only to tell the whole story but to narrate context. At La Silla, we make explicit the narrative threads that pull the stories together.

We also talk about some issues that are taboo for mainstream media. For example, we have run several stories on tax exemptions and tax privileges awarded to companies, one of the topics barred from media.

> For young generations in Colombia, their media is Facebook, and all the important information circulates there.

Print media have a big tax break on paper, so they are not so willing to criticize something that they benefit from. But also, private companies are shielded from public debate in great part because they are the ones that advertise.

At La Silla Vacía we cover the intersection of private companies and politics. We were the first to tell the story of the 'stabilization pacts' signed by Uribe's government with the big companies promising them not to raise their taxes for 25 years, and we have also pointed out the amount of money invested in tax breaks.

Another issue that we have covered that is taboo in Colombia is how power is exercised by media. There is a 'pact of silence' among journalists. We can criticize everything except each other. At La Silla Vacía, media is not off-limits, which opens up the opportunity for media to be held accountable.

Not only have we tried to cover under-covered issues, but also in the way we cover them we try to break barriers people have to access information. At La Silla Vacía we believe in the value of unprocessed information. That's why we use every tool to make original documents and reporting available to users. We also use open-source tools like Ustream to allow users to directly interview our sources. And we use Twitter to cover important events in real time, so that people get direct access to raw information with as little mediation as possible from journalists.

And lastly, the Internet provides an opportunity for citizens to politically engage by participating in the national conversation, the strongest guarantee for freedom of expression.

In mainstream media, the information loop is closed, but online media are able to interject in and reflect an ongoing, open conversation. From its start, La Silla Vacía put forth the idea that citizens are not only the recipients of information but that they can also participate in the creation of the message, and in that process get more deeply involved in the political debate.

At La Silla Vacía, each user has his or her own profile page, which contains a record of all his or her contributions to the page. We have an audience editor, working with users who submit stories to the page to make sure that they meet the journalistic standards of accuracy, verification and interest to readers; we have an Urtak tool for users to ask and answer survey questions in real time about political issues; and one-third of our story ideas come from users, who give us tips and information.

This experiment in crowdsourcing and user-generated information decentralize the information in a way that not only reflects the center of the country, but also the regions. It also opens up a path of self-expression and political engagement for younger Colombians, who are skeptical of established media and so often opt out of the political debate.

As Internet guru Jean Francois Fogel has said, what the Internet changes is that citizens become the promoters of the collective conscience as content creators. "Public opinion no longer has a mood, but favorite sites and connections," he says. At La Silla Vacía, we expect to be the favorite site of the most progressive segment of Colombian society.

Juanita León is the Founder and Director of LaSillaVacia.com, the most influential political website in Colombia. She was a Harvard Nieman Fellow and is a graduate of Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism. She was the launch editor of Flypmedia.com, and taught 'Guerrilla News' at New York University's School of Journalism.

Digital Technology Fuels both Oppressive Governments and Media Freedom in Arab World

By Daoud Kuttab

Technology changed the history of media in Arab countries by offering alternatives to government controlled communications.

While technology has made a considerable contribution to media throughout the globe, it has had a unique impact in the Arab world. But this impact has not always been positive.

Until the mid-1990s, radio and television stations that Arabs were able to follow were mostly government owned. With the exception of international radio stations such as BBC, Voice of America and Monte Carlo radio, hundreds of millions of Arabs were forced to hear and see protocol news of their presidents and kings leading and dominating newscasts.

Governments dominated audiovisual media so much that representatives of presidents and kings had an office at the local radio and TV stations for ease of passing on information and to the state owned and run media. Live interviews were not allowed for fear that something unscripted could be said.

Governmental control of radio and TV had its logic in the history of governance in many Arab countries. In the post decolonization phase, many Arab countries witnessed armed revolts and military coups. In most of these revolts, radio stations were among the first institutions, after the presidential palace, to be taken over by the new powers. Knowing full well the power of the

airwaves, the new rulers made sure no one else took them over physically or in terms of content.

Newspapers, which by their nature had a narrower audience except among the literate residents of major cities, still had governmental controls, either directly or indirectly. External media was only allowed in the country after a thorough read by customs minders who, at times, would either deny entry or physically cut out a particular article that was not pleasing to the local rulers.

That was the situation for most Arab countries, with the exception of Lebanon, Kuwait and Egypt. But the information revolution forced a lot of change. Some of the change was in the form of totally new media outlets, in other cases the IT revolution had its trickle effects within traditional media outlets as well as helped develop an alternative media landscape that is among the main forces of change in the Arab world today.

TV was among the first media to change due to the information revolution. While governments could control their own media and prevent printed publication from entry, their ability to stop the airwaves, especially with the introduction of satellite television, was impossible. Al Jazeera was born in this atmosphere.

A BlackBerry user displays the SMS sent by his service provider notifying him of the suspension of services at a mobile shop in Dubai, UAE. Saudi and Emirati authorities' battle with BlackBerry manufacturer Research in Motion shows how rapid changes in technology are sowing unease in countries where the unfettered flow of data is seen as a threat.

The Qataris, who were looking for a way to be known, stumbled on a failed attempt by Saudi businesspeople to produce a joint effort with the BBC. The failed Orbit News operation in Italy provided the Qataris with a cadre of professionally trained Arabic speaking journalists. With little critical news to report on in tiny Qatar, the new station was able to deliver professional news by satellite to the entire Arab world.

The Internet provided yet another opportunity for Arab news junkies. As it happened, all 23 Arab countries were careful about making sure that the local press was under control but could do little to stop any other Arab media outlet from writing about them. With cyberspace outside the control of Arab interior and information ministers, an entirely new opportunity was opened up.

One of the first efforts began in Palestine. The Arabic Media Internet News (AMIN.org) was established in 1996 with the aim of publishing uncensored content. Their most successful effort was a section informing their visitors of the websites of other Arab newspapers. By accessing these Arab newspapers, Web surfers were able to find out what was happening in their countries simply by reading what Arab papers outside their own borders were publishing.

Online publications soon followed and in time provided opposition parties, ideological groups and various others with the opportunity to make their ideas public. With Internet penetration still low in most Arab countries, it was important to employ the ripple effect. Internet media advocates in the Arab world began by trying to encourage Arab journalists, thinkers and writers to get online.

Various civil society efforts helped by purchasing computers with Internet connections and providing public space to allow amplifying voices to obtain information online and then reproduce it using traditional media. The success of this effort wasn't initially evident, but its online power was soon to be seen in efforts to establish alternative media outlets and in citizen media initiatives.

Initially the Internet was left under lock and key in traditional newspapers as owners were afraid of this newcomer to the information world. But with time, the availability of information, which provided a wider point of view and a much deeper version than what was being said locally, caused traditional media owners and editors to adopt and warm up to the Internet.

Alternative and citizen media initiatives were soon growing in the Arab world. When Mahmood Al Yousifi (mahmood.tv) used Google Earth to show the amount of unused land owned by the ruler and unavailable to homeless citizens, the Bahrain government temporarily banned Google Earth.

When Egyptian blogger Wael Abbas got hold of a cell phone video showing police brutality he posted it on his site (Misrdigital.blogspirit.com), forcing for the first time

the Egyptian government to try and convict the policeman in the posted video.

Tunisian blogger Sami Ben Gharbieh, with the help of friends and plane-spotting websites such as airliner.net and planepictures.net, was able to show how the president's jets made frequent visits to major European capitals between 2001-2007 for the Tunisian first lady's shopping trips, as the autocratic president of Tunisia rarely leaves the country.

These individual efforts broke a lot of taboos but also brought governmental wrath that has included frequent arrests and restrictions on bloggers, as well as a variety of nasty efforts against these citizen journalists. But these brave early bloggers became role models for many and paved the way for more established and sustainable alternative media operations.

One of these efforts took place in Jordan, when the first online radio station in the Arab world was established to counter the country's governmental radio monopolies. While AmmanNet.net was established in the fall of 2000 and was focused primarily on local news, it found that its live broadcasts on pro Palestinian demonstrations during the Second Intifada were also of interest to Palestinian FM radio listeners. When Palestinian stations downloaded the signal from the Internet and broadcast it terrestrially, Jordanians were able to hear the broadcast on their car radios and transistors. The Internet was thus instrumental in helping break up a governmental monopoly and eventually opened the way for the licensing of independent and private radio stations.

Facebook and Twitter gave alternative media activists yet another opportunity to circumvent government controls. When the education minister in Jordan made some nasty remarks in his opposition to attempts by public servants to create a teacher's union, a Facebook group was

formed calling for the minister's resignation and within hours attracted thousands of fans. A Jordanian version of twitter (watwet.com) was instrumental in helping AmmanNet to spread breaking news through free SMS messages to thousands of cell phone owners.

The success of media entrepreneurs in using the Internet to circumvent government controls was not without a strong governmental response in most Arab countries. While some countries applied strict proxy restrictions banning locally produced content from being seen by the country's citizens, or carried out brutal crackdown actions, the majority of the Arab regimes decided to join the revolution.

When it became clear that they couldn't totally stop many alternative websites, Arab governments decided to either co-opt existing sites or create their own sites camouflaged as independent sites. In some cases, money was made available, as well as tantalizing local news and various other efforts to give these government sites the appearance of alternative media.

Oppressive governments also used a number of other ways to clamp down on alternative media. Bloggers and media owners faced various bureaucratic problems that included travel bans, imprisonment and in some cases physical punishment. Bad mouthing bloggers and spreading false rumors became the norm in many countries. Governments that depend on large funds from external countries encouraged journalists and other bloggers to attack these independent media activists by claiming that their foreign funding rendered their efforts unpatriotic.

While the jury is still out on whether the IT revolution has strengthened or weakened media freedom efforts, it is clear that there are opportunities, especially for young Arabs who are the majority of the population.

Web surfers were able to find out what was happening in their countries simply by reading what Arab papers outside their own borders were publishing.

While technology has provided the vehicle, the future of free media in the Arab world will require a mix of professionalism, courage and alliance-building. Journalists will have to steer clear of yellow journalism and muster the courage to take on governments and interest groups that prefer to operate in the dark.
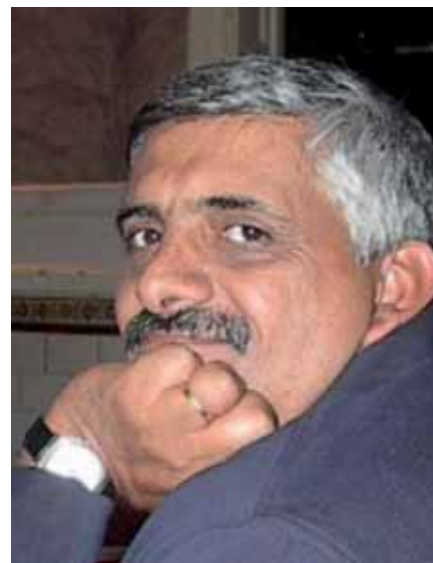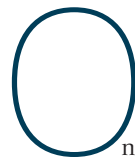

Daoud Kuttab, a former Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University, is the director general of Community Media Network, a media NGO in Jordan and Palestine.

NN24: Birth of an African Channel

By Anthony Dara

This new, 24-hour global news channel serves Nigeria and viewers across Africas with independent information about the country and its people.

On the African continent, entrepreneurs must be tenacious and overtly ingenious to succeed. As professional and complete as it may appear to viewers, NN24 is just out of the starting blocks in its march to be a global news channel from Africa. We can and must grow our coverage and depth. NN24 (Network News 24) is Nigeria's first 24-hour, seven-day-a-week news channel, the channel operates out of Lagos, Nigeria and is distributed via direct to home satellite service by DStv in Nigeria and a number of countries on the continent. The chanel produces its news content, gathers news and information content from CNN Newsource and Reuters.

However the channel aims to produce up to 80 percent of its own content, considering the vast amount of unreported stories in Africa. And it will also establish bureaus in a number of African countries as means of achieving this objective.

When I first mentioned the idea to friends and colleagues, many told me I was a television engineer with an outlandish dream. But I knew the time had come for such an enterprise to be the voice of and for Africans. The progress of Africa and her people has been pushed to the background in almost all areas of media; there is too much emphasis in global media on issues such as famine relief, refugee issues and the intervention of Western military to solve problems, which, incidentally, are often the result of Western meddling in African affairs. As if that is not negative enough, the world often gets distorted information about the successes, failures and dreams of the continent from outside media whose journalists, even when trying hard, are ill-informed about our history and issues.

In 2005, my ambitions for this project were crystallized from reading a BBC article/editorial written by its then country representative in Nigeria, Anna Borzello. She said that Nigeria was so vast, multicultural, and multi-layered in all aspects, that it was impossible to accurately tell stories about the nation. She lamented the misinformation that crept into so many reports. This redirected my initial dream of building a general entertainment television channel.

Our journey took twists and turns through ups and downs, starts and false starts. The intensity of this cannot be over emphasized in the Nigerian business environment. I took for granted there is an electricity issue. But it was, nonetheless, a big shock that we had to provide our own power even at a rented training facility. Think of the irony that one of the world's largest energy producers – oil – can supply but a fraction of the internal power needed to move the country to meet its full potential. Africa needs new enterprises like ours, but the lack of basic infrastructure keeps most in the "dream" stage of development.

NN24 is built on highly skilled and trained manpower, modern technology, sensible budget and low investment risks. First of all, I come from a very strong technological

background, having studied for a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Electronics and Telecommunications and a Bachelors of Science (BSc) in Broadcast Technology. I had the full understanding of "how-it-works" from the outset. And with 16 years of work and experience in broadcasting I saw a credible chance to succeed. I am also privileged to have had the assistance of an ex-vice president of CNN as the tireless and innovative project manager. Kenneth Tiven came on board with me very early in this project.

The NN24 team is young, energetic and fresh. We resisted taking experienced hands. The basic strategy was to give the enterprise the opportunity of an uncompromised beginning devoid of old and bad habits. Our approach with new technology required that we do just that. Our operations are fully digital, automated and the

content we produce is high definition (HD) ready. We have invested heavily in training and capacity building.

Every one of our young Nigerians went through training on how to write stories, report, shoot and edit them. They multi-task in every facet of the job. Their employment contracts stipulate high standards of professionalism and commitment to performance improvement. More importantly, there is zero tolerance for corrupt practices in journalism. We pay the best wages in television in Nigeria as part of this commitment. We also have well defined, simple-to-understand gift policy, a copy of which can be found on our website (www.nn24.tv). NN24 is an affiliate partner of CNN, and through this partnership, staff of the company has the opportunity to attend a CNN Fellowship for three weeks at its USA headquarters in Atlanta.

Our business model is designed so that the cost of operation is covered by income through advertisement and sponsorship. The concept is built around low margin on large volume and we pre-sold a block of time to an ad-buy agency to guarantee income for the first three years. This model makes the company quite viable. This was accomplished before the investment drive. Investors in Nigeria were happy to commit money to the project.

We have a staff strength of 120 people selected from nearly 5,000 who applied for jobs. It took us about twelve months go on air and the unintended consequence of the delays was that from day one we looked grown up. Our output has been quite remarkable, and thousands of SMS messages confirm the happy disbelief of so many Nigerians that this is really a Nigerian channel on the DStv distribution platform.

Two days after going on air on the 3 May 2010, we reported the death of the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. For many TV viewers we broke the news first. We have 24 news bulletins every day at the top of the hour. At half past the hour we produce other news programmes in sports, entertainment, documentary and business. They cover a lot about Nigeria and the rest of the continent. And very importantly, all stories we bring to viewers, whether local or international, we do so with an African perspective. We are grouped on DST with the international news channels, where we belong, and our viewers seem to agree.

Just a few months after launching in Nigeria, NN24 received pan-African distribution via DStv and we are expanding distribution to the rest of the world. Work is in progress on the NN24 website and also in development is an NN24 mobile phone application for iPhones, Blackberry and Android devices.

The initial quality must be sustained and improved. We are in the precarious situation of managing the high expectations of people who believe we have saved the industry, at least in Nigeria, from the low standards of television both privately and publicly owned. Following launch, many of the television stations have improved their quality, some are changing programme styles and daring to try new ways. The regulators point to us as an example of how television should be done.

The human angle stories are a hit with our viewers. We have been surprised that no one has complained about the lack of government propaganda, which dominates traditional Nigerian media. We have been hard hitting with investigative reporting, coverage of human rights issues, justice, development and seeking answers from people in positions of authority across all sectors – public and private – about their actions and inactions. We seek and report public opinion on issues of the day . News in Nigeria is heavily centered in favour of who is doing what in government and politics. Most television news you get in Nigeria is by state broadcasters and they will not say anything negative about people in government. Content is heavy on commissioning of roads, unfurnished hospital buildings, schools, etc. Our viewers are happy that we cover stories of the ordinary people.

We have done things our way, it has not been business as usual. It amazes people that, unlike the practice in so many media organisations in Nigeria, we refuse to take or give money for stories we report. Importantly, the editorial team is very independent of the management of the business. The structure does not allow me as the Chief Executive of the company to influence what news is carried and what is not. The newsroom decides and in every case it upholds the tenet of hearing all sides to be equal on all sides.

On our logo in between the 2 and 4 is a cube. The cube is equal on all sides: equal to all and that is what we strive to do. The colour of the logo, silver and red, symbolises the silver-lining of hope and prosperity over the dark cloud, while red is for the constant struggle of the African.

I truly hope that NN24 after 60 years of world press freedom will become the beacon of hope for the continent in the mainstream media of the world. We will not shy away from the fact and reality of the African situation of corruption, war, famine, bad governance as it exists everywhere in the world, but we will put these in the right and non-demonising context as the case has often been. We are mindful that Al Jazeera English and the growing number of news channels have expanded coverage of global issues, East and West, in rich and poor nations.

Good things are happening in Africa. The 2010 World Cup held in South Africa has been adjudged the best so far! Corruption is being punished in Nigeria today. Only a handful of African countries now have undemocratic leadership. Africa is on the move and NN24 will march in step with this spirit.

Anthony Dara is the founder and Chief Executive of NN24. Born in Bwari, Nigeria and a broadcast engineer by training, Dara has worked in the newsroom environment and has been involved with journalism for many years.

Tracking the New York Rangers Hockey Team from Toyko: A Personal Tale of Media Consumption

By Takashi Tanemura

As important as mobile devices and other digital delivery mechanisms are to news consumers in Japan, the print editions of newspapers remain a highly valued source of both scanning and deep reading.

As a boy growing up in a country where my native language was almost non-existent, it was very difficult to get an idea what was going on. Before moving to New York, I remember reading the sports sections of newspapers as a first grader in Japan. But in the early 70s, with no satellite transmission available to print newspapers from overseas, subscribing to hometown newspapers was too expensive for the average Japanese household in New York.

As I started to learn English, I remember clipping an article from the newspaper and writing a short summary to explain it in class as homework every week. As I recall, sports were not allowed and my parents' New York Times subscription put me in a tougher spot than the kids who were able to clip articles from the city's easier-to-understand tabloids. Still, it was a very good way for me to get started with news.

By the time I moved back to Tokyo, I was 11 years old and still had a passion for New York sports teams. In the days before the Internet, following them from Tokyo was not easy. The only medium available for free was the Far East Network, part of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network, so that was where I went for the US sports news.

Fast-forward 10 years to when I started working: News became a part of my daily life. At breakfast, I was getting news from television through my ears while my eyes were on the newspaper. I was commuting from my parents' home, so I was on the train for 30-40 minutes every weekday and did some reading when I was not too tired.

The first change in my news consumption habits came when many cable operators spread their service with the launch of satellite broadcasting. CNN started their international service and a couple of domestic media groups started a 24-hour news channel. The penetration was low in Japan, but my residential area had a service and we subscribed to it, making news available 24/7.

Next came the Internet, of course, followed by mobile. NTT Docomo started the mobile Web service called "i-mode" in Japan and the content providers were able to charge their content on Docomo's phone bills. News outlets developed services tailored for small screens, and getting news on the go became an instant hit. When Japanese carriers provided a fixed price Internet connection on their mobile services, consumers were able to access the Internet without fear of being charged a big data transmission fee. The richness
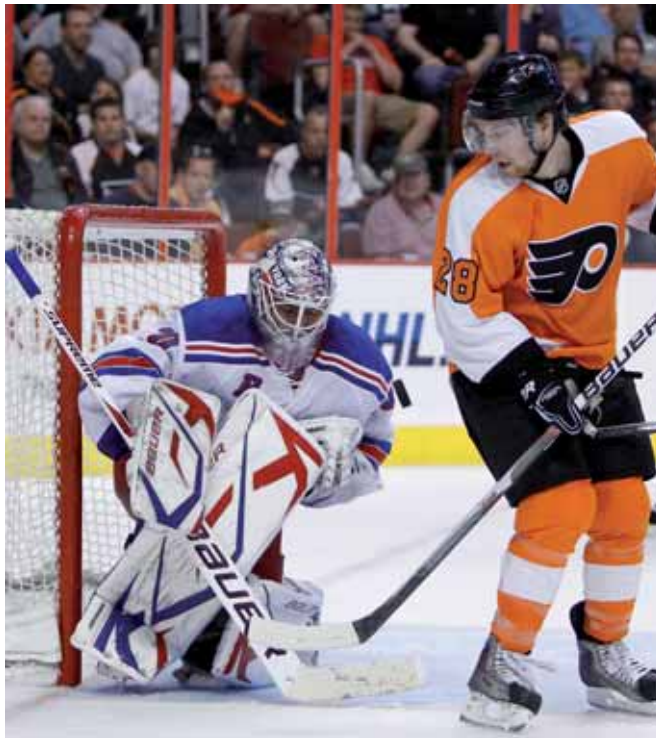
and quality of the content improved dramatically.

The latest twist is smart phones. They made mobile computing possible and web services like Twitter and Facebook became easier to update and read real time in a mobile environment. One of the general interest newspapers in Japan, Sankei Shimbun, has an iPhone app that enables users to browse the paper's print layout.

How have all these tools and new technology altered the way I get my news? Well, it has changed the way I track the New York Rangers. Online, I'm able to access most of the New York newspapers' sports sections and to read specialized publications about the team. My RSS feed means I don't even have to visit newspaper sites to check the beat writers' blogs anymore.

But the biggest change in my media consumption had more to do with my commute to work than any changes in technology. By moving into the center of the city, my time on the train dropped from 40 minutes to just eight minutes. Since the train is usually crowded in the morning, I don't want to bother taking something from my briefcase to read. Instead, I pull my phone from my pocket and do my daily Sudoku, assuming I'm able to put down my brief-

case. If not, doing nothing at all for eight minutes isn't so bad.

In the four years I spent at the Nikkei Media Lab, I got a look at some of the assumptions about – and actual behavior of – other news consumers in Japan.

For starters, we assumed there would be a lot of customization and personalization of news – just like that viral Web video, EPIC 2014, predicted with depiction of a Googlezon future. After the video was posted (by former Poynter interns Robin Sloan and Matt Thompson), we gathered some industry professionals to discuss it before we put together some ongoing research to test some of EPIC's ideas. In addition to personalization and customization, we thought people would take advantage of easy-to-use Web tools to do a lot of commenting about the news and writing their own pieces. In the three years we conducted this research (2005-2007) in Japan, it just didn't happen.

Two dimensions of news consumption appeared especially valued by readers and users. In an era when you can find all sorts of information online, the judgment of experienced editors about what is really important becomes especially valuable. Serendipity is also important – the chance

to discover news you never knew to look for on your own. In addition, reading news that's selected by professionals puts you in touch with the current topics everybody is reading and talking about. That factor is often overlooked in a lot of the talk about customization.

Our new online service, The Nikkei Online Edition, has a customization function called "My NIKKEI". It recommends news based on your reading habits as well as such demographics as age, job and industry. As essential as we believed this service would be, our user surveys and access logs tell another story. It has not become very popular in our service. We need to promote this feature more effectively, but our surveys indicate that our readers want to read the same information that is in the print newspapers.

Along the way, we've learned that a newspaper company's role is the same in the digital era as it has always been. Readers want the judgment from the newspaper company so they can be on the same page with every other reader. Our surveys showed that the main purpose of subscribing to our digital service is to read the same contents from the print edition on a digital device. Although we provided digital features like search, clipping and scrap/save,

they were not the main reasons users subscribed.

From The Poynter Institute's "Eyetracking the News" study, I learned that a newspaper reader is either a scanner or a reader. The print newspaper of today is the ultimate product that has been upgraded constantly for the last hundred years. It saves the scanners time as they get a handle of what's going on in the world. It's also a platform that seems to give readers the feeling that they have some time to spend with it.

How might news consumption change over the next decade?

The former chief of the Nikkei Media Lab told us that he doesn't scan the newspaper himself anymore. He relies on his community in Mixi, the largest Japanese social network service. If there's an important article in today's Nikkei, someone mentions it on the bulletin board and he follows up and reads the story. He says that's a time-saver for him, but I'm not sure his calculations include time spent on the bulletin board.

The wisdom of relying on friends to scan the news for you has a lot to do with the news you're looking for – and how much trust you have in those friends. If you're not sure of your own capacity – or your friends' – to filter your news diet, then I'd say a newspaper company saves you time by at least getting you the minimum information that you need.

Mobile devices are leading to some interesting changes among our customers. To save time, many of them scan the print edition at home in the morning and read the stories that they found interesting on their mobile devices during their commutes. With short, summarized news formats developed for smart phones, the reverse pattern might also take hold – with readers scanning on their mobiles and relying on print editions for more extended reading.

In fact, as important as new media is to the distribution of news in Japan, digital technology has a long way to go to catch up with the role of printed newspapers. Sure, I'd be out of luck tracking the Rangers if I had to rely on the sports section of the newspaper that shows up on my doorstep every morning. To tell you the truth, though, there just aren't that many Rangers fans in my Toyko neighborhood.

Although it sometimes seems that the ascension of digital is not that far away, replacing the prized product – the printed newspaper – might need more time than you think.

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10 Waypoints Tagged to the Future of News

By Bill Mitchell

As I finished reading this final chapter, I found myself visualizing pins on a map.

Some mark the datelines of stories recounted here. Others show the taglines from the top of those articles, each suggesting a waypoint for navigating the future of news.

Reviewing those tags revealed no single, overriding theme. Indeed, our attempt to pull common threads from the essays produced a list of tags several score in length. No main highway, in other words, but signposts for many still emerging routes for news.

I've selected 10 tags, or themes, that appear to be most important for the target audience of this report – the women and men leading media enterprises of various shapes and sizes around the world. Some of the tags mentioned below are listed frequently in the report, others just once or twice.

Your list of critical themes – and questions – will be different. Here's mine:

1. Processed: It sounds awfully industrial, but as news in various forms becomes more abundant, the remaining scarcity – and value – lies in what journalists do with it. Most of the following tags flow from that notion – processing the raw material of news into services and products that hold real value to various stakeholders.

The Web has enhanced the distribution of unprocessed information, too, and Juanita León describes the value of such original data and documents in her essay about La Silla Vacía, the startup news site she runs from Bogotá. Paul Bradshaw describes a model that starts with data and adds value with computer processing and the sort of sophisticated analysis that newsrooms need to "skill up" on. What's the most important new process you and your team need to get good at?

2. Partnered: As Endy Bayuni points out, "In this…wired world, professional journalists have to share the field." That creates opportunity for alliances that can (a) enhance the information they provide, (b) avoid pointless duplication, (c) keep costs low and (d) stay in business. Some of these partnerships will involve individual readers, viewers, listeners and users anxious to volunteer their efforts; others will involve deals with NGOs, universities and competitors. Partnerships you haven't considered but might?

3. Linked: It's the heart of the Web, of course, but its potential remains mostly unrealized by news organizations. What would it take to become the leading network of networks in your community?

4. Engaged: Many news organizations are doing a better job of engaging their audiences, partly by accepting the contributions of time and talent volunteered in the form of crowdsourcing, user-generated content and social media. But there's opportunity for a next step in engagement, getting journalism closer to its ultimate purpose of serving civic life. That's the linkage between news and action: How can you do a better job helping users transform the news you provide into action required to govern themselves well?

5. Innovated: The report includes many examples of new initiatives by media organizations around the world. As Dan Gillmor points out, "You can innovate by being more efficient or thorough, not just by inventing new technologies… Innovators often connect dots where others can't imagine the connections." If your organization were really focused on innovation, what dots might the entrepreneurs in your midst help you connect?

6. Independent: This word shows up frequently in the preceding pages, reflecting a core value linked to the credibility of news. To the extent journalists are able to maintain their independence, they enhance their ability to maintain their primary allegiance to

their audiences. As journalism changes, it's hardly surprising that users wonder where journalists' loyalties lie. How will you make clear to your audiences just where you stand?

7. Trusted: Users place their highest trust in content that's recommended by people they trust. That content includes news, analysis, and advertised products, among other things. How will you help your customers learn what's trusted by their friends and neighbors? How will you earn more of their trust in what you and your colleagues produce?

8. Investigated: Investigative reporting represents one of journalism's most refined processes: it requires extraordinary expertise to sift meaning from raw data and info too jumbled or concealed to make sense otherwise. Investigative reporting remains a franchise that professional journalists are well positioned to lead, especially with help from their audiences. How might you collaborate with users on investigations into the most critical issues facing your communities?

9. Trained: None of the above will happen magically. Staff members and contributors alike need new skills. Rajesh Kalra urges training for citizen journalists "that would not only ensure that selection of topics is relevant, but (that) quality can be maintained." How will you and your users get the training required for good and profitable answers to the questions in this list?

10. Sustained: Done right, all of the above will create substantial new value to users, advertisers and other stakeholders. What's the linkage, in your operations, between the sort of innovation suggested above and your bottom line?

Making progress in these areas will not be easy, especially in countries without a strong tradition of independent media. Several of the essays describe some early progress, highlighted by a few more pins on the map:

● **Lagos,** where NN24, Nigeria's first 24-hour news channel, is focusing on people as opposed to institutions, challenging local traditions by excluding both advertisers and the station's CEO (our author, Anthony Dara) from any decisions about news coverage.

● **Shanghai,** where reporter Qiu Ziming's aggressive reporting about a major manufacturing company prompted local authorities, at the request of the company, to issue a warrant for Qiu's ar-

rest. Six days later, Yuen-ying Chan reports that fierce objections from Chinese bloggers and journalists led police to drop the warrant and apologize.

● **Rangoon,** where correspondents for Mizzima News work at great risk, filing reports surreptitiously to editors based in India, Thailand and Bangladesh. Mizzima's accounts of life inside Burma show how digital tools can be used "to evade authoritarian controls, both in gathering information and delivering it to those who need it most," reports Soe Myint.

Our speculation about the future of news should be informed, and humbled, by the track record of previous prognosticators. Not all of our hunches have played out quite the way we expected they would.

At Grocott's Mail, a small paper in South Africa, editor Stephen Lang expected that "civic activism" would motivate the citizen journalism made possible by a grant from the Knight Foundation. In fact, he found that "the driving force for citizen journalists in our area is the prospect of gainful employment."

In Japan, Takashi Tanemura reports that Nikkei's media researchers expected to find significant user interest in customized and personalized news. Instead, they were surprised to find readers of online news mostly interested in getting the same news that their friends and neighbors were reading in print editions.

Speaking of surprises, what surprised me most about these 42 essays is the impact they've had on my own view of journalism's future.

I still believe our profession faces a chaotic transition. Exactly how people will get the news and information they need remains an open question.

But the report has shown me how some of the chaos is giving way to clarity, revealing a global media landscape where the news about news is not so much bleak as breaking, revealing innovative approaches – especially in the ten areas highlighted above -- that are starting to grab some traction.

We're entering an exciting new chapter of a fast-moving, high-stakes story. Its promise is beginning to outweigh its peril.

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