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Journalism Education is the journal of the Association for Journalism Education a body representing educators in HE in the UK and Ireland. The aim of the journal is to promote and develop analysis and understanding of journalism education and of journalism, particularly when that is related to journalism education.

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Contributors

Ann Luce

Dr. Ann Luce is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism and Communication at Bournemouth University. She is the Programme Leader for the BA in Communication and Media and also teaches across the multi-media journalism degree. Her main research interests are representations of suicide, mental illness and trauma and how journalism students today learn. She currently serves on the MeCCSA Disability Studies network and is a former award-winning US newspaper and online journalist. aluce@bournemouth.ac.uk. 44 1202 962340

Mathew Charles

Mr. Mathew Charles is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism and Documentary at Bournemouth University. He is an award winning documentary maker and a former BBC reporter, where he worked mainly for BBC Breakfast and the BBC News Channel. He is a fellow of the International Journalists' Programme and is a recipient of the George-Weidenfeld bursary. He is in the third year of his PhD investigating how journalists report violence in Colombia and Central America. mcharles@bournemouth.ac.uk. 44 1202 965394

Mick Temple

Mick Temple is Professor of Journalism & Politics at Staffordshire University. His single-authored books include *The British Press* **(2008),** *Blair* **(2006) and** *How Britain Works: From Ideology to Output Politics* **(2000). He has published extensively on many areas of politics and the media, including recent articles in Political Studies, New Perspective and Politics. He broadcasts regularly on current affairs for radio and television, and is an election night analyst for BBC Midlands TV. Mick is a convenor for the Media & Politics group of the Political Studies Association, a former AJE chair, and one of the co-editors of Journalism Education.**

Chris Frost

Chris Frost is Professor of Journalism at Liverpool John Moores University in the UK and has been a journalist, editor and journalism educator for more than 40 years. He is chair of the Association for Journalism Education, chair of the National Union of Journalist's Ethics Council, an NUJ National Executive Council member and a National Council member of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. He also sits on the NUJ's Professional Training Committee. He is a former President of the National Union of Journalists and a former member of the Press Council. He has written several books on Journalism: *Journalism Ethics and Regulation* **(now in production for the fourth edition);** *Designing for Newspapers and Magazines* **(now in a second edition);** *Reporting for Journalists* **(now in its second edition); and** *Media Ethics and Self-Regulation* **as well as numerous refereed papers and book chapters.**

Liz Hannaford

Liz Hannaford joined Manchester Metropolitan University as it launched its new BA in Multimedia Journalism in September 2014 to run alongside its established Masters journalism programme. She has also taught at the University of Salford. Before starting her academic career, Liz spent 15 years working in BBC World Service News and Current Affairs presenting and producing live programmes and features from around the world, including 12 months based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. She is the founder and co-organiser of HacksHackersManchester.

Guy Hodgson

Dr Guy Hodgson is a senior lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University who worked as a journalist, including for The Independent and the BBC, for 35 years. Prior to working in Liverpool, he was a senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Central Lancashire and was Head of Media at the University of Chester for four years. He published a book in 2015 entitled: *War Torn: Manchester, its Newspapers and the Luftwaffe's Blitz of 1940* **and his research interests include newspaper history, propaganda, war and censorship**

Lily Canter

Dr Lily Canter is a principal lecturer and subject group leader for journalism at Sheffield Hallam University. She teaches on a range of practical and academic modules ranging from online journalism skills to research method and ethics. Her research interests include local and hyperlocal media, digital journalism, social media and journalism training. She continues to work as a freelance journalist building on her experience working as a reporter and features editor in the regional press. Her other passion is film and she chair of film festival Film Northants.

Pradeep Nair

Pradeep Nair PhD, is Associate Professor and Dean, School of Journalism, Mass Communication and New Media (SoJMC&NM) at Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala, India. His teaching interests include communication research, development communication, health governance and critical theory. His scholarly work is grounded in a nuanced understanding of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary engagement. His research studies talks about the strategic utilization of various participatory communication strategies to facilitate the process of development by accompanying the local development dynamics at community level. Ph. No. +91-98166-00218. E-mail: nairdevcom@yahoo.co.in

Harikrishnan Bhaskaran

Harikrishnan Bhaskaran is Assistant Professor at the Department of Journalism and Creative Writing, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala, India. He worked with The New Indian Express, Kerala as a Staff Correspondent before joining academics.

Navneet Sharma

Navneet Sharma, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education, School of Education, Central University of Himachal Pradesh. His research interest has a wide array from philosophy of education to its praxis in various forms. His core grounding in philosophy and education motivates him to look for and appreciate every educational initiative.

Articles

All papers in the Articles section are peer reviewed and discuss the latest research in journalism and journalism education. These are intended to inform, educate and spark debate and discussion. Please join in this debate by going to www.journalism-education.org to have your say and find out what others think.

Computational Journalism in the UK newsroom: hybrids or specialists?

Liz Hannaford, Manchester Metropolitain University

Abstract:

As new forms of multimedia, data-driven storytelling are produced by news organisations around the world, programming skills are increasingly required in newsrooms to conduct data analysis and create interactive tools and news apps. This has prompted some universities to combine journalism courses with computer skills and there is much hype about the emergence of hybrid programmer-journalists, journo-coders, journo-devs who are equally proficient writing code and copy. To date, most of the academic research into computational journalism in the newsroom has been restricted to the United States where studies suggest a model whereby the roles of journalist and programmer are merged. There is, therefore, a need to identify the extent to which this organisational

model is replicated in newsrooms in other parts of the world. This paper is an exploratory study into two news organisations in the UK – the BBC and the Financial Times – to investigate the extent to which journalism skills and programming skills are being combined and the different professional identities being created. This study finds that the journalists and programmers are considered as two distinct professions and the idea of a hybrid role is rejected by the newsroom staff interviewed. A new model is identified in the newsroom whereby teams consisting of journalists, programmers and designers work closely together on interactive, data-driven projects. These findings are valuable to journalism educators in that they identify the technical skills and attitudes required by journalists working on innovative storytelling formats.

Introduction:

As journalism loses its traditional dependency on the medium of paper and becomes a digital enterprise (Hamilton & Turner, 2009; Jacobson, 2012, p. 5; Steensen, 2011), computational techniques have led to major new developments in the field of journalism and journalistic expression (Cohen, Hamilton, & Turner, 2011; Flew, 2012, Spurgeon, Daniel, & Swift, 2012; Jacobson, 2012; Lewis & Usher, 2014).

Journalism's digital era is no longer just about finding efficiencies to replicate traditional models of newsgathering and storytelling – PCs to replace typewriters, for example (Flew et al. 2012) The new digital era is about using computer technology to extract, analyse and visualise data (Gray, Chambers, & Bounegru, 2012; Nygren & Appelgren, 2013) or using programming skills to build news applications such as maps, interactive multimedia stories, tools to explore data (Jacobson, 2012; McAdams, 2014; Royal, 2010); or even creating online news games enabling the audience to play, for example, at being the protagonist in a news story in order to better understand a complex organisation (Bogost, Ferrari, & Schweizer, 2010).

Usually the term "computational journalism" is used to encompass this range of techniques and developments (Cohen et al., 2011; Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014; Lewis & Usher, 2014). But what is less clear is who should be doing the computational journalism in the newsroom and what should we call those carrying it out. Is a new generation of programmer-journalists emerging? Do all journalists need to acquire programming skills? These are important questions that directly affect all those who are involved in journalism education. Do our students need to ditch shorthand and learn to code instead?!

There is much excited talk in the United States of the rise of the journo-coder, programmer-journalist, hacker-journalist, journo-programmer - the terminology is undecided (Pilhofer, 2010).

Indeed, 'Why all your students must be programmers' was the provocative title of one of the liveliest panel discussions at the August 2013 Conference for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in Washington, D.C. On Twitter, it was dubbed the #AEJMCBattleRoyale (Hernandez, 2013).

Already, some institutions are combining journalism and computer science programmes (Cohen et al., 2011). Notable amongst these is the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism (together with the Tow Center for Digital Journalism) which offers a dual degree in Journalism and Computer Science the stated goal of which "is for its graduates to help redefine journalism in a fast-changing digital media environment." (Columbia Journalism School, 2014).

Here in the UK, some of the top journalism schools have also introduced computing into their courses. Most recently, the University of Cardiff launched a Masters in Computational Journalism in 2014 which aims to "enable students to acquire specialist knowledge of journalism and computer science." (Cardiff School of Journalism, 2014)

However, there is frustration that the "should journalists learn to code?" debate has become meaningless (Veltman, 2013) because of a failure to define what "coding" actually means in a journalistic context. For some, it can only ever mean expertise in programming languages such as JavaScript, Python etc. For other, it seems to mean little more than advanced computer literacy. Very little research has explored the extent to which journalists in newsrooms are actually using programming skills, if at all. Some research has been carried out in American newsrooms, notably by Cindy Royal (2010) at the New York Times, and more recent research has been conducted in Norwegian newsrooms by Joakim Karlsen and Eirik Stavelin (2014). But none has yet been carried out in a British context although British news organisations have been very dynamic in innovating in this area of journalistic activity (Gray et al., 2012). It seems that as universities increasingly offer their journalism students courses that include some level of computational skills, it would be useful to explore and analyse what actually happens in newsrooms and there is room for more study in this area (Anderson, 2012).

This paper is a small-scale exploratory study which investigates computational journalism in the specialist units of two newsrooms in the UK, namely the BBC and Financial Times. It addresses the following research questions:-

Q1 – Does the hybrid journo-coder/programmer-journalist model exist in UK newsrooms? If not, what alternative model is being implemented?

Q2 – What technical skills are required of journalists working in the field of computational journalism and how are these acquired?

Definitions

As mentioned above, definitions and terminology in this field are still disputed and undetermined (Gynnild, 2013). Much of the literature concerned with computational journalism seeks to locate it in a historical context with a natural, evolutionary development. The consensus is that computational journalism has its roots in the "precision journalism" described by Philip Meyer in his 1973 book of that name. Indeed, in the latest edition of the book, Meyer reveals that Newsweek had described him as a "computer reporter" five years before his book was published (Meyer, 2002). Meyer's emphasis, however, is primarily on the application of social science methods to journalism and therefore is associated strongly with investigative journalism. Mainframe computers were the tool which enabled him to store and analyse scientifically the huge amounts of data he collected. This is usually referred to as Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR) and its history has been well-documented (Flew et al., 2012; Parasie & Dagiral, 2012).

The more contemporary practice, data journalism, has evolved from CAR but Bounegru (in Gray et al., 2012) argues there is debate as to the extent to which the two have diverted. Unlike CAR, Data Journalism is not solely concerned with investigative journalism but can be used to find or

enhance a wide range of stories (Gray et al., 2012; Mair & Keeble, 2014). Bounegru concludes that data journalism is best seen as an evolution of the CAR tradition but the emphasis on the word "data" is significant in that it recognises a new era of journalism epitomised by the volume of data freely available to all (Bounegru in Gray et al., 2012)

Others have described the way in which CAR has evolved into Computational Journalism by utilising Web 2.0 technology which allows for new forms of journalistic storytelling such as multimedia, interactive features as well as journalistic investigation (Flew et al., 2012; Hamilton & Turner, 2009; McAdams, 2014). The significant implication here is that whereas CAR (and data journalism) was largely carried out by people who solely identified as journalists, computational journalism brings technologists and journalists together to develop new tools and interactive storytelling techniques (Flew et al., 2012; Lewis & Usher, 2014). Sometimes the end product will not be a traditional story, but a tool that allows the audience to use the data to answer questions of personal interest (Parasie & Dagiral, 2012).

Meanwhile, Gynnild (2013) draws attention to the difficulty of defining this evolving field and points out that the terminology is not keeping up with the speed of innovation and change. Her list of the new terminology that has emerged in the 21st century is indicative of the problem of trying to find meaningful and widely-accepted definitions:-

"data journalism, data-driven journalism, computational journalism, journalism as programming, programming as journalism, open-source movement, and news applications." (Gynnild, 2013, p. 5)

Gynnild herself suggests the term Computer Exploration in Journalism (CEJ) to describe an approach of "journalistic co-creation" using algorithms, data and social science methods in reporting and storytelling (Gynnild, 2013). However, this term has not been adopted more widely.

The term "computational journalism" seems the most useful in that it is broad enough to embrace the full range of activities discussed above.

Literature Review

Since the computerisation of newsrooms, technology issues have become a major area of focus for newsroom studies (Boczkowski, 2004). This has given rise to two conflicting theoretical frameworks. The first stresses a determinist approach, as emphasised by Pavlik (2000), who asserted that "Journalism has always been shaped by technology" (Pavlik, 2000, p.229). A similar technological determinism is suggested by McNair (1998) who writes that "the form and content of journalism is crucially determined by the available technology of newsgathering, production and dissemination" (McNair, 1998, p.125). Bardoel and Deuze (2001) are more cautious claiming that, whilst there is a strong deterministic component, technology itself is not the sole determining factor in changes to journalism (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001)

The second, contrasting approach is to reject the idea of technological determinism as an unhelpfully simplistic way of explaining changes to newsroom practice (Cottle & Ashton, 1999; Örnebring, 2010). Instead, more recent academic research has adopted a sociological framework (Boczkowski, 2004; Schudson, 2005). Michael Schudson's "Sociology of News production," first published in 1989 but revised several times since then, has been influential in focusing attention on the newsroom as a complex sociological construct, the dynamics of which affect the way in which technological developments are adopted (Schudson, 1989, 2005). This has influenced much of the subsequent research work on computational journalism in newsrooms. Anderson (2013) applies Schudson's four classic perspectives on the sociology of news – political, economic, organisational and cultural - to computational journalism, adding two more of his own – technological and institutional (Anderson, 2013). He notes the need for further research into "the social organization of news-work" (Schudson, 2005) in order to understand the "ground-level newsroom dynamics" of computational journalism and explore potential differences between ethnographies of digital newsrooms over a period of time (Anderson, 2013, p.1014).

One of the most comprehensive empirical studies of how new technologies are adopted in newsrooms is Boczkowski's (2004) research into three online newsrooms in the United States (Boczkowski, 2004). In strongly rejecting the determinist approach, the author focuses on the process of adoption, arguing that newsrooms' appropriation of new multimedia and interactive technologies is related to variations in organisational structures, work practices, and representations of the end-user (Boczkowski, 2004). Following in this tradition of rejecting determinism, Weiss and Domingo (2010) propose that networks and hierarchies in the newsroom influence innovation and they use Actor Network Theory and the meta-theoretical approach of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) to explain the relationship between journalists and technology (Weiss & Domingo, 2010). In particular, the Communities of Practice approach is used to explain how knowledge is gained and shared within the social environment of the newsroom as new technologies are learnt and adopted.

These socio-organisational approaches would seem to offer rich opportunities for exploring the variations in the way computational journalism is incorporated into newsrooms and the delineation/description of job roles. They also offer opportunities for comparisons to be made across national boundaries and between news organisations of different sizes (Fink & Anderson, 2014).

A parallel strand of scholarly work has sought to position computational journalism in the field of journalistic practices as a whole. Much of the initial research in this regard has been conspicuous in its optimism, claiming that the multi-disciplinary approach of computational journalism could ultimately lower the costs of watchdog reporting making it easier to hold governments to account (Cohen et al., 2011; Hamilton & Turner, 2009). Similarly, Flew et al (2012) claim that computational journalism increases opportunities for producing quality news at high speed and reduced cost, adding "real value to journalistic knowledge production" (Flew et al., 2012, p.168).

However, a criticism of these analyses is that they have been overly-optimistic, based mainly on speculative future-gazing. They tend to rely on analysis of the journalistic output produced by computational journalism without questioning how computational techniques might challenge the philosophical orientation of newswork or the social organisation of the newsroom (Anderson, 2013; Lewis & Usher, 2013).

Powers (2012) addresses some of these problems by investigating how journalists themselves discuss new technologies in news production. He suggests that journalists discuss changes in the technology of news production in three distinct ways:-

- part of a continuum of evolving journalistic practice
- threats to be subordinated
- the basis for journalistic reinvention (Powers, 2012).

Whilst the study is limited in its use of published articles rather than interviews with working journalists whose views might be less extreme, it does raise the important issue of the epistemological challenges that data-driven, computational practices can present in traditional newsrooms, a point overlooked by some of the optimists discussed above.

Although there has been academic interest in computational journalism for some years, there have been very few empirical studies of journalists and programmers working in newsrooms in this field. The earliest example of such a study is Cindy Royal's 2010 case study of the interactive news technology department at the New York Times (Royal, 2010). Drawing on a social meaning of news framework, Royal conducted an ethnographic observation of the department combining physical observation with lengthy interviews with key protagonists. Her research found that the technologists she interviewed identified their work as journalistic with a strong editorial element - "as fluent in journalism as they were in coding" (Royal, 2010, p.3) - suggesting the idea of a hybrid job-role combining both skill sets. Royal found that the culture of the department was rooted in the open-source, hacker culture which strongly influenced the newswork produced. Most of the interviewees described themselves as essentially self-taught enthusiasts who felt that media

education should therefore inspire students to become problem-solvers rather than simply teaching them to code (Royal, 2010). Whilst this research provides a very important starting point for further empirical studies, a drawback of this approach is its focus solely on the New York Times newsroom as a means for developing general theories. There are reasons to suspect that the NYT department at this time was atypical being under the strong leadership of the highly influential pioneer in computational journalism, Aron Pilhofer. There is a need, therefore, to see how Royal's findings compare with other newsrooms in different contexts.

Parasie and Dagiral (2012) focus their study on the city of Chicago, looking specifically at what they term "programmer-journalists" (Parasie & Dagiral, 2012). They use a combination of qualitative research interviews and quantitative news content analysis to examine the impact of bringing programmers into the newsroom to work on data-driven news projects. This study is significant in that it suggests that bringing programmers into newsrooms challenges the epistemologies of journalism because the methods and background of these "programmer-journalists" rest in the hacker culture which differs acutely from traditional CAR journalists'. Although the study is limited, as acknowledged by the authors, in being focused just on Chicago, their findings confirm the fears expressed by many journalists in Matthew Powers' study discussed above (Powers, 2012). Specifically, Parasie and Dagiral conclude that programmers place great emphasis on granularity of data rather than statistical analysis and storytelling as practiced by traditional journalists.

A major limitation of the research discussed so far is that it focuses almost exclusively on the United States. Whilst this is understandable in that much of the innovation in this field has taken place in the States, it is a weakness if we want to understand the processes whereby computational journalism has been adopted in newsrooms and derive hypotheses. An attempt at a broader approach is made by Weber and Rall (2013) who interviewed experts - a mixture of journalists, designers and developers - involved in the production of data-driven interactive news products in eight media companies - five in Germany, two in Switzerland and one in the USA (the New York Times again) (Weber & Rall, 2013). They noted a stark contrast between the European and American examples. In Germany and Switzerland, there was a clear definition of separate roles for journalist and programmer/designer. The journalist was responsible for the research and content of the news product with the programmer and designer responsible for the visual/interactive element. At the New York Times, in contrast, the programmers considered themselves to be journalists and were also involved in research and content, as found by Royal (2010). The authors hypothesise, therefore, that the key "success factor" in computational journalism is for each team member to think and act like a journalist (Weber & Rall, 2013, p.170). This "holistic approach," they claim, is what makes the New York Times a role model in this field. However, the authors' hypothesis rests on an assumption that the New York Times does indeed represent best practice and a role model without explaining how this is the case. In such a small study, it seems simplistic to make such a strong claim.

Using the Aristotelian concept of techne to frame and analyse their findings, Karlsen and Stavelin conducted a relatively small study into computational journalism in Norwegian newsrooms (Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014). The authors use the term "journalist-programmers" to describe those working in computational journalism in Norway who combine journalistic skills with programming skills (Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014, p.37). Elsewhere in the study the authors discuss journalists and developers working in teams so it is unclear how many of the nine people interviewed for this study were indeed self-described hybrid journalist-programmers or what level of skill they had in programming. It is therefore difficult to draw direct comparisons with other studies. However, the study does claim to support Royal's (2010) findings that all those interviewed who were working in computational journalism saw themselves first and foremost as journalists.

This review so far has examined the literature concerning computational journalism in the specific social organisation of the newsroom. But beyond the newsroom, there is growing scholarly interest in new forms of digital media and production which exist at the periphery of what might still be called journalism and it is useful to include a brief analysis of this "emerging techno-journalistic space" (Ananny & Crawford, 2015, p. 192) because of its implications for the future development of computational journalism and, thus, for journalism education. These studies have explored the extent to which journalism and technology can merge into what some see as a hybrid culture whereby journalism is defined as an ideology rather than a distinct profession (Deuze, 2005). Here, the idea of hybrid journalist-programmers seems well accepted, an inevitable evolution even as news is reinvented for the internet age,

> "working in a space between technology design and journalism, influenced by both but not entirely beholden to either as they create systems that gather, sort, rank, and circulate news" (Ananny & Crawford, 2015, p. 204)

This intersection of journalism and technology is further explored by Lewis and Usher (2014) in their two year qualitative study of the global Hacks/Hackers organisation – an informal, grassroots network of journalists ("hacks") and technologists ("hackers") whose stated aim is to explore the future of news and information (Hacks and Hackers, 2010). The authors use the concept of "trading zones theory" (Galison, 1997, cited in Lewis & Usher, 2014) to argue that informal relationship-building is an important part of the process of bringing journalism and technology together, leading to the emergence of a shared language between distinct professional groups (Lewis & Usher, 2014). However, the study found that most Hacks/Hackers chapters lacked the institutional support identified in the trading zone concept and this led to frequent misunderstandings and differences of priorities between the journalists and technologists. That there is an urgent need for journalists to learn the language of technology and for journalism schools to address this is a recurrent theme in the recent literature (Doherty, 2012; Jacobson, 2012; Royal, 2010; Weber & Rall, 2013).

This review of the literature highlights the need for more empirical research into newsroom practice in the UK context – a gap which this paper attempts to address. In particular, the roles and skills of journalists and programmers need to be defined in order to facilitate comparisons across national boundaries in future studies.

Method

A case study approach was used to establish organisational structure at the BBC's Visual Journalism unit and the Financial Times' Interactive News team. Both of these teams are primarily producing data-driven, multimedia, interactive features. Interviews with the leaders of these teams enabled the researcher to study the role of journalists and developers working on these news products. The production process was examined as was the relationship between these specialist teams and the rest of the newsroom. These news organisations were chosen because of their innovative development of data-driven, interactive stories on their websites and because they enable the study to explore different newsroom settings; the BBC is a public service broadcaster whereas the Financial Times is a commercially owned daily newspaper. Both the BBC and Financial Times have global audiences.

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with journalists and developers working in these specialist teams to gather qualitative data from those working on computational journalism in the newsroom. The interviews were conducted between July 2013 and May 2014. In order to develop the semi-structured interviews, an initial face-to-face group discussion with key members of the BBC Visual Journalism Unit, including the team leader, Andrew Leimdorfer, was set up to establish themes to be further explored in the interview stage. This was followed by a similar telephone discussion with Martin Stabe, who was leading the Financial Times' team. Semi-structured telephone interviews were then conducted and recorded with journalists, developers and team leaders at both the BBC and Financial Times. This yielded 10 interviews in all which lasted between 30 minutes and 45 minutes each. The sample is small because the population size of the teams themselves is small. However, it was found saturation had been reached even with this small number of interviewees and no additional data was emerging to develop the various categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 61; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 188). The interviews were

transcribed and coded according to categories related to the research questions. Two categories then emerged as the most significant:-

- Skills and skills acquisition
- Attitude to work role

"Skills" is an important category because it helps us reach an evidence-based definition of what "coding" might mean in a journalistic skill-set and thus helps transform the "should all journalists learn code?" debate into something more meaningful and helpful for journalism educators. Similarly, it is important to study how those currently working in computational journalism acquired - and continue to acquire - their skills since this could be used to inform the design of new courses for multimedia s**torytelling.**

The "attitude to work role" category is key to this study in that it enables a deeper understanding of how journalists and developers view their professions in the newsroom context. Specifically, the interviewees were asked about their attitudes towards the idea of a hybrid journo-coder/programmer-journalist.

Finally, listings of jobs, traineeships and internships advertised on the Gorkana website (http://www.gorkanajobs.co.uk/jobs/journalist/), the specialist media recruitment agency, were gathered from 18th June 2014 – 8th January 2015. Only those based in the UK were used in this study. Duplicate job adverts were removed from this selection as were jobs which were specifically in sales. This resulted in 1166 unique listings. The job descriptions were then filtered to search for "interactive," multimedia" and "data" roles. This filter produced only a small number of results and so was expanded to include other key words, namely "digital", "content", "web". These results were then analysed further and those which specified some level of coding skills in the job requirements were noted.

It is recognised that Gorkana is not the only journalism job listing site and it is not claimed, therefore, that this selection represents every journalism job advertised in the UK. However, it was chosen because of its comprehensiveness.

Analysis and Results

Analysis of advertised journalism jobs

Analysis of the Gorkana journalism job adverts provided quantitative data about the value placed on coding skills in UK newsrooms. Of the 1166 unique listings (N=1166) collected in the timeframe of the study as described above, 24 jobs (2.1%) specifically mentioned some level of coding in the skills required for the job. A further 4 jobs (including one advert for a graduate programme) required data analysis skills. Thus 2.4% of total jobs in the study timeframe specifically mentioned some form of computational skills.

Of the 24 jobs with a coding requirement, 6 were newsroom designer roles and these all required a good level of proficiency in HTML/CSS. The remaining jobs covered a broad range of journalistic roles which have been categorised as follows:-

Digital Content – 13

Social Media – 3

Data Journalism – 1

Interactive Journalism - 1

Of the non-designer roles, only the Interactive Journalism role specified "expertise" in HTML/CSS and JavaScript. The Data Journalist role required Python, JavaScript and MySQL. All the other journalistic roles (16) specifically mentioned some level of HTML and of those, 5 also mentioned CSS. The level of skill required in these roles was generally described as "basic" or "an understanding of" rather than proficiency and was always in the context of working in a Content Management System rather than front-end coding. It is therefore clear that few recruiters specifically require journalists who can code. However, this may not be because it is an undesirable skillset. Rather it could be that recruiters do not expect to find many potential candidates with this skillset and are therefore reluctant to include it in a list of criteria.

Organisational Model – the Team Approach

A clear organisational model emerged from the case studies and is visualised in Figure 1. In contrast to much of the literature based on US examples, the hybrid, programmer-journalist model (Parasie & Dagiral, 2012; Royal, 2010; Weber & Rall, 2013) is strongly rejected in the news organisations studied in the UK and instead a team approach is adopted whereby journalists, programmers and designers work closely together to produce multimedia, interactive news products. Martin Stabe argues that truly hybrid journo-coders or programmer-journalists do not currently exist in the UK.

"We've decided at the FT that the only way to bring those skills into the newsroom is to create a team that has people who come from both those backgrounds, plus designers. You really need a numerate journalist, a developer who can work on deadlines, and a designer who understands technology. If you have those three people working together, you have a journalist-coder." (Martine Stabe, Financial Times, 2013)

Significantly, he points out that the developers in this triangular team remain members of the IT rather than the editorial department so their career path in mainstream web development is not broken.

This team model is replicated at the BBC where Andrew Leimdorfer agrees that hybrid journo-coders are not necessary, preferring instead to bring together highly talented specialists. It is interesting to note that this is similar to the model Weber and Rall observed in their German and Swiss examples (Weber & Rall, 2013).

In this model, the journalist is responsible for sourcing the data and carrying out the initial analysis in order to find the news story to be pursued and then contextualising it. Indeed, the story remains central to the whole team's approach. Leimdorfer believes that simply mapping data and presenting it to the reader in a granular form does not constitute "journalism." This would seem to reject the concept of "journalism as programming" (Gynnild, 2013, p. 9) and differs significantly from the model described by Parasie and Dagiral in Chicago where "programmer-journalists" were primarily focused on giving readers tools to access the granular data rather than storytelling, thus challenging the epistemology of the journalism itself, according to the authors (Parasie & Dagiral, 2012). In the BBC and Financial Times model, the news product is driven and managed primarily by the journalist and there is no epistemological dilemma because storytelling remains central to the project.

"The journalist won't ever leave the process. This is the thing. They'll be on it right up to the final day. Quite often, once it's been designed, they might be suggesting tweaks, discussing things around finer points of UX to make sure they get the user experience they want for their storytelling." (Leimdorfer, BBC, 2013)

Within this model, the developer may at times be heavily involved in the journalistic process. For example, finding the editorial interest in census data may require highly specialist data-analysing skills so the journalist will work closely with a developer to combine the data in different ways until the news story is found. Furthermore, the developer does not simply "take orders" from the journalist but is able to suggest ways in which data can be visualised or stories explored by the audience, for example, whilst remaining a feasible project within the technical and time constraints. This close, on-going collaboration throughout a project distinguishes the BBC and Financial Times model from the model identified by Weber and Rall (2013) in Germany and Switzerland where the authors found journalists effectively passing on the journalistic content to the developers in a more linear workflow rather than the continuous triangle identified in this study.

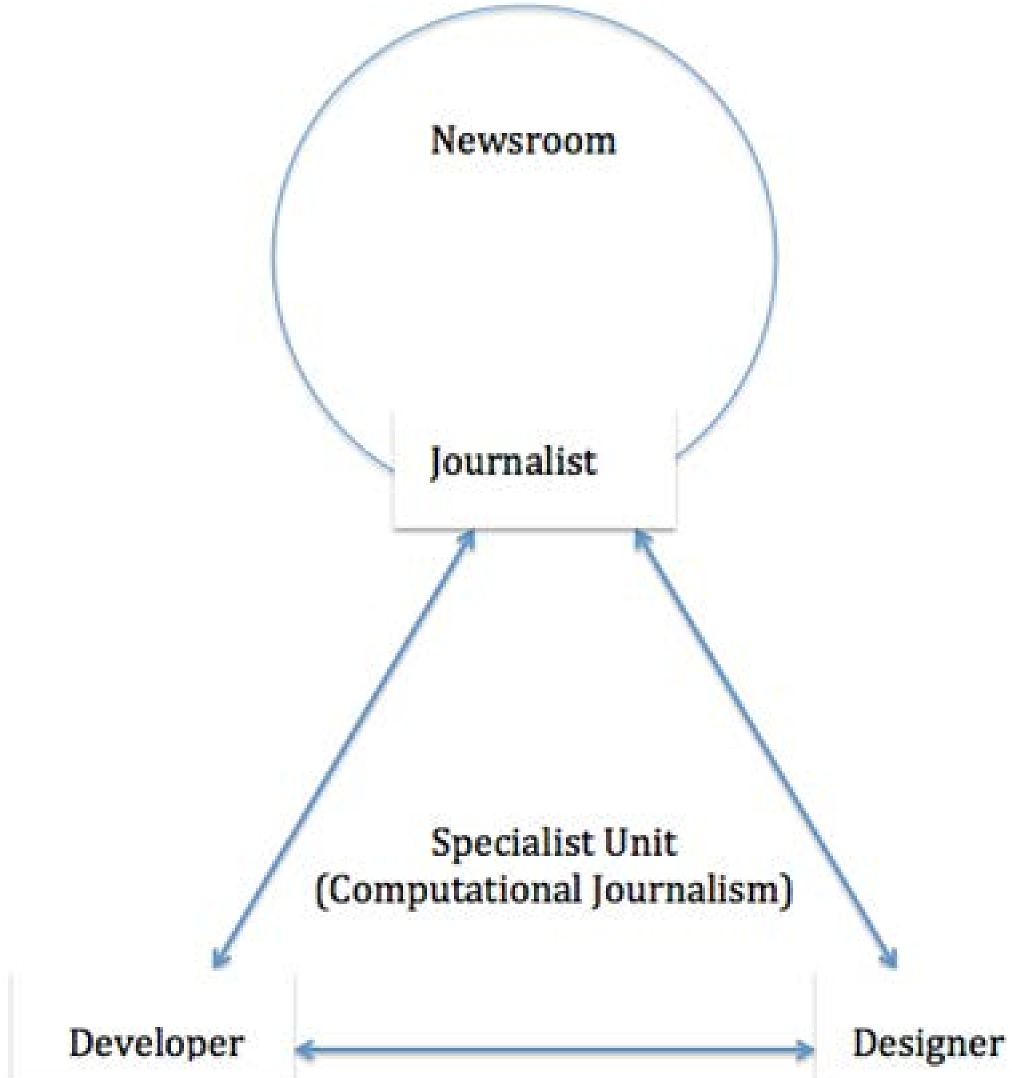
Although this team approach rejects the need for hybrid journo-coders/programmer-journalists, this model works only if the journalists on the team have the appropriate skills to at least understand what is technically possible….

"…who can write just enough code to understand what the developers are doing, who can do

good data management and the data sourcing aspect of the interactive, investigative project." (Stabe, FT, 2013)

The developer on the team is regarded as a precious and limited resource so the more data-analysis work the journalist is able to do on their own to find the story, the more likely they are to be successful when pitching for developer time to build a multimedia, interactive news package.

Figure 1:



As visualized in Figure 1, the journalist on the team is also the point of contact with the wider newsroom and often ideas for data-driven stories and interactive formats come from subject-specialists outside of the team. At the BBC, this goes even further with the journalist also responsible for ensuring the interactive news packages and apps produced by the team are integrated into the whole news output with, for example, text-based online articles and on-air features for radio and television audiences.

Skills and Skill Acquisition

The interviewees were asked to list their key technical skills and these have been categorised in Table 1.

The table demonstrates a clear distinction between the skillsets with none of the journalists interviewed claiming programming as a skill. Instead, the journalists said their skills were in data analysis, primarily Excel spreadsheets which were universally mentioned as the pre-requisite skill for working in this field of journalism. One journalist mentioned a basic knowledge of the statistical programme, R. Tools for mapping and visualising data were valued by journalists because they enabled them to further analyse the data. However, the journalists did not build the maps and visualisations that would be seen by the end-user of the website. These were built by the developer and designer on the team.

Table 1:

	Developers	Journalists
Front End (User Interface)	HTML/CSS	
	JavaScript	
Back End (support systems eg database management)	Python	
	PHP	
	Ruby	
	SQL	
	UNIX	
Data-analysis/presentation		Excel
	MPS	
	SPSS	
	GIS mapping software	GIS mapping software
	R	R
		Tableau

Although Table 1 shows the answers given by interviewees when asked to list their key technical skills, further questioning did reveal a more nuanced picture. The journalists refused to describe themselves as having programming or coding skills or a need to acquire them but they did admit to some "basic" knowledge. Certainly Martin Stabe believes more and more journalists have enough knowledge to be able to write simple programming scripts in Python, Ruby or PHP to scrape data from a website and store it on a spreadsheet, for example.

"From a full time developer point of view, these are fairly trivial, simple tasks they wouldn't mention on their CV. If you asked a top-notch developer what their skill set is, they probably wouldn't mention they could write complex Excel functions or that they can manage a database on SQL or write a really simple scraper in Python. For a journalist those are exceptional skills and definitely accessible skills and skills that an increasing number of journalists have." (Stabe, FT, 2013)

This clearly demonstrates the need to define clearly what is meant when discussing whether journalists should learn to code because there is a broad spectrum of skill. Journalists working in specialist teams at the BBC and FT do not consider their level of skill to be sufficiently high to merit the term "coding" because it is so far down the spectrum compared with the experienced developers they work alongside who are able to produce software. However, the journalists have enough knowledge of some programming languages to enable them to carry out, for example, important data-gathering tasks such as web scraping.

It was interesting to note that only two of the developers interviewed had a Computer Science higher education background. The other developers – like the journalists – came from a humanities/arts background but had developed a strong interest in programming which they had pursued informally. This replicates Royal's findings at the New York Times where few of the technologists

interviewed had a purely Computer Science background and had instead acquired their programming skills through informal self-directed learning (Royal, 2010).

All respondents agreed that learning new skills and pushing the boundaries of their knowledge was a major part of their job and took up to 25% of their work time each week.

"Every year there's a different way of doing things, producing graphic or interactive, so you have to constantly look at what you know about how to do your job." (Journalist)

"You learn by always coding at the edge of your understanding….It's about constantly throwing yourself into a slightly uncomfortable situation then learning your way out of it." (Developer)

"I don't think you can do this role without the attitude and willingness to learn new skills all the time and I think the point at which you stop learning is probably the point you're not at the top of your game any more." (Journalist)

This learning is distinctive in that it is informal, self-directed and highly reliant on online resources and knowledge-sharing. Formal courses did not play a significant role. Learning from colleagues in the newsroom was cited as a major source of information and skill-sharing was a distinctive aspect of the teams at the BBC and Financial Times.

"Basically, it's asking people around you. It saves time. If you try to literally teach yourself, that's very time-consuming. People are often very willing to help." (Journalist)

"I've learnt so much from fellow colleagues – how to build code that is robust and can scale without breaking." (Developer)

Other sources of learning came from informal meet-ups such as HacksHackers and the online community such as NICAR and the Centre for Investigative Journalism. Developers also spend time analysing the code underlying their competitors' interactives and news apps (the New York Times' was mentioned specifically) in order to learn. Journalists found it particularly helpful to use the internet to seek out other journalists working in the field rather than trying to learn from official software training guides, for example, which tended not to be geared towards journalistic use.

This culture of "perpetual reinvention" (Powers, 2012, p. 37) - constantly pushing boundaries, updating skills, learning from a community of fellow practitioners - owes more to the hacker culture (Lewis & Usher, 2013) with its emphasis on innovation, tinkering and collaboration than the traditional newsroom culture and has been observed in other studies of computational journalism in the newsroom (Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014; Royal, 2010). Indeed, Gynnild (2013) argues that developing this "innovation-oriented mindset" is more important for ensuring journalism's future impact on society than adaptation of technology itself (Gynnild, 2013, p. 15/16).

Attitude to work role

As explained earlier, interviewees were asked about their attitudes to their work role, specifically their attitude towards the idea of hybrid journo-coders/programmer-journalists.

Only one of the interviewees – a developer - described himself as a "journo-coder" or any of the other hybrid job descriptions.

> "I'd like to think that any developer that works on any journalism team is a journalist." (Developer)

This interviewee believed that any work which involved building something to tell a story for an audience was "journalism" which is similar to the attitudes found in studies based in the United States (Royal, 2010; Weber & Rall, 2013) where programmers in newsrooms tend to see their work as journalistic.

However, this response was in stark contrast to all other responses from this study where interviewees identified strongly as either developers or journalists and were, indeed, sceptical about the possibility of combining both skillsets in one person in any meaningful way. Typical statements include:-

"I've never met a journalist who is particularly adept at coding in my fairly limited pool." (Developer)

"I just say I'm a journalist who specialises in maps and charts." (Journalist)

"I don't think a person can straddle both. To make an interactive requires so many different areas of knowledge, you need years of experience just doing that. And journalism is a whole other area of expertise so you'd be lacking in focus on one side." (Developer)

"I think it's great that we have crossover in our world - a bit like a Venn diagram - but I think I'm never going to be at the level that (a developer) is at and I think my time is better spent doing the more journalistic part of the work" (Journalist)

"I'm an expert in my field, the journalist is an expert in their field and together we get things done. There's a huge amount I don't need to know - law, editorial guidelines, style - I just don't get that involved in that kind of thing." (Developer)

The programmers interviewed did not feel competent finding news stories or writing copy and relied on the journalists for this aspect of the projects. However, all programmers did say they had acquired some understanding of the journalistic process – the need for a news angle, hitting deadlines, understanding the audience – which they felt distinguished them from programmers working in the IT department.

Thus, given this strong belief in clearly-defined, specialist roles, collaboration becomes a key component of the attitude to work where members of the teams are, in the words of one interviewee, constantly "bouncing bits of knowledge off each other." This requires an understanding of each other's sphere of expertise leading to what Andrew Leimdorfer at the BBC has described elsewhere as "tech-savvy journalists and news-savvy technologists" (Leimdorfer, cited in Herrman, 2011). The interviewees describe learning each other's "language" in order to collaborate successfully thus enabling two separate groups of professionals (journalists and developers) to combine ideas and innovate. This intersection of professional disciplines in a shared space with common goals is consistent with the trading zone concept which Lewis and Usher (2014) used to investigate the Hacks/Hackers global network. The authors found that simply putting technologists and journalists in the same room did not lead to mutual understanding and productive collaboration because of the clear "barriers" between each profession's understanding of the other (Lewis & Usher, 2014). However, the institutional setting of a newsroom with clear leadership and carefully selected team members seems to overcome these obstacles and results quite readily in cross-disciplinary innovation.

Conclusion:

A socio-organisational approach has been found to be a useful framework for investigating the field of computational journalism in UK newsrooms allowing an exploration of emergent themes and suggestions for further research. Boczkowski's theory that organisational structures, work practices and in particular representations of the user shape the adoption of multimedia and interactive tools in newsroom (Boczkowski, 2004) seems well-founded. Significantly, teams at both the BBC and the Financial Times perceive their audience as wanting to personalise, share, explore and play with news/information on a variety of devices and this drives the constant search for new ways of presenting stories and the skills and technology to achieve this.

However, no evidence was found to support the idea that currently journalists in the newsroom need to learn to "code." Similarly, it found that in all but one case, developers working in the UK newsrooms investigated strongly rejected the idea that they were "journalists" in contrast to the findings in research conducted in the States (Parasie & Dagiral, 2012; Royal, 2010; Weber & Rall, 2013). Rather than seeing this unwillingness to think of themselves as journalists as a "weakness"

(Weber & Rall, 2013), this study argues that the triangular team model identified at the BBC and Financial Times ensures the emphasis is always on the journalistic story rather than the granular data.

This contrasts with the programmer-journalist, open-source, hacker tradition observed in other studies (Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014; Parasie & Dagiral, 2012; Royal, 2010; Weber & Rall, 2013).

Clearly, caution is needed when drawing generalisations from the findings of such a small-scale study. However, this research does suggest that there is a distinction between the American and European models of computer journalism in the newsroom. Further ethnographic studies are now needed in a variety of newsroom settings across national boundaries in order to verify this and, indeed, investigate any alternative models. Similarly, the evolution of these newsroom models needs to be studied to investigate significant changes to job roles and skillsets over time perhaps influenced by developments outside the newsroom where the intersection of journalism and technology is developing rapidly (Ananny & Crawford, 2014).

The analysis of Gorkana journalism job adverts supports the evidence from the case study interviews in that expertise in coding languages was rarely required. Journalism job adverts which require coding knowledge are still the exception – just 2% of the total analysed – and there is no evidence to suggest that UK newsrooms are seeking hybrid journo-coders. But it seems employers see value in journalists having some basic understanding of HTML – the language of the Web – in that it helps them perform their core tasks such as creating digital content in a Content Management System. However, it should be noted that the journalists interviewed for this study all arrived in their specialist roles via an internal route having developed particular interests in data and multimedia rather than through an external recruitment process. In addition, recently a number of major news organisations in the UK have offered journalism trainee schemes which specifically mention coding and data analysis skills in the list of criteria suggesting that news organisations may be increasingly confident of finding graduates with this skill set and nurturing it in their newsrooms – for example, the Guardian's 2013 Digital Trainee scheme, Reuters Journalism Programme (Thomson Reuters 2014), the Financial Times' 2015 scheme (Financial Times, 2014), the Telegraph Media Group's Editorial Graduate Programme 2015 (Telegraph Media Group, 2014).

Finally, this study has established the importance of defining what is meant when we discuss "coding" in the context of journalism and journalism education. The "tech-savvy" journalists interviewed in this study were not "programmers" or "coders" in the sense of building software and applications. But they were sufficiently skilled in this area to be able to collect and analyse data and to have meaningful discussions with developers about creating the User Experience demanded by the story. If we do not define "coding" clearly we risk alienating both the programming community and many highly-skilled journalists. We also risk failing to advance education programmes for the next generation of journalists if we do not have a clear understanding of how journalists operate in the newsroom setting.

Although a few universities in the UK are already offering post graduate courses in computational, data-driven and interactive journalism, it seems unlikely that forcing highly technical modules on all our journalism students would result in a generation of enthusiastic computational journalists. However, there is a strong case for all journalism students to be at least introduced to the field of computational journalism early on since many will not have even contemplated the role data and coding are now playing in the newsroom. Universities should also consider the way journalism courses are marketed to perhaps attract more students who are numerate and already interested in technology.

Moreover, this study does suggest a need to create journalism graduates who are problem-solvers, curious and able to learn new skills independently using online information and the networks of practitioners that now exist – learning behaviours that were practiced by all those interviewed for this study. One approach might be to adapt the Hacks/Hackers model to bring together the social worlds of journalism and technology students within a university setting to foster greater understanding and collaboration (Lewis & Usher, 2014). Further research should also explore the significance of Communities of Practice in sharing and developing knowledge of computational journalism (Weiss & Domingo, 2010) since online communities and networks within the newsroom were repeatedly mentioned by interviewees as key methods of learning.

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Reporting US2012: Using Facebook to Communicate

Ann Luce and Matthew Charles, Bournemouth University

Key Words: Journalism, Facebook, US2012, Experiential Learning, Communication

Abstract

In November 2012, 300 students came together in The Media School at Bournemouth University in the UK to report the US Presidential Election, Over the course of 10 days, students published 176 articles on a rolling news website, garnering more than 20,000 hits. On election night itself, students produced 10 hours of live coverage on both TV and Radio, airing 30 pre-recorded video packages and 35 pre-recorded radio packages. This extra-curricular, experiential learning project, demanded constant contact and communication. Facebook was chosen as the main method of communication throughout the six-week project. This paper explores the successes and failures of using a social network site to manage such a large project.

Introduction: Opening New Channels, Moving Towards a Network

Traditionally, communication between lecturers and students has happened in the classroom in front of a white board, or during a one-on-one tutorial. But with technological advances and the creation of social media, communication is no longer constrained by space and time; now communication can occur in a digital sphere where the boundaries are skewed and time is endless (Papacharissi, 2002).

With this, however, comes both a positive and negative impact. As will be seen here, by using social media, or more specifically, the social networking site (SNS), Facebook, learning can be

enhanced outside the classroom, communication can be opened between students and lecturers, and students can peer support and learn from each other in an environment where they are already living much of their lives (Madge et al, 2009). On the negative side, when lecturers foray into the world of Facebook and use it as an instructional tool, some students perceive this to be a blurring of roles and also a mixing of the educational and social, while others still, enjoy the access they get to their lecturers (which can be an expectation of 24/7), and the ease with which material can be shared and thus used in the learning process (Mazer et al, 2007).

Facebook came onto the educational scene in early 2004 at Harvard University when then-student Mark Zuckerberg created the online tool to allow students with a university e-mail address 'to look at each other's photos, flirt, network and interact' (Boyd & Ellison, 2008: 218). Soon after, Facebook was open to all university students across the United States. By late 2005, however, Facebook went global. With more than a billion monthly active users as of December 2014 and 82% of them outside the United States and Canada, Facebook is a diverse community that engages at all levels of education and all areas of society (http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts, retrieved, April 8th, 2015).

In the UK, a recent study by Mori (2007) suggests that more than 95% of British undergraduate students are regularly using SNS. Hargittai (2007) agreed, pointing out that Facebook is a popular online destination for young people, as it acts as 'both an important social domain and a powerful communication tool' (Madge et al, 2009: 142). Thus Facebook was chosen as the key communication tool for US2012, a special project in The Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University, where students came together to report the US Presidential Election, live, on Radio, Television and Online on November 6th, 2012. Having a digital tool where lecturers and students could communicate in a generally fast and easy manner became of utmost importance during this project. Having a place to hold documents, plan meetings, post text and video links and explain the political process as the project progressed was crucial. Thus, Facebook became a vital tool in communicating without crossing professional boundary lines. It is hoped that the case study, shared here, will allow media educators to review and share further experiences of using experiential learning in journalism education.

Navigating the Network: From Personal to Professional

Historically, like many Humanities subjects, journalism has been taught via lectures, seminars and workshops (Meadows, 1997). Over the last decade, however, lecturers in The Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University have taken that model and consistently challenged it. Multi-media journalism, which consists of teaching newspaper and magazine journalism (print), TV and Radio journalism (broadcast) and Online journalism (print and broadcast together) was introduced to the school in 1992. Groundbreaking at the time, the degree sought to set itself apart from universities that were not adapting to the changing needs of British and international newsrooms. It became apparent in the mid-late 2000s, however, with the creation of MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter, that the field of journalism, and would-be-journalists would be impacted yet again—there were new reporting skills to learn, and platforms for sharing information were changing. The Faculty decided to introduce converged news days in 2008. On a converged news day, students report for multiple platforms, including TV, Radio and Online. Students take on leadership roles, as would be expected in a newsroom, and they work to their news bulletin deadlines. This gives students some experience of what it is like in a functioning newsroom, but due to time and staff constraints, these news days do not happen as frequently as staff would like: 'The challenge for journalism faculties is to consistently engage students in new ways of learning and to offer them opportunities to become highly skilled journalists who are ready to enter the converged media workplace' (Lamb et al, 2010: 93).

There is a need in the journalism curriculum at Bournemouth University for more hands-on experiential learning. While lecturers can teach the basics of writing structure, editing and design, it is not until students experience journalism for themselves that they understand the high-pressured, high-stakes environment in which they will be working. Kolb (1984) explains that in experiential learning theory, 'ideas are not fixed and immutable elements of thought but are formed and re-formed through experience. Learning is described as a process whereby concepts are derived from and continuously modified by experience' (1984: 26). Brandon (2002) explains that in journalism education, experiential learning is a process during which 'a person experiences an event, acquires competencies and then compares the knowledge gained with knowledge gained in similar situations' (2002: 62). To further the journalism curriculum at Bournemouth University, staff recognized a need for a real-world, intensive project in which skills in print, broadcast and online would be tested. It was also recognized that a project such as this could potentially enhance communication skills amongst students, build up confidence and self-esteem, while also exposing students to a live, unfolding media event that was being reported around the world. Thus, US2012 was born.

The project recruited 300 students, representing 1.7% of BU's total student population and 11% of media students. These students, all of whom volunteered to work on the project, came from 13 different degree programmes, five of which were postgraduate degrees. There were no grades attached to the project and no extra academic credit was given. Students studying on the BA in Multi-Media Journalism were allowed, however, to submit their work on US2012 for their National Council for the Training of Journalists portfolio, which is evidence of three years work at the end of their degree.

Throughout the duration of US2012, two staff members took responsibility for the project, with 24 staff providing support in the lead up to election night and on the night itself. There were 10 days of online rolling news coverage that started October 29th 2012 and ended November 7th. In that time, students published 176 articles, about 17 a day. Throughout the 10 days, there were 20,761 hits on the website, with 9,094 (44%) of these coming on election night alone.

On election night itself, students produced 10 hours of live coverage on both TV and Radio, airing 30 pre-recorded video packages and 35 pre-recorded radio packages. Students interviewed 50 guests live in the studios on the night as well. Online, production continued as the previous 10 days, but the students also created a live blogging team for the duration of the coverage. Following the conclusion of the project, students created a 20-page US2012 Election Magazine special, with highlights from the project. Following the conclusion of US2012, the project was awarded Best Live Programme and was runner-up for Best Factual Programming and Best Male Presenter at the British National Student Television Awards in 2013.

While teaching students about the history of US politics, providing extra workshops on TV and Radio editing, and teaching them how live reporting events work was important, what was indicated early on in the summer months, before the students were even approached, (how were they approached and selected?) was the lack of infrastructure within the university in which to communicate with the students who needed those extra tutorials. The university had mailing lists for various academic cohorts, but there was no way, short of creating a project database, to communicate with specific students who were completing specific tasks related to the project. With some earlier success of communicating with students via Facebook regarding changes to class timetables and promoting various events occurring in the department, it was decided to try this social networking tool as a way of managing the project.

Navigating the Network: Tags, Likes and Updates

The US2012 project was organized to make the experience as real as possible. Therefore, how the leadership hierarchy was created mimicked that of a professional converged newsroom, such as the BBC. The two lecturers that oversaw the project were established as 'Executive Producers'. For pedagogical and legal reasons, staff had to maintain control and responsibility of the project,

but under lecturers were student leaders1: Editor-in-Chief, Deputy Editor, Hub Editor, Online Editor, TV Editor, Radio Editor and Social Media Editor. (How were these chosen?)Once students were aware of the hierarchical structure, the EIC took responsibility for creating the open online Facebook group, to which all 300 students were encouraged to join. Unfortunately, at any given time, there only seemed to be about 200-275 students who were in the group, thus this proved to be an issue in terms of communication, which at times thwarted the project. What needs to be remembered in terms of this project is that all students volunteered to work on it from start to finish. Students were recruited during induction week when they returned for the academic year in September, and were also encouraged to attend larger informational meetings held across the Faculty. Students and staff alike volunteered their time, with no compensation, monetarily or on timetables, so requiring anyone to do anything at any given time was always based on goodwill and engagement and commitment to the project.

The project had a loose structure which articulated how lecturers thought it could or should work, but ultimately, this is an example of a project that grew organically, with both students and lecturers alike, learning from each other and about each other as the project progressed. The functionality and usage of the US2012 Facebook Group, ultimately fell into four categories: usage by lecturers and their changing roles; administration/management of the project and how students communicated with each other; how students learned about the US political system and engaged in the political process and lastly, post US2012, what happened next?

Lecturers and their changing roles

For young people, Facebook has its own codes, and is governed by certain values, 'such as establishing and negotiating identity, building relationships, staying connected, brevity, conciseness and immediacy' (Reid, 2011: 59). These values make students feel comfortable in this digital environment, as they see it as their domain. With such a captive audience, it stands to reason then that educators might venture into this unknown world and use it as a tool for enhancing learning outside the classroom. Mason (2006) suggests that Facebook is a good tool to encourage reflection, give peer feedback and encourage collaborative learning. Selwyn (2007) added that its informality encourages interaction between students. The little research that is available on whether students want their lecturers to move into the digital sphere is patchy at best. Madge et al (2009) explain:

> In our research, a clear picture emerged whereby first year undergraduate students, generally thought the use of Facebook was most importantly for social purposes, secondarily for informal learning processes (ie. For student-to-student interactions about academic work-related matters), but definitely not for formal teaching purposes (ie. Between staff and student and involving formal assessment) (Madge et al, 2009: 148)

Mazer et al (2007) had similar findings: 'It appears there are a range of opinions regarding tutors using Facebook, but generally students were not overly keen on the idea' (2007:13). Yet these pieces of research differ to more recent studies, which are more positive (list them). As is the nature of technological change, perhaps ideas about what is acceptable on Facebook in terms of student-lecturer interaction is also changing.

At the beginning of the US2012 project, the two lecturers who oversaw the project provided significant guidance and input into the project, which ranged from choosing editors, booking rooms for meetings, and outlining how the project would work, arguably all appropriate tasks for educators who are trying to engage students in an experiential learning project. However, as the project progressed, lecturers became facilitators and guides, steering students in the direction

1 The editor-in-chief had ultimate responsibility for the coverage, and managing students so they could meet the expectations set for the project; the deputy editor assisted the EIC. There were five main groups into which the journalism was divided, with each section headed by an editor that would report back to the EIC and DE as and when needed. The Hub editor was responsible for several sub teams on the night, which included Results and Newswire, Picture Desk, Interviews, Live Text and Ticker, Graphics, US Bureau and On Air Reporters. On election night, all information flowed from the Hub to the other groups. The Online Editor was responsible for the US2012 Website and its daily operation. The TV editor oversaw the creation of the 30 video packages, and organized the TV teams on the night. The Radio editor oversaw the creation of the 35 radio packages and organized the Radio teams on the night. The Social Media Editor was responsible for maintaining the project's social media feeds, as well as monitoring social media on election night.

Figure 1:

Figure 2:

that they needed to go, but allowing the students to make their own decisions, fail and succeed, and steer the project. Lecturers also facilitated learning by providing extra lectures on US Politics two evenings a week, and by bringing in journalists as guest lecturers so students could hear from professionals who were covering the election at the time. Additionally, on Facebook, lecturers started discussions based on links posted on the page (See Figures 1 & 2), and continuously asked students to think about the journalistic decisions they were making and why they were making those decisions. Reid (2011) determined that students respond well to the power shift that happens on Facebook when tutors make themselves available, communicate with them and engage in 'solidarity-building interaction' (2011: 64). It also indicates a desire on the lecturer's part to learn and engage with a world they might not otherwise inhabit (Roblyer et al, 2010; Arnold and Paulus, 2010). Yang et al (2011) concur, stating that student satisfaction with student-faculty communication outside the classroom increased when virtual office hours were available via Facebook.

The US2012 project was an intense six-week experiential project, and thus lecturers were always available for support when students felt overwhelmed or panicked over the immensity of the project. In a sense, through daily communication on the Facebook page (sometimes multiple times a day), lecturers became peers. This is quite similar to what is seen in a professional newsroom, when editors throw off their titles and 'get stuck in' when breaking news is happening. While the professional peer role allowed for much more joviality amongst the US2012 participants, and a sense of camaraderie between staff and students, there was still a boundary of professional distance where students respected and responded to lecturers when demands were made. Yet, despite these more recent positive studies, not many educators are embracing Facebook as a pedagogical tool. Researchers argue this is because lecturers are not open to the idea of using Facebook as a teaching tool and fear the perception that Facebook is merely a tool for socializing and not learning (Daniels and Billingsley, 2014).

Administration/Management of the Project and Communication amongst Students

Ultimately, US2012 was a student-led project, with supportive guidance from lecturers. The Facebook page proved a crucial tool in the administration and management of this project. First and foremost, students were able to motivate, encourage and scold each other in ways that their lecturers could not. In Roblyer et al's (2010) research, they found that students are 'much more open to the idea of using Facebook instructionally' than their lecturers (138). Burnett and Merchant (2011) reinforced this idea:

> Clearly, the potential for social media to support new or extended forms of participation and collaboration that could promote learning is attractive to those who embrace student-centered ideologies, and those who believe that traditional structures of knowledge and power are loosening (2011: 41).

Students motivated each other with pictures of sad-looking animals when they felt disappointed in each other, and funny videos when they needed pick-me-ups. The students held each other accountable (see Figure 3), using Facebook as the tool to do this. As classroom space was limited for this extracurricular project, students cautioned each other about being disruptive in classrooms where other classes were taking place; they also warned each other not to 'skip' or 'miss' classes when some of them started doing this, and the lecturers overseeing the project got in trouble. This is evidence of the peer relationship established between lecturers and students working on the project.

Overwhelmingly, however, it was how Facebook was used to manage their professional duties as journalists that was encouraging. They made use of the file-sharing tool on Facebook to create lists (see Figure 4), update practices and make announcements to the entire cohort working on the project. They created sub-groups on Facebook to break into smaller teams to manage their plans for working on election night (see Figure 5). They used the main group's wall to announce meetings and important updates as and when they were happening. They also used the wall to shout for help when students forgot their shifts, or forgot to submit stories for the website (see Figure

Figure 3

6). The Facebook group was used as a public relations platform from which they publicized their own coverage. They discussed their PR plans (see Figure 7), they suggested what they should be publicizing and the best way to attract an audience for their night of coverage. Without Facebook, it appeared communication amongst students and staff would have been sorely lacking.

Learning about the US Political System and Engaging with Politics

David Buckingham, a media academic who writes about new technology and the impact and influence it has on young people, has explored the notion that new technology, such as Facebook, helps to support new kinds of participation, whether it be learning or in the form of civic engagement (2003). Min (2007) suggests that online deliberation can increase a person's issue knowledge, political efficacy and willingness to participate in politics. While these discussions are helpful at a macro level, when it comes to working with students on a social networking site, it is best to engage on a micro scale.

It became clear early on in the US2012 process that few students had knowledge of the US political system. Consequently, staff members—those who worked as journalists in the United States, and those who researched the US political system—became quite important in providing a supplementary lecture programme two evenings a week that students were required to attend. Surprisingly, students engaged fully in these lectures, and carried their discussions over to the US2012 Facebook group. Students began reading newspapers and magazines from around the world, and

Figure 4

engaging with TV and Radio journalism in ways that their lecturers had not seen before. Students appeared to become inspired; they discussed articles they had read with each other (See Figure 8), supporting each other and helping each other when there were questions (See Figure 9); they also queried whether they should be covering similar topics themselves (See Figure 10). What should also be noted here is that lecturers were able to engage with students who otherwise rarely contribute in classes. Reid (2011) discovered that a closed Facebook group in her teaching was immensely helpful for engagement: 'People who don't normally say anything in class often came online to say something. Many students who are more reticent in the face-to-face context of the tutorial class participate actively on the closed-group Facebook wall' (Reid, 2011: 67). Lecturers engaged in some of these online discussions started by students, (see Figure 11), challenging them to think about the topics in more analytical ways Thus, here was another way that lecturers were able to teach, encourage and inspire students to learn.

Post US2012: What Happened Next?

As mentioned earlier, covering US2012 was an exercise in taking the student-lecturer relationship beyond the typical hierarchical structure of the lecturer in charge, and the student as submissive. Light et al (2009), discuss how 'teaching is not simply regarded as aiding students' accumulation of knowledge presented to them, but rather the process of facilitating students' construction of

Figure 5


Fiona Gladstone
TV PEOPLE: We've set up a group for you to join, so please do as it will make communicating between TV groups and editors much easier!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/356501331104526/

Thanks!

US Elections: TV Team
This group is for everyone who is interested in taking part in the TV coverage of BU's US Election coverage! It would be great if you could all post TV feature ideas, cool ideas for the night or any ...

28 members · Join Group

Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 5 October 2012 at 13:53 near Bournemouth

Seen by 194

Vikki Hutton The final TV group is:
Julia Denni
Tayla Woodard
Sophie Crockett
Adam Miyanji... See More
5 October 2012 at 14:22 · Like

Figure 6


Ben Tyrer
Robyn Brimmer Doyle and Mary Cleary, you're meant to be working on the website right now? Where are you??
Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 5 November 2012 at 12:01 vi Mobile

Seen by 187

Mary Anne Cleary I'm not a reporter anymore just on the radio team tomorrow night and have interviews for my radio package today sorry
5 November 2012 at 13:06 · Like

Ben Tyrer TV and radio presenters have been attending shifts, you really should have let us know beforehand
5 November 2012 at 13:08 · Like

Figure 7


Vikki Hutton
So, who wants to big up all the brilliant work we've been doing and get a huge audience on board for the night itself? I need you!
Our PR team are making a name for us in the atrium tomorrow but they need extra help. I'm looking for people who may have half an hour spare at any point between 9am and 1pm tomorrow to say they'll go and lend a hand. You'll be giving out fliers, spreading word of the election night coverage and getting people excited about what we're doing, following our twitter feed etc.
If all 200 members see and ignore this I'll be gutted – please help?
Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 29 October 2012 at 22:00

Ellis Emily Ford and 2 others like this. Seen by 190

Steven Buckley Whilst I'm either filming or in seminars all day, I will be whoring out my twitter and Facebook all week! Others should do the same!
29 October 2012 at 22:15 via mobile · Like

Vikki Hutton Seen by 32 out of 200 (yes, I'm keeping track) and still no takers, come on guys.. Ellis I will come in to help you set up for 9 x
29 October 2012 at 22:21 · Edited · Like

knowledge for herself. The teacher will help the student develop and change his own conceptions of the subject and in many ways himself as a person' (2009: 30). This project showed how the relationship with students, based on using Facebook as the method for predominant communication, morphed the student-lecturer relationship into more of a professional peer relationship, but students themselves grew as journalists and individuals. Women's and Gender Studies pedagogists have argued that through the process of experiential learning, 'students gain new perspectives on themselves and their potential, which can lead to greater confidence in their ability to participate fully in the world of work and other spheres' (Malkin and Stake, 2004; Hoffman and Stake, 1998; Stake and Hoffman, 2001).

This learning carried over post-US2012 and back into the classroom. Post-US2012, a bond was created between lecturers and students, where after spending so much time together in the six weeks leading up to the project, it was difficult at first to disentangle. Educational theorists (Bullough 1994; Chickering and Reisser, 1993 and Klein, 1991) argue that changes in a student's engagement 'take place more effectively in an atmosphere of mutual trust and collaboration between teacher and student' (Malkin and Stake, 2004: 456). This was clearly seen Post-US2012, where Facebook proved to be a crucial tool in continuing new and previously established relationships (See Figures 12-14). Banter continued on the Facebook page amongst students and staff alike until about mid-December, 2012. Even now, despite finishing nearly 2.5 years ago, students still go onto the Facebook page to discuss projects they are working on and to discuss world events and how they would cover them, and those who have graduated report back about the 'real world' of journalism and how the project has helped them.

Figure 8

Network Support: Control Alt Delete

The purpose of this paper has been to outline the arguments for using Facebook as a pedagogical tool, using the experiential project of US2012 as a case study. The project, as shown through the various snapshots from the US2012 Facebook group, was exciting, nerve wracking, stressful and fun all at the same time. However, the project was not without its problems and Facebook was not the most perfect of tools to use in terms of communication, but it continues to be a resource that staff in The Faculty of Media and Communication use quite frequently to communicate with students regarding extracurricular projects (since US2012, we have worked on India2014, and are currently planning UK2015). Students who participated in US2012 were asked for anecdotal feedback, as well as asked to complete a questionnaire with 26-open-ended questions. The feedback received will be presented here, but will also inform guidelines for lecturers who might undertake similar projects in the future.

Feedback

Students and staff were asked to feed back their thoughts on the project in general. Overwhelmingly, feedback on the project itself was positive. One male student commented:

> "It was by far the best thing I've done since being here and the biggest project the media school has ever seen! I am very grateful to you both that I got the chance to present and also for your advice along the way. It has been invaluable and I have never been more proud to say I was involved in a project"

Another male student talked about the impact the project had on his life:

> "I just wanted to say thanks for the opportunity to present the graphics for the live US2012 coverage. It was stressful, yet fun and more exhilarating than I could have imagined. Essentially, the coverage has not only helped by giving me a taste of real election coverage, but gave me a greater inkling for the future of XXXX, so thank you."

While a female student discussed the confidence the project instilled in her:

> "Thank you for believing in me and trusting me with presenting seven hours of the live coverage. It was an honour and undoubtedly the highlight of my three years at Bournemouth University. I will remember and cherish this experience far beyond my years at Bournemouth. I really en-

Figure 9

Figure 10

Joshua Saunders
This may be a ye olde already pre-scribbled idea but the features/TV team may wanna look at the influence and involvement of Presidential wives throughout the elections perhaps? Maybe compare the involvement through the decades? You guys probably have this thought already though so hopefully it doesn't sound patronising!
Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 4 October 2012 at 15:20
Oscar Tollast and Alice Simons-Denville like this. Seen by 194
Oscar Tollast Cheers, Josh. It's one of the ideas on our list that we'll hand out to relevant editors tomorrow.
4 October 2012 at 15:31 · Like · 1
Helen Winter I read an article the other day about Obama's wife bringing in the 'black votes' rather than Obama himself in the Economist...
4 October 2012 at 16:03 · Like

Figure 11

Gareth Hill
Here's a left view of the elections with Gary Younge of the Guardian. The climate is particularly interesting with Occupy Wall Street emerging outside of electoral politics. That movement and the recent and current strikes in Wisconsin and Chicago could be a base for a look at the politics outside of the two parties which could influence the election. Will people who feel let down by Obama bother voting ? etc That sort of thing.
Interview with Gary Younge on US presidential elections | 29Sep12
www.socialistworker.co.uk
Author and journalist Gary Younge spoke to Willemijn Wilgenhof about Obama's record and the mood among the US working class
Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · 1 October 2012 at 17:11
Oscar Tollast likes this. Seen by 195
Ann Luce Media-Bu Good stuff Gareth. Don't forget the Tea Party angle, too! Former Dems and Reps who might now have switched parties... what role does that play?!
1 October 2012 at 17:12 · Like

Figure 12

Mat Charles BU
Thank you, thank you, thank you. Last night, and the project overall, was a massive success. I am so proud of all of you. The coverage compared well with my professional experiences of covering American elections, and I hope you enjoyed it as much as me. I can't believe we called it for Obama before CNN! All the hard work really paid off, and I hope you now appreciate all my nagging! You know where to come for a reference! Here's to the wrap party! :)
Unlike · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 7 November 2012 at 23:04 via Mobile
You, Oscar Tollast, Anushka Naidoo, Vikki Hutton and 35 others like this. Seen by 184

Figure 13

Vikki Hutton
You were all brilliant, I can't say this enough. We were so proud to see this project come together. Watch this space for details of the wrap party – Friday 16th Nov. x
Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 7 November 2012 at 21:34
Oscar Tollast, Anushka Naidoo, Beth Graham and 11 others like this. Seen by 184
Write a comment...

Chika Anene
Everyone did a super job, both yesterday and today. You should all be proud of yourselves :). It was actually a really fun experience (those times I wasn't dozing off :/). :)
Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · 7 November 2012 at 18:54
Oscar Tollast, Charlotte Foot and Alys Penfold like this. Seen by 184
Skyler Shah Ha dozing or in a coma?
7 November 2012 at 18:55 · Like · 1
Chika Anene Lool
7 November 2012 at 19:02 · Like

joyed working with both of you and hope I'll have the opportunity to work with you again before I leave next year"

It was not only students who gushed about the project. Staff, too, were impacted by the immensity of engagement:

> "I've never seen the Media School operating at anywhere near this level of energy and commitment. It was really inspiring and wouldn't have happened without your incredibly hard work. Thanks for a great night and congratulations for a phenomenal success"

> "Overall, I feel US2012 was a brilliant project combining both hands-on pedagogy and good fun. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that it's been one of the highlights of my last 11 years at BU. The sheer amount of people and roles involved was staggering. Presenters were well briefed and very calm under extreme pressure. For me, the best thing was how students and staff from different parts of the Media School worked together on a collaborative project which showed how much we can achieve when we harness the talent, expertise and facilities that are available to us"

Yet, the project was not without its problems. One colleague noted that while the project captured the imagination of staff and students, the 'cross department collaboration was only partially successful—the silos were connected, but they were still silos… only a limited number of staff became involved—Why?' This was a critical point that was noted by the organizers of the project, also. The main hypothesis however, is that many staff members were cautious of the experiential nature of the teaching that was taking place, and that if it went wrong, there could have been a negative impact on other areas of teaching within the Faculty. Thankfully, however, this was not the case. While these issues are important to note to help inform future guidelines for running projects of this magnitude, it is Facebook that really needs to be discussed.

Students were honest in their evaluation of the usage of Facebook during US2012. The feedback suggested that Facebook was a "great forum to communicate with everyone and for people to share interesting articles and websites with each other" and that it was "… extremely useful as a tool to cut bullshit. Everyone checks Facebook and Facebook knows what you've checked. People who might otherwise have slacked off stuff because 'they didn't know' suddenly were without an excuse". Students also described Facebook as 'a lifeline' and that it was "… an invaluable tool for interaction between the students and the team of lecturers working on the project; it allowed us to share ideas and information more efficiently than via email." Using the social networking site as a management tool was also praised: "The group was really helpful. I could locate all the files I needed because I knew they were all in one place. I used it all the time to get updates easily. The Facebook group definitely was a key aspect of communication."

On the other hand, students were also quite honest about the failures of Facebook. The Editor-in-Chief of the project who predominantly managed the group was thoughtful in his reflection:

> "[The use of Facebook during the project was] challenging. It has pluses and minuses. I'm not sure it's the best way to coordinate more than 200 people. Sub groups worked to some extent, but I think we assumed because we put the information on Facebook that everyone would read it. That wasn't the case, and that's why confusion occurred.

> "I think we relied too heavily on Facebook. I think we chose Facebook because we felt we'd get a quicker reaction from other students, but I can remember one final year BAMMJ pointing out that it was easy to miss notifications."

Other students noted that the communication on Facebook always seemed quite 'frantic' and thus, "the page got very used and it was hard to read every post and many people who you needed to see your post didn't." Still others were frustrated by how the group was used during the project:

> "I felt that people ended up abusing the page to post funny videos they found on the Internet, rather than putting up the latest news that might have helped the news team." The constant notifications didn't go down well, either: "[I was] always bombarded by posts from the group, so didn't check it much as was repetitive."

However, despite the critical comments, students collectively agreed that Facebook was crucial to the running of the project: "not only THE place for communication, but THE place to promote our work" and " I think given the scale of the operation, communicating via social networks on a continual basis was efficient."

Guidelines for Staff: 5 Steps to Using Facebook in Special Projects

Despite some of the negative comments, it is clear that Facebook was a success in terms of the US2012 project. If this mode of communication was to be used again, however, there are some guidelines that need to be followed:

Lecturers should create a 'work' Facebook identity: Staff should create a 'work' identity for themselves, which is clearly labeled as a staff account, eg: Joe Bloggs, Josephine Bloggs. This indicates to students that there is a level of professionalism that needs to be followed, and that students will not get to engage with their lecturers in a typical 'friend' format. Lecturers need to decide what pictures to show of themselves, and how they will communicate with students on Facebook—is the tone formal, or informal? How much access will you give the students? In a project like US2012, access was given from about 6am until well past midnight most days, but the sheer magnitude of the project required this. Lecturers need to make this decision before they engage in their project.

Make sure ALL students on the project are 'enrolled' on Facebook: For communication to succeed, all students working on your project, must have their own Facebook page, but also MUST be enrolled in the Facebook group you are using. If this is not done, there will be miscommunication, students who feel left out, and students who do not engage when you need them to. This should be made mandatory as part of participation in the project.

Set ground rules and know what your Facebook group is for: Based on feedback from students, this is an important element of working with Facebook. Students have to understand the boundaries of the Facebook group. Can unrelated video be posted? Can students talk randomly about various different issues? Looking back at US2012, these boundaries and ground rules were missing. Students needed to be instructed that they were to use the group ONLY for US2012-related discussions. Miscellaneous conversations and videos should not have been allowed in the group. Additionally, it is here that students should also know how they can interact with their lecturers. Is it OK to joke with them and make fun of something their lecturer has done/said? In the case of US2012, this was allowed and encouraged to build camaraderie, however, lecturers carrying out future projects need to consider the boundaries and rules they wish to put in place to communicate with their students and vice-versa.

Encourage other staff members to engage in your Facebook group: One of the things that was lacking in US2012 was the lack of other lecturer voices. For the most part, staff left the group to the two main lecturers in charge of the project. While this was fine, it would have been better from a pedagogical perspective to have students engage in analytical and critical discussions with other colleagues throughout the project. It would have strengthened the learning process, and it would have also removed some pressure from the lecturers overseeing the project.

Carry classroom discussions onto Facebook: The beauty of Facebook is that the learning can continue 24/7, if you choose. Throughout the US2012 project, students engaged with their lecturers on a daily basis producing stories, and planning for election night itself. Some of the best learning occurred when conversations that had happened in the classroom continued on Facebook, with students posting references to information learned earlier in the day and/or week. Students also had the opportunity to ponder information that they learned and then ask questions about different election processes on Facebook, which again enhanced the learning experience.

Conclusion: Network Maintenance

US2012 was the first project of its kind to be ever carried out in The Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University. Overwhelmingly, the project was a success, and part of that success had to do with how communication was handled with the aid of Facebook. While there are positives and negatives to using Facebook as a communication tool, it is clear from the reflective evidence received from both students and staff in the Faculty, that overwhelmingly, Facebook was a tool that enhanced educational practice during this rather unique project. It is clear then that while communication between lecturers and students has traditionally happened in the classroom or during one-to-one tutorials, this does not need to be the case anymore. In fact, technological advances have enhanced how students and lecturers can communicate, which can only enhance the student learning experience. This case study about US2012 has shown that communication and experiential learning around journalism can happen in a digital sphere. It has been presented here as a roadmap for journalism educators to review and mould for their own projects, so that we can collectively enhance and share best practice in journalism education.

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Chasing the Accreditation Dream: Do Employers Value Accredited Journalism Courses

Lily Canter, Sheffield Hallam University

Abstract

A third of the UK's 300 undergraduate and postgraduate journalism courses are accredited by at least one of the main accreditation bodies (NCTJ, BJTC, PPA) illustrating the marketing value universities place on such schemes in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Yet questions continue to be raised amongst academics and practitioners over the ongoing value and relevance of such accreditation schemes in a diversifying industry that currently places great emphasis on digital skills. This exploratory research is the first independent study to date to examine the value of accreditation to employers via interviews with 14 editors representing all sectors of the industry. The findings depict a changing landscape where writing skills and digital skills are held in equal regard and work experience takes precedent over qualifications. It also reveals that accreditation is not a key factor in the employment of entry-level journalists.

KEYWORDS: accreditation; journalism; education; employment; digital skills; professionalisation

Introduction

Former *Sun* newspaper editor Kelvin MacKenzie publically decreed in 2011 that he would "shut all the journalism colleges down" and there was "no merit" in going to university if young people wanted to become a print journalist (MacKenzie, 2011).

Instead he advocated getting a job on a local newspaper and learning from firsthand experience.

What MacKenzie failed to acknowledge was that the era of the singular print journalist is over as today trainees must be accomplished in print, online and broadcast skills. Furthermore, journalism has become a graduate occupation and it is extremely difficult - although not impossible - to enter the industry without an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Training no longer occurs systematically on the job as industry increasingly relies upon higher education to provide this service. Both of these factors have increased exponentially since MacKenzie made his remarks four years ago. Advice to aspiring journalists given by the Society of Editors (2014) makes it abundantly clear that the majority of new entrants to the occupation have degrees and an approved journalism qualification. Data from the Journalists at Work report (Spilsbury, 2013), for example, indicates that 82 per cent of people working as journalists have a degree or higher-level qualification compared to 38 per cent of all employment in the UK, making journalism a highly qualified occupation. By way of contrast, in 1968 fewer than 10 per cent of UK journalists were graduates (Boyd-Barrett, 1970).

The progression from school leaver to graduate job has occurred at a relatively steady pace in the UK over the last 40 years, albeit at a slower rate than in America or parts of Western Europe. The first full-time postgraduate journalism course in the UK was established at Cardiff University - formerly University College Cardiff - in 1970 (Evans, 2014) and more institutions followed suit, with postgraduate programmes in journalism being offered at 27 British universities by 2006 (Hanna and Sanders (2007). Initially the industry was sceptical of "out of touch" graduates, still preferring younger recruits trained at vocational further education courses (Hanna and Sanders, 2007, p405). But this scepticism gradually subsided as the conversion of polytechnics to universities in 1992 saw competitive expansion in higher education and the emergence of single honour journalism undergraduate degrees. Between 1996 and 2005 the number of applicants applying for undergraduate or Higher National Diploma journalism programmes rose by 61 per cent (Hanna and Sanders, 2007) and according to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service there are currently around 100 single and joint undergraduate degree courses involving journalism and 200 postgraduate (UCAS, 2015). Yet the leading accreditation body, the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), initially resisted the expansion of journalism training into higher education. It feared such degrees would create an over-supply of journalism recruits to the market (Hanna and Sanders, 2007). Resistance eventually shifted to co-operation, however, and today the NCTJ accredits around 40 undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including BA Journalism, BA Broadcast Journalism, MA Magazine Journalism and MA Sports Journalism together with approximately 30 further education and fast track courses (NCTJa, 2015). These courses account for 13 per cent of all journalism Bachelor and Masters degrees.

Founded in 1951, in response to criticisms levelled at the ethics and training of journalists in the Royal Commission on the Press, the NCTJ is the oldest and most dominant accreditation body in the UK. Now operating as a charity, the NCTJ is regulated by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation and sets examinations for its Diploma and National Qualification in Journalism. In 2013 nearly two thirds of journalists held a journalism qualification, with the most common qualification being the NCTJ, which accounted for 73 per cent of all journalism qualifications (Spilsbury, 2013). In other words, just under half of all working journalists had an NCTJ qualification. Initially funded by industry and strongly supported by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), the NCTJ controlled journalism training from the 1950s to the mid 1980s, setting caps on the number of training places in relation to vacancies in the regional press (Cole, 1998). But during the late 1980s and 1990s many newspaper groups withdrew from the NCTJ to set up their own training schemes or to transfer to the National Vocational Qualifications, which attracted public funding (NCTJb, 2015). Meanwhile higher education institutions encroached further into journalism education and "the whole area became a melting pot" (Cole, 1998, p6). During this period the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) gained traction having previously operated as an advisory council for the training of radio journalists. In 1980 the BJTC became a formal partnership between universities and UK broadcasters such as BBC, ITV, ITN, Associated Press, Sky News, Channel 4 News and Reuters to accredit training schemes and maintain professional standards. Although it also holds charity status, in contrast to the NCTJ the BJTC does impose a single prescriptive syllabus on training providers and has no involvement in examinations but instead “encourages institutions to set examinations and assessment regimes which reflect current best practice and industry requirements” (BJTC, 2015). It currently accredits more than 50 higher education courses, 17 per cent of the 300 listed by UCAS.

Meanwhile the Professional Publishers Association (PPA), which evolved out of the historic Society of Weekly Newspapers and Periodical Proprietors, dating back to 1913, began accrediting higher education courses in 2011 (PPA, 2011). It currently accredits almost 20 undergraduate and postgraduate courses, representing seven per cent of all journalism higher education courses. The organisation, which represents 220 companies, ranging from consumer and customer magazines to business-to-business data and information providers is a forum and membership scheme for the magazine publishing industry.

Whilst it is possible for a course to be accredited by all three bodies, most institutions choose the scheme that suits their specialism, whether it be print, broadcast or magazine journalism (Frost, 2012). In such a busy and expansive marketplace, accreditation is an attractive ‘added value’ for journalism degree applicants. As such, it is viewed by universities as a valuable marketing tool. Currently a third of higher education journalism courses are accredited by at least one of the three bodies. The same value is also placed upon accreditation in university business schools where “those who are accredited see it as a valuable distinguishing mark for high quality provision and one which enhances demand and the fees that may be charged” (Locke, 1999, p75). However there is no evidence in the UK to support the assumed applicant perception that accredited degrees are ‘superior’ to unaccredited degrees. Furthermore there is a significant lack of independent research into whether employers themselves value graduates from accredited courses over those from non-accredited courses. The emphasis on employability is a growing factor in UK universities with graduate employment rates featuring in league tables (The Guardian, 2015; The Complete University Guide, 2015) and the employability agenda creating a climate of “education for employment’s sake” (Sarson, 2013). But enhancing employability within journalism is dependent upon students being prepared with the relevant skills and expertise. With the growth of interest in digital and broadcast media, higher education institutions are faced with the question of whether or not accreditation schemes are relevant to employability and career progression and if indeed there is any correlation between accreditation and graduate employment rates. Some journalism scholars and educators (Heseltine, 2010; McNair, 2010) argue that student employability is no longer dependent on accreditation in an era of rapid globalisation and digitalisation and these bodies are no longer providing the necessary skills that industry requires. This research project therefore seeks to address this unchartered field of inquiry via an exploratory study to identify the value of accreditation schemes to employers and the factors higher education journalism providers should assess when considering accreditation.

Value of accreditation

There is limited literature, globally, on any aspect of accreditation in higher education aside from a handful of papers on public relations (Sha, 2011), business (Locke, 1999) and general accreditation in American higher education institutions (Hall, 2012). Such studies tend to support the view that accreditation plays a significant role in maintaining professional quality and attracting students to courses. An extensive search uncovered only one piece of research relating to journalism, however, which reported on a longitudinal analysis over three decades of the value of accredited and non-accredited journalism and mass communication programmes in the United States (Seamon, 2010). The study found “no evidence” that accredited programmes were “strongly or clearly superior in major ways to unaccredited programmes” (p10) and that there were more similarities than differences between accredited and non-accredited journalism degrees. The body in question, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC),

requires institutions to fulfil nine specific criteria including diversity, scholarship and research, and fulfilling obligations to community and the public ensuring that accredited programmes meet “rigorous standards for professional education” (Seamon, 2010, p11). The liberal arts approach differs greatly from UK accreditation schemes which solely focus on practical skills and largely dismiss academic and scholarly activity. However, similarities between USA and UK journalism accreditation can be identified as Seamon’s research indicates that some institutions withdrew from the accreditation process due to the “inflexible rules regarding curriculum” (2010, p11), echoing the frustration felt by some UK universities (Heseltine, 2010; McNair, 2010). Four years later and Brian McNair, former Professor of Journalism at Strathclyde University, still claims the NCTJ work against the core aims of universities, rub against intellectual and academic ethos and are “a bit of a scam” (McNair, personal communication, 2014). Yet no independent, scholarly research on journalism accreditation has been conducted in the UK to date. The only benchmark is a 2011 survey of 104 newspaper editors, commissioned by the NCTJ, which found that 90 per cent viewed the NCTJ qualifications as “industry standard” (Gunter, 2011).

The problem of professionalisation

Despite UK accreditation bodies attempts to formalise journalism training there is no set entry requirement into the occupation and modes of entry vary enormously. Applicants can gain their first job in journalism via work experience, formal training schemes, freelancing or directly with no prior experience (Spilsbury, 2013). The legitimacy of journalism degrees as entry into the ‘profession’ is therefore questionable when compared to disciplines such as law, medicine and engineering. The Quality Assurance Agency which monitors standards in higher education has no benchmark outline for journalism. Instead the subject falls under communication, media, film and cultural studies, in part due to the fact that it is a historically undefined activity bridging multiple classifications, including profession, craft, industry, literary genre, culture, social practice, community and ideology (Evans, 2014). Its ambiguous nature means that journalism cannot be clearly defined as a complete profession but nonetheless it has been moving towards professionalisation in the past 40 years with the development of professional ideology including objectivity, integrity, public service, professional institutions and codes of practice (Nygren, 2011) and its progression from school leaver to graduate occupation. Indeed raising journalism from a trade to a learned profession has been a topic of debate in the UK for more than a century (Christian, 1980) and similar arguments have been held across the Atlantic since editor Joseph Pulitzer gifted $2 million to Columbia University in 1903 to set up the world’s first Graduate School of Journalism (Mensing, 2011). Subsequently in 1908 *The Washington Post* proposed that:

> “Today the cowled doctor of law sits in the front row of fame, the distinguished representative of a most honored profession. And it is not unreasonable to fancy that in the fullness of time our doctor of the science of journalism will sit on his right hand and share with him all of the rights, privileges, and honours which the distinction affords,” (*The Washington Post*, 1908).

But journalists and scholars alike (Donsbach, 2014; Nygren, 2011; Wilson, 1995; Boyd-Barrett, 1970) still remain resistant to professionalisation due to the potential legal restrictions and implications on the freedom of speech which could “undermine the constitutional role journalists play as the watchdog of government” (Wilson, 1995, p2).

As previously discussed, the development of journalism as a graduate occupation - albeit not a graduate profession - is largely due to the expansion of journalism education in postgraduate and more recently, undergraduate, programmes. But a paradox exists within higher education as the traditional consensus is that journalism education should be focused on practical vocational skills including shorthand, news gathering and news writing, as legitimised by the accreditation bodies, and yet it is situated within an academic environment, whose core business is research. The focus of this education is occupation socialisation and “training students to work in professional news organisations” (Mensing, 2011) rather than enabling graduates to reflect upon their role in society and question the world in which they operate. Burgh (2003) further argues that journalism should be regarded as a serious academic discipline and not simply vocational training and that the purpose of a degree “is not to make people adequate employees but thoughtful citizens and potential contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of society” (p98). The question then becomes as to whether such an education is possible within a restrictive, skills-led accreditation framework and employment-focused higher education marketplace.

However, rather than analyse the vocational versus educational content of journalism degree programmes which is another legitimate field of inquiry, this research sets out to explore the employability agenda and the correlation between employment and accreditation. In my career as a journalism educator (and former NCTJ qualified journalist), I have often heard the claim from colleagues at various institutions that employers prefer, or prioritise, graduates from accredited courses however this is entirely based on anecdotal evidence. This project is the first step towards systematically addressing those claims by conducting research with journalism employers involved directly with recruitment.

Methods

This study was conducted on an exploratory basis via qualitative interviews to make initial steps into the uncharted territory of accreditation. Purposive and convenience sampling was used to select 14 interviewees who represented the breadth of the industry including newspapers, magazines, online publishers, radio broadcasters and television broadcasters from community, local, regional and national news organisations. The sample included both public service broadcasters and commercial media companies. The full list of organisations can be found in Appendix 1. Interviewees were selected on the basis that they were directly involved in recruitment, in particular, entry level. The anonymous sample was therefore largely made up of editors (11 in total) with the remaining three interviewees holding the position of deputy editor, department editor or news editor. Each interview was conducted via telephone, bar one which was held in person, using a structured interview incorporating qualitative and quantitative questions. The questions were developed following consultation with members of the cross-disciplinary Sheffield Hallam University C3RI Research Seminar group who made recommendations on how to develop the scope of the original questions.

The purpose of the interview was to explore, if and how, subjects differentiated between skills and training, their own training and entry into journalism, their awareness of accreditation bodies, the significance of accreditation in the recruitment process and their views on the value of accreditation bodies. Further questions were used to explore their views on graduate and non-graduate candidates.

Findings

Despite the prevalence of discussion surrounding journalism accreditation in higher education and a third of courses being accredited, results from this exploratory study indicate that accreditation is not a key factor in the recruitment of entry-level journalists. However some journalism training - accredited or otherwise - is desirable although not always essential.

Skills and training

The 14 subjects were each asked an opening question about the types of skills they were looking for when recruiting an entry-level journalist. The skills were self-selected rather than being chosen from a list and therefore were open to interpretation of the word ‘skill’. This technique was used to explore their understanding of the word skill and also to identify the basic core job requirements, without leading interviewees to directly relate these to training or accreditation. Respondents were able to list as many skills as they deemed appropriate. The two most popular skills were writing skills and digital skills with two thirds of the subjects listing both of these indicating that they now hold equal weight in the newsroom. Technological advancements mean that generally speaking

employers expect new recruits to be digitally literate but the traditional skill of writing a news story - even for broadcasters - remains equally important and employees are expected to have both sets of skills. However in some areas digital and social media skills are becoming more significant with one news website editor saying:

> We are looking for someone who is good on the internet, it’s as simple as that...We don’t look that much at CVs. .... If you are not active on Twitter you are definitely not getting a job with us.

Five respondents also referred to experience of working in a newsroom and finding a story, but only four mentioned shorthand, three referred to media law, two stated public affairs and two asked for subbing skills. One newspaper editor discussed the decline in public affairs as an essential skill:

> In terms of law and public affairs I would say that law is definitely more important. You would expect them to be competent and at least understand the warning signs if nothing else especially now with online there is a lot more publishing direct without any checks...Then public affairs is at the bottom of the pack to be honest. A basic understanding of how councils operate is useful and local government but to be honest with you, apart from the fact it is part of the prelim NCTJ qualification as a whole, we wouldn’t place that much important on that, that going to council two or three times wouldn’t solve.

Other ‘skills’ that received responses from four or less people included: ethics, ideas, attitude, communication, social media (rather than more generic digital skills), driving traffic and an interest in current affairs. Aside from the skill of writing a news story the other traditional skills of media law, public affairs, shorthand and subbing, which are examined by the NCTJ, were not prevalent in the responses showing a shift away from these core skills.

The second question focused on training rather than skills and asked what training employers would expect new recruits to have. There was some overlap here with the first question as many respondents did not distinguish between skills and training. Nine respondents said they would expect entry level journalists to have some form of journalism specific training whether it be higher education, further education, fast track or even self-taught. Only two respondents specifically referred to accredited training (one NCTJ and one BJTC) and three referred to a journalism undergraduate or postgraduate degree although did not specify that it had to be accredited. A third of respondents said they were specifically looking for evidence of media law training, four referred to shorthand and five referred to work experience as a form of essential training. One national broadcaster explained the need for a balance of training and experience:

> On the job experience is really important. Too many people are going straight from journalism courses into an air-conditioned newsroom and they never knock on someone’s door the day after their son was killed. I think you need the two together. A journalism course or training without experience of gathering stories in a local area is not enough but equally experience without the bedrock of journalism training is quite tricky.

These responses suggest that although journalism training is advantageous, accredited training or higher education training is not essential or at the forefront of employers minds.

Interviewees were next asked whether they would expect the same level of skills and training from freelancers and the overwhelming response was yes, with half saying they would expect higher skill levels from freelancers than they would from entry level recruits. One national broadcaster said: “The same rules apply for freelancers, even more so. They need evidence that they have practically done the job. You wouldn’t want a freelancer who can’t write good, clean, accurate copy.”

Shift in training expectation

Each interviewee was asked about their own training and entry into journalism to identify how this process may have changed over time but also whether it had any bearing on their own recruitment selection process. As Figure 1 reveals, the respondents had a mixture of pathways into the occupation, with five being indentured to local newspapers via the previous NCTJ training scheme, three with a postgraduate qualification in journalism, two accepted onto industry training schemes and perhaps more significantly, four with no training at all. The latter included one who had entered the industry in the last decade, who stated "I have been doing journalism for 10 years, I have never felt the need to get a formal qualification in it" and another who argued "I haven't got any formal journalism qualification. I have 20 years experience". This reflects the "melting pot" of training and entry into journalism that has developed over the past 40 years " (Cole, 1998, p6).

Figure 1: Training patterns of employers

Despite the fact that more than two thirds of respondents had completed journalism training themselves, half said they would employ someone today with no training at all. This is an unexpected finding due to the reduction of in-house training schemes but respondents argued that there were many different ways for candidates to demonstrate their skills and gain experience that would not have been possible in the past, when a training certificate was more relied upon. One newspaper editor described the recruitment of a recent reporter:

> One of the digital trainees we recently recruited hadn't even got A levels, didn't go to university, hadn't trained with NCTJ or anybody else, but she could demonstrate in the way the application was written, it was funny, it was clever. She had done lots of things, a blog, digital journalism, got herself a job with an online publication and was absolutely exceptional and had no qualifications at all.

But the other half of the respondents disagreed with this viewpoint and said taking on someone with no training was too risky and they could not provide the training to make them trustworthy. One digital magazine editor said taking on someone with no training would be "far too much work" and added:

> I would need them to jump in fairly quickly. It is very risky taking on someone with no training and there is an awful lot to teach them even with people who have done courses if they are new to work they still have to pick up a lot.

These results show an ambiguous picture over the importance of training, not least accredited training, but do emphasise once more the increasing significance given to work experience and candidates demonstrating that they have conducted real life journalism rather than simply carrying out training exercises.

Significance of accreditation

A significant proportion of the employer interviews involved questions surrounding journalism accreditation and higher education courses. Interviewees were asked which journalism accreditation bodies they were aware of, if any, and asked to name them. Only two respondents were unaware of any bodies and these were people representing non-traditional news / magazine websites who had no journalism training and would be better categorised as entrepreneurs. The other 12 respondents all named the NCTJ, whilst five also identified the BJTC and three the PPA. Three of those that did identify the BJTC were not clear of its exact name or acronym and referred to it as the "broadcast equivalent of the BJTC", "BAJ" or "NCTJB". Only one respondent was able to name all three accreditation bodies and this was a broadcaster who had been trained via an NCTJ newspaper indenture. These findings indicate that the NCTJ is the market leader in terms of accreditation penetration and visibility, which is not unexpected given it is the longest standing training body and traditionally was the entry route into journalism. Its ability to adapt to a competitive training market has enabled it to maintain its market dominance and presence in both education and industry. Whilst the NCTJ is recognised by employers at print, broadcast and online platforms, the BJTC remains confined to the vestiges of broadcast media and the PPA has penetrated very little of the non-magazine market. Indeed the BJTC and PPA operate as niche accreditors and unlike the NCTJ which has incorporated magazine, broadcast and online modules, are content to represent their platforms rather than market themselves as holistic journalism training providers.

Although the majority of interview respondents could name at least one accreditation body their knowledge of the organisations was largely limited. Two respondents referred to undergraduate courses that they had relationships with under the assumption they were accredited when in fact they were not. A quarter of respondents said they were not directly involved in keeping track of accreditation, this being dealt with by a central human resources or placements department. Three respondents referred to the setting of exams but one of these wrongly stated that the BCTJ set exams as well as the NCTJ. Half of the respondents referred in general terms to the way in which accreditation bodies accredit courses, set a benchmark and inspect standards and five respondents admitted that they had little or no knowledge of what the bodies were responsible for. One newspaper editor appeared to be unaware of the NCTJ's expansion into multiplatform training:

> I know the NCTJ have historically always been plugged into traditional media for accreditation and qualifications and in terms of colleges and universities as well. They have a responsible for the training levels of students and reporters becoming recognised senior reporters. The way they set exams and keep abreast of that situation but that is broadly it. Certainly for print I don't know if they deal with magazines or any broadcast but I suspect not but I don't know, I might be wrong. I would be surprised if they were involved in accreditation outside that sphere like start up websites or digital orientated businesses that would class themselves as journalism or employing journalists.

The lack of detailed knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of the accreditation bodies may go some way towards explaining why eight employers stated that accreditation was not part of the recruitment selection process and all bar one said attainment of the NCTJ diploma was not a requirement. The one respondent - representing the regional press - clearly indicated that NCTJ accreditation and NCTJ diploma attainment was part of the candidate selection process, and the remaining five respondents said accreditation was a factor for consideration but not a priority, a "desirable rather than an essential" and "part of the package rather than something we actively look for". And even the regional press employer said there were exceptions to the rule:

We would specify that we would expect to be interviewing people who had their NCTJ prelims preferably 100 wpm shorthand and when we do the initial sieve of applicants that would be the first thing we would do in terms of putting a yes and no pile together. Equally if we are aware of someone who has been in with us on work experience and we think they have got talent and we like them and we think they would fit in the newsroom and depending on where they are at and what the job is we would probably prioritise that above the qualifications. But we would still expect them to be on route to those qualifications or we would push them towards them.

Other respondents did not appear to differentiate between a journalism degree and an accredited degree, with one magazine editor stating: "We would ask for a journalism qualification either NCTJ or university equivalent." It is also worth noting that this employer was showing a preference for the traditional NCTJ accreditation route rather than the magazine specific PPA scheme. Again the recurring theme was that candidates should be able to demonstrate that they had experience in the field above all else. One national broadcaster explained:

> Rather than a first class honours from a BJTC course I would be more impressed with someone who has written a blog or has 10,000 Twitter followers or runs their own website or YouTube channel and I can look and think yes, that is good stuff, they're a good journalist.

Considering that attending an accredited course or attaining an NCTJ journalism diploma is not deemed essential criteria for entry level job applications it is interesting to note that half of respondents still felt that accreditation bodies had a valuable role to play, in particular in preparing students for the working news room and giving them a "readiness to jump into things". Two interviewees said they valued accreditation bodies immensely with one broadcaster acknowledging: "We rely on them to set the bar. We rely on them that their students can deliver the business for us. Without that we would be lost a little bit". Two others respondents referred to accreditation bodies as a safety net albeit with caveats as one print employer explained: "It is helpful but it is by no means an acid test of whether someone is going to be a good reporter. It is a bit of a safety blanket."

Attaining 100 words per minute shorthand, an NCTJ diploma requirement, was raised, unprompted, by two interviewees - print and broadcast - who argued that this was an effective way of "filtering out people who are really committed" and measuring a candidate's "application rather than intelligence".

The continued relevance of accreditation bodies and their ability to meet rapid changes in the industry formed the last section of the interview, with six respondents stating that these bodies remained relevant, but five stating that they did not know. Three interviewees suggested that the bodies needed to improve their digital content to remain up to date. These results depict a contradictory picture about the value and relevance of such bodies which is often overshadowed by the marketing value attributed by higher education institutions.

The value of a degree

Although this research project was focused on the value of journalism accreditation bodies, it was conducted in the context of higher education at a specific point in time. Interviewees were asked whether there were any significant differences between candidates with journalism training from outside higher education, such as further education or fast-track courses, and those with undergraduate or postgraduate journalism degrees. For many lecturers, particularly former practitioners, journalism is a practical skill, rather than an academic discipline and as such sits awkwardly and somewhat ambiguously in higher education. This is reflected in industry where experience and skills are given preference over qualifications and academic achievement. The subjects in this research were of a similar opinion and expressed lukewarm reception to the suggestion that journalism degrees provided something fast track or further education courses could not. Four respondents said there was no difference, or they did not know if there was any difference between

higher education journalism courses and non-university courses. One magazine employer believed training was far more important than a degree and two other respondents went further and said a degree in journalism was a hindrance with one national employer reasoning that "if you limit the selection process to someone who has all the certificates you are not necessarily going to get all the best people". The remaining interviewees focused on the practical skills and experience that were catered for within degrees rather than academic attributes such as critical thinking, research and scholarship. However half of the respondents did view journalism degrees as offering added value and attributes such as "greater confidence", a "readiness for work" and "deeper knowledge of the subject" with four employers recognising that the prevalence of degrees amongst the population meant it was becoming a minimum requirement by default. As one broadcaster reflected: "It is not necessary to have a degree to be a journalist but it is necessary to have a degree to get into journalism. Everybody has got a degree." Indeed due to the saturation of the journalism degree market, five interviewees commented that greater social diversity was needed in the newsroom rather than more graduates and the industry should be encouraging applications from "local lads and lasses" and those with a "rawness" to prevent journalism becoming an "elitist profession".

Discussion

These exploratory findings give a snapshot of the changing pathways into journalism in the digital age. Despite the rhetoric often presented by journalism lecturers, many of whom are former print journalists themselves, entry into the occupation is no longer a singular route via the regional press. Graduates today are faced with a diverse range of occupation entry points and multiplatform opportunities.

Although the research for this study is preliminary, being based on a relatively small sample of opinion, it is possible to speculate whether the findings may be indicative of wider patterns across all sectors of the industry. Skills based training of some variety which prepares students for work in a newsroom is the most attractive package that graduates can present to employers when seeking employment. This supports the employability agenda being implemented by universities and measured in league tables (*The Guardian*, 2015; The Complete University Guide, 2015) and continues the tradition of journalism education as a form of socialisation to the occupation (Mensing, 2011), with employers longing for recruits who are ready to work and can fit into the existing newsroom structures, norms and practices. This perpetuates the longstanding debate, which has existed since the creation of UK journalism degrees in 1970 over the legitimacy of journalism as an academic discipline or indeed as an entry requirement into an industry that is so ambiguously defined. This raises further questions about whether journalism educators should be simply be creating carbon copies of existing journalists, with a standard set of skills required by current employers, or encouraging greater academic development to produce critically thinking graduates who can challenge existing journalistic norms.

However the right balance needs to be found and skills will always be integral to journalism education even as educators develop further scholarship alongside this. But as this research indicates, this core skill set is changing and is now largely comprised of two key elements - representing the past and future - the skills of finding and writing a story together with intermediate digital literacy. This then brings into question the continued relevance of accreditation bodies, particularly the NCTJ with its core syllabus, which focus more on traditional skills of shorthand, media law and public affairs. Indeed the findings of this project indicate that applicants are much better able to demonstrate these skills through their own extra-curricular activities such as work experience, producing a multimedia blog and creating a Twitter following than by showing up to an interview and producing an accredited degree or NCTJ diploma certificate. However it must be acknowledged that in many, if not most cases, the skills, opportunities and experience developed on their degree has encouraged and enabled applicants to undertake such extra-curricular activity and furthermore some may argue that this is more prevalent on accredited courses, where such activity is expected to achieve accreditation.

This project set out to identify the value of accreditation to industry employers in light of a lack of independent research in this field and the findings appear to uphold the conclusion of Seamon's research (2010) which indicates that there is no evidence that accredited courses are superior in some way, from an employer perspective at least. Employers prefer applicants to have some form of journalism training, but since such training is ubiquitous and employers find it difficult to differentiate between accredited and non-accredited courses, and to a certain extent between higher and further education, they rely upon applicants to demonstrate their skills through their online portfolios and via selection days and interviews.

Although this study raises initial questions about the continued value and relevance of journalism accreditation the results must be evaluated with caution due to two key factors. The study was exploratory in nature and only involved a small sample of employers and therefore future research should seek to engage a more substantive quantitative sample. Secondly the research was only focused on the perspective of employers and the employability agenda of universities rather than the marketing agenda. Further study is needed to understand both the value of accreditation to journalism students themselves and also the correlation between accreditation and the recruitment of students onto accredited and non-accredited degrees.

Conclusion

It appears that by default rather than design that journalism has become a graduate occupation despite the fact that it is not a selection requirement by employers. Indeed the training of journalists appears to be in flux once more as employers are more open to diverse candidates, including those who are self-taught, and news organisations are making attempts to encourage non-graduates to enter the profession. Whilst in the latter half of the 20th century journalism training shifted from industry to university there now appears to be a gradually emerging trend whereby entry level applicants are being expected to self-demonstrate their skills using online digital tools. This raises questions not only about the value and relevance of accreditation but also the role of educators in a world where anyone can practice journalism online.

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Appendix 1

Interviewees' media organisations

About My Area; BBC (individuals from online, radio and television, regional and national); BuzzFeed

ITN News; Johnston Press; My Student Style; Press Association; Progressive Media Group; Regional Magazine Company; Sky Sports News; Slimming World; The Guardian

Raising journalism ethical standards: learning the lessons of Leveson

Chris Frost, Liverpool John Moores University

Keywords: IPSO, Independent Press Standards Organisation, PCC, Press Complaints Commission, self-regulation, press, complaints, Leveson Inquiry

ABSTRACT:

The Leveson Inquiry was set up to examine the ethics of the press in the UK. It took evidence from 700 witnesses on the state of the British press and its standards and the failure of the Press Complaints Commission to combat irregularities and raise standards.

Most attention has been paid to policy surrounding press regulation since Leveson reported leading to the closure of the PCC and its replacement with the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

However, Leveson also made it clear that regulation was not the only way to improve the culture and ethics of the press and that a sweeping change in practice was required. This paper examines the effectiveness of a regulator in raising journalism standards and the importance of education in changing newsroom culture for raising standards in the future.

Introduction

The Leveson Inquiry was sparked by widespread claims of unethical or illegal practices including phone hacking and bribing public officials by some national newspapers and their journalists. It was set up to examine the culture, practices and ethics of the press and took evidence from around 700 witnesses: campaigners, politicians, editors, journalists, publishers and academics.

Its final report, released in November 2012, found widespread illegality and bad practice in a number of national newspapers especially tabloid newsrooms and identified that the PCC had failed as a regulator.

The PCC had previously made some claim to having improved ethical standards over the period of its existence and Leveson did find some limited evidence for this:

In some cases the pre-publication guidance which the PCC produced was effective, and resulted in some improvements to the press coverage of the issues concerned. For example, the PCC has worked hard to improve the coverage of mental health issues. To this end, the PCC has produced a guidance note on the subject and has delivered training to journalists. It is difficult to form a clear judgment about this, but the sense I have is that press reporting on some aspects of mental health issues has improved, and the insensitive and in many cases offensive language deployed in some sections of the press ten years ago is now rarely used. However, in this context, I note the evidence submitted by organisations such as Mind and Rethink Mental Illness which indicates that problems remain. Recognising this, the points they make reflect on the press in general rather than on the PCC. (Leveson, 2011, p. 1519)

Despite this limited evidence of an effect on standards, it has to be considered that if there were such an improvement and a linked adherence to the accepted standards of journalism ethics by professional journalists then there may well be other reasons for this and that a regulator may not have played any part, or at least only a limited part in improvements in such areas as mental health (Ibid.) or children (Frost, 2004). Logic suggests that there are likely to be four main strands in any development of better professional practice:

1. agreed professional standards (as outlined, for instance, in a code of conduct);
2. an open culture in the workplace supporting the application of such standards;
3. some form of regulatory system, whether statutory or self regulatory, supported by the industry;
4. professional ethical education, involving research, academic publication and teaching.

This idea is supported by the Leveson Report:

> This is a very fundamental issue about culture, practices and ethics, and the way they relate to each other. Professor Christopher Megone, who has worked extensively with industry bodies (mainly in finance and engineering) on issues of workplace ethics, put the matter this way to the Inquiry:
>
> "*Of course an ethical media organisation needs to have an ethical code…*
>
> *However, even more critical to the existence of an ethical media organisation is culture. … If there is an unhealthy culture then an organisation can have an ethical code but it will have little influence. Members of the organisation can undergo 'ethics training' but it will have little effect.… there are a number of critical factors that could be expected to bear on ethical culture in a media organisation. First, tone from the top – leadership – is of tremendous importance … Secondly, an ethical organisation needs to have an open and honest culture in which it is possible for members of the organisation to raise their concerns about practices and to discuss them with colleagues and senior staff. [S]taff need to feel confident that if they perceive unsatisfactory practices to be developing, or face a challenging situation, they can raise the matter with colleagues or senior staff. And they need to be confident that they can do so, and have a proper discussion, without fear of mockery or retribution.*" (Ibid. p. 87)

Points one and two identified above are clearly the duty of the press regulator.

Leveson does not allocate much of his report to discussing journalism training or education. Indeed he mentions media training of police officers more than the training or education of journalists. However, he does correctly identify that much good work is going on in the training and education of journalists:

> I have not sought to look at the adequacy of the training available to, or provided to, journalists. However, a number of professors of journalism have given evidence to the Inquiry and it is apparent from their evidence that the schools of journalism are committed to offering high quality training in which ethical journalism plays a full part.. (Leveson, 2011, p. 736)

Despite this, it seems from the importance he places on the evidence of Professor Megone that he does understand the importance of these issues as identified in the Association of Journalism Education's evidence to the inquiry:

> The AJE believes that education and training, particularly on undergraduate programmes over the past ten years, have made journalists more aware of ethical requirements. We believe that education and training is central to good practice, alongside good working practices in the newsroom, allowing for discussion between peers and journalist and editor. Ethics is not something to be left at the university door with the academic gown, but needs to be nurtured and developed alongside other professional skills in the newsroom.
>
> AJE members who have been practitioners (they continue to think of themselves as journalists) are well aware of a difficult double standard. That they should teach what is right, but also teach what is actually done. Honesty to the student requires that they be made aware that while there is a right way to do things, they might well be asked to do something different in the newsroom. This double standard can be reinforced by anecdotes from visiting speakers from the workplace. (AJE, 2011, p. 4)

And so it now it falls to the Independent Press Standards Organisation to carry out the regulatory role for the press, drawing up a code and regulating its use, whilst the education and training of journalists and the early development of the expectation of an open culture in newsrooms to help foster better standards are in the hands of journalism educators.

History of UK press journalism regulation

Concerns about journalistic standards in the UK are not new. The second edition of a journalism book (possibly the first designed to teach journalism in the UK) included a chapter about "Reporting Etiquette", probably the first published suggestion that there is a need for some professional courtesies (Reed, 1873). However the etiquette, quaint though it was, was more about working practices than ethics. Only the author's stress on the need for a reporter to be able to rely on his own notes would be recognisable as ethical advice today (Reed, 1873, pp. 103-109).

A professional code of practice for journalists, one of the requirements for higher standards of journalism, was first developed in the UK in 1936 by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) (Mansfield, 1943, p. 526).

Other plans to beat what were perceived (even in the thirties) as falling standards included a law to prevent multi-ownership; a well organised workforce; a well paid workforce and a conscience clause, allowing journalists to make ethical decisions about their work without fear of losing their job (Mansfield, 1935), policies still being sought by the NUJ.

The first body that could be identified as a form of press regulator in the UK was the Press Council, started in 1953 and launched out of the Royal Commission of 1947-49. The Press Council was a representative body of employer groups, editors and trade unions.

It had a chequered history and was finally wound up in 1990 following the Calcutt report on Privacy and Media Intrusion (Frost, 2000; O'Malley and Soley, 2000; Shannon, 2002). Whilst it had dealt with complaints from the public, it did not develop a code of practice, although it had been its intention to do so shortly before it was wound up. It was replaced by the Press Complaints Commission, a smaller body with a complaints panel consisting of editors and members of the public. This did use a code of conduct developed by the editors' code committee set up by national newspaper editors out of necessity during a period of particular public concern in 1989 (Frost, 2000; O'Malley and Soley, 2000). The PCC was not able to punish newspapers in breach of its code and could only oblige them to publish an adverse adjudication.

It seems that there are several reasons for the increase in the general perception that there has been a fall in journalism ethical standards. First is the rise in competing attractions throughout the mid to late eighties following the deregulation of TV and radio and the growing acceptance that the market should be the dominant factor (Frost, 2011; O'Malley and Soley, 2000; Shannon, 2002). This encouraged the popular press to increase its coverage of celebrities and gossip, leading to an increase in incidents of unethical behaviour such as intrusion, harassment and eventually phone hacking and data hacking. This was exacerbated by the increase in the number of publications available and the technical advances that led to multi-channel 24-hour TV, which saw TV following tabloid papers down the intrusion road with reality TV.

At the same time and subsequently, through the nineties and noughties, cost-cutting, deregulation and reduction in "government interference" led to an erosion in on-the-job training for journalists and a reciprocal rise in university journalism education (Cole, 1998). This also led to an increase in courses able to offer critical analysis of journalism and the teaching of ethics alongside practical training.

Training and education of journalists

Training of the growing band of early professional reporters in the 19th and 20th Century was limited to learning as you worked. There were no training schemes and precious little in the way of support. Few books were available to lead the way for the new reporter. One of the first books to be published about journalism in the UK was the *Reporter's Guide* (Reed, 1873) – a delightful but small publication full of detailed advice for the budding reporter. A further book, *Newspaper Reporting: In Olden Times and Today* (Pendleton, 1890), also throws some interesting light onto reporting in the early days of reporting in the era of the telegraph, but before the motor car.

Both these books tell tales of working with pens and ink in the days before typewriters in a world where much was changing, particularly in the world of politics and reporting.

Journalists of this early period took their work seriously, but whilst they worked hard, there was not the need for much skill other than a reasonable general education and shorthand. Technology was limited to the telegraph and a coach and horses.

Very little was written about journalism from the late 1800s until the Second World War. Things were changing, but the pace was slow. It was a period of development though: a diploma in journalism was started in 1919 by the London University with a course in practical journalism and English composition and optional choices in the fields of politics, economics, literature, history or modern languages.

F.J. Mansfield's The Complete Journalist (1935) was one of the few UK books on journalism to be written in the first half of the 20th Century. A foreword written by the former prime minister the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George expresses his astonishment that this should be the case:

> "Men who devote themselves to a calling so far reaching in its influence upon the nation clearly deserve the most careful training and preparation, the fullest literature of instruction, that can be provided. Yet it is an astounding fact that only in the most recent years have courses in journalism found their way into the curricula of a very few of our universities, while there are hardly any really good textbooks giving an adequate survey of this field of crucially important activity."

(Mansfield 1935, p. viii)

Ethics is hardly mentioned in Mansfield's book, although he does talk about a code of honour. The late thirties were starting to show some of the same ethical cracks that we see today and the debate around Bills calling for the registration of journalists, and a suggestion for a "Truthful Press Act" was a live issue. Walter Lippman called for professional training while H.G. Wells suggested that: "a well-paid and well-organised profession of journalism is our only protection against the danger of rich adventurers directing groups of newspapers" (Mansfield, 1935, p. 372).

Newspapers remained unchallenged as a news medium until the serious advent of radio in the 1930s and through the war, so although there was a wider use of typewriters than in Reed's day,

and the new journalism was starting to add more interpretation into stories than had been the case before, there was still little change in the way that the journalism was taught.

The London University journalism diploma did not survive the Second World War (Bundock, 1957, p. 67). The immediate post-war period, therefore, also lacked almost any kind of formal training or education for journalists in the UK.

The National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) was started in 1952 by employers groups, trade unions and editors overseeing training schemes in newspapers – it did not offer training for entry to journalism.

On the back of this steady formalisation of journalism training, the early sixties saw a sudden flourishing of books about journalism, all produced within months of each other. Whilst they were all solid primers on journalistic work, there was no mention of ethics and only an implied reference to standards.

This continued into the seventies with the NCTJ encouraging and sponsoring the publication of a number of books. Many trained in this era fondly remember the books by former *Sunday Times* editor Harold Evans. His books, *Newsman's English, Handling Newspaper Text, News Headlines, Pictures on a Page* and *Newspaper Design,* are classics and many still use them today. However things were changing with Cardiff University and then City University launching journalism diplomas in 1970 and 1976.

Training during the decades from the fifties to the eighties was still largely based in provincial newspaper in-house schemes examined by the NCTJ. These were funded and driven, to a large extent, by the Printing and Publication Industry Training Board, a quango set up to oversee training in those industries. In the seventies and eighties block release courses and then pre-entry courses were introduced, operating to the NCTJ's syllabus.

Broadcasting was largely run by the BBC until independent TV was launched in the fifties and then in the middle of the seventies when the Sound Broadcasting Act (1972) introduced Independent Local Radio. By 1977 there were 19 stations (Crissell, 1997, p. 187). The BBC was also building its local radio network through the seventies and eighties (ibid. p. 143). Broadcasting had long insisted on taking only graduates as recruits unless they had experience as newspaper journalists and, in so doing, had often taken excellent recruits who did not want to work in local newspapers (Cole, 1998, p. 69). This demand for additional journalists to feed the growing number of broadcast stations led universities to start Broadcast Journalism postgraduate courses.

With the changes in employment practice introduced by the Thatcher government, the eighties were a period of rapid and dramatic change. Universities now developed postgraduate courses in newspapers, following the introduction of postgraduate broadcast routes. The abolition of the PPITB left newspaper proprietors keen to reduce their spending on training after the withdrawal of state funding (Cole, 1998, p. 70) and this coincided with the ending of the provincial newspaper National Agreement between Newspaper Society members and the NUJ in 1987 (Gopsill and Neale 2007, p. 124), ending proprietors' obligation to train. With the marketplace filling with well-qualified graduates, many publishers saw an opportunity to save money by closing their training schemes to recruit directly from universities, ending their duty to consider training in ethics and any serious commitment to developing a supportive and ethical workplace culture.

It was not long before this student-driven desire to be trained as a journalist - no longer linked directly to employment - was converted by universities into undergraduate programmes. Lancashire Polytechnic, City University and London College of Communications were the first in the UK to launch a degree in journalism, with each launching courses in 1991.

These courses heralded the modern era of journalism training because undergraduate programmes were popular from the start with students. High numbers of applicants persuaded universities already running journalism postgraduate courses to launch their own journalism undergraduate courses and, ten years later, there were more than 30 HE institutions in the UK offering journalism degree courses and more than 40 by 2006. Today there are more than 60.

Alongside this growth in university courses, newspaper circulations were dipping, leading to redundancies. In the new millennium, as graduates were moving into the new posts provided by the internet expansion, more and more journalists were seeking the relatively safe haven of the academy as senior jobs suitable for those seeking promotion became even more difficult to find within the traditional media. This move to the academy led to it becoming a significant employer of journalists with hundreds taking up posts as "hackademics", as they swiftly became known, following the use of the term by Mathew Engel (2003, p. 61 cited by Harcup 2011, p. 34).

As these newly minted academics made the transition, many became more concerned with the central business of universities: scholarship and research. The traditional newsroom-based post-graduate courses, with their heavy emphasis on experiential learning were, of necessity, morphed into a more mixed course of theory and practice, with time spent in newsrooms split with more traditional lectures, seminars and tutorials. This move towards leavening journalism practice with skills of critical analysis and evaluation was demanded both by the universities and their quality assessment programmes; but there was also a demand by the students and, in many cases, by the hackademics. To be promoted in the academy involved becoming an administrator or a researcher and scholar and for many the administration route was unattractive. The growth of journalism research and scholarship led to a growing number of academics publishing in the field of journalism ethics and standards. The first few years of the 21st Century saw a rapidly rising number of very useful books almost entirely about ethics and media responsibility from such authors as Kierans (ed) (1998), Shaw (1999), Berry (ed), Frost, O'Malley & Soley, (all in 2000), Keeble, Cohen-Almagor, (in 2001), Sanders (2003), Alia (2004) and Harcup (2005). Practical journalism books also started to include serious discussion of ethics, with either a chapter or two, or at least references in the index: Keeble (1994), Randall (1996), Wilson (1996), Taylor (1998) and Frost (2001). This massive increase in journalism ethics books tells its own story. After 20 years of rapid development, journalism ethics was now being taken seriously in universities. This had more impact within the profession than would be expected. Journalism is a profession of young people with the typical reporter in his or her twenties or thirties; 70% are under 40 (Spilsbury, 2002, p. 4). In other words, many reporters have attended a course on journalism as outlined above, and many executives working in newspapers are also young enough to have attended a course that had some serious ethical input.

Journalism regulation

Broadcasting

Broadcast journalists have been regulated by statute since the start of broadcasting. Initially this was through the BBC charter, as the only broadcaster in the UK, but following the introduction of commercial television in the fifties and commercial radio in the 1970s, through various statutory regulators. These regulators had the power of prior approval over commercial TV until the abolition of the IBA in 1990 and its replacement with the Independent Television Commission. Now control lies with the Broadcasting Act 1996 and the Communications Act 2003, operating through Ofcom, the broadcast regulator set up under the Office of Communications Act 2002. This does not allow for prior approval but does lay down stringent obligations on broadcasters regarding accuracy, privacy, fairness and harm and offence. Broadcasters who breach the code risk a reprimand or a fine. Ofcom levies fines of several million pounds each year.

The Press Complaints Commission

The Press Complaints Commission, a press self-regulatory body, came into existence in January 1991 in the wake of growing concerns about the invasive nature of some of the media and the falling reputation of the Press Council, the previous self-regulatory press body. The was set up to replace the Press Council after the Calcutt committee, set up by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1989 to examine privacy and related matters, recommended that the industry

be given a year to get its house in order with a working self regulator, or otherwise risk statutory control. It issued adjudications measured against a code of practice.

The Independent Press Standards Organisation

The Independent Press Standards Organisation was set up by publishers in 2014 through the Regulatory Funding Company after the failure of negotiations on a new Leveson-compliant regulator. The failure of talks led to parliament agreeing a parliamentary Royal Charter and setting up a press recognition panel to verify that regulators adhere to the Charter requirements. However, the scheme was rejected by publishers who identified the Royal Charter as some form of statutory regulation, despite proposing a Royal Charter of their own to control press regulation.

The IPSO was launched in September 2014 under the chairmanship of Sir Alan Moses, a retired High Court judge. The board of IPSO was selected by an appointments panel, itself appointed by the Regulatory Funding Company. Complaints are measured against a code of practice published by the code committee composed mainly of editors. The Code, at the time of writing, is identical to that used by the PCC. IPSO does have some minor differences in approach to the PCC it replaced:

- Newspapers must have an acceptable in-house compliance system;
- Complainants can insist on complaints going to adjudication;
- Third party complaints can be accepted regarding accuracy or potential breaches of the code involving the public interest;
- The IPSO has the power to instruct publications where in the publication an adjudication should be published;
- The IPSO has the power to fine a publication for reckless or systemic breaches of the code;
- The IPSO has the power to monitor publications and investigate allegations of bad practice;
- The IPSO is obliged to set up a whistleblowing hotline for employees.

All of these reforms were suggested to the PCC on many occasions over the years but were rejected (see various Royal Commissions, Frost, evidence to CMS select committee reviews on press regulation, policy papers from the CPBF and NUJ, Media Standards Trust and Hacked Off). They are required by the Royal Charter and the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) and a rival regulator, Impress, is hoping to launch in the autumn of 2015 and thus receive PRP approval, triggering the final section of the Crime and Courts Act 2013.

Leveson Inquiry

The Leveson inquiry was announced on July 20, 2011 by Prime Minister David Cameron and started work shortly after. It finished taking evidence in July 2012 and published its 2,000 word report in November 2012. The report identified a number of problems regarding press standards and the culture of the press, including breaches of the Data Protection Act, the bribing of police officers and public officials and the ineffectiveness of the PCC.

Specific problems with the regulatory system included:

- Agreement that the PCC was not a regulator;
- The PCC was underfunded and could barely manage complaints handling;
- It had insufficient resources to initiate its own investigations;
- It was unable to accept complaints from third parties on a transparent basis;
- Bodies representing the interests of groups or minorities could not complain to the PCC;
- It had to trust that newspapers were properly examining the issues and were not being

economical with the truth;

- In relation to its investigations into phone hacking, it is common ground that it was misled;
- The lack of a power to fine, even in relation to serious and systemic breaches of the code, meant that the PCC was not a body whose adjudications had force against the industry (Leveson 2012, pp. 1541-1560).

It is these issues that the IPSO claimed to tackle, but it was clear from the report that Leveson identified more serious issues, which had limited the PCC and which the IPSO also failed to address:

"The PCC is constrained by serious structural deficiencies, which limit what it can do… the PCC is far from being an independent body. The lack of universal coverage, most notably after the withdrawal of the Northern and Shell titles from the self-regulatory system in January 2011, gave cause for observers and complainants to lose faith in the system." (Leveson, 2012, pp. 1576-1577)

There is no obligation on a newspaper to join IPSO and whilst most have, there are some notable exceptions: The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Observer, the Independent, The Independent on Sunday and the Evening Standard. Some other influential publications such as Which and Private Eye are also not members. This is despite evidence from virtually everyone to Leveson that membership of all significant publications was required for regulation to work. An absence of significant publications means that the regulator inevitably has to play to the lowest common denominator for fear that a publication that faces regulation it considers too stringent will quit, just as Northern and Shell (Daily Express, Sunday Express, and Daily Star) did in 2011 under the old PCC. The changes in the civil court costs regime under the Crime and Courts Act 2013 was intended to address this issue but requires the existence of a recognised regulator in order to be introduced in full.

Analysis

In order to evaluate the systems used to improve standards over the years there has to be an examination of the effectiveness first of the press regulatory systems that should be responsible for upholding items 1 and 3 identified in the introduction (the code and its standards, and the policing of the application of those standards) and an evaluation of the effectiveness of journalism education and its role in developing personal ethical standards with students and an understanding of the importance of a positive newsroom culture (items 2 and 4 above: newsroom culture and general educational standards, ability to develop an individual conscience, and so on).

Whilst newspapers and their readers have changed dramatically over the past 50 years, there are very similar concerns about standards now as there were 60 years ago. Parliamentary debate in 1990 was depressingly similar to debates following the release of the Leveson Report. Mr David Waddington, Secretary of State for the Home Department told Parliament in June 1990 that the government accepted the central recommendations of the Calcutt Report, which stated that:

> the press should be given 12 months to establish a press complaints commission on the lines proposed. This is positively the last chance for the industry to establish an effective non-statutory system of regulation. (http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1990/jun/21/calcutt-report)

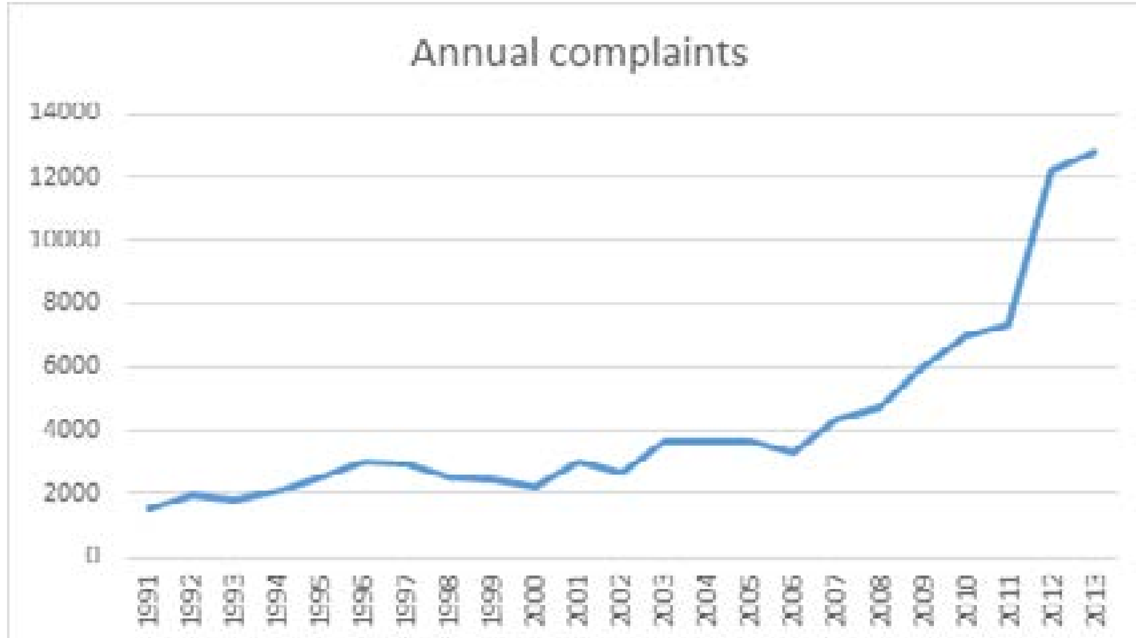
A very similar approach was taken in 2012, although David Cameron had weakened in the determination to reform press regulation that he had shown at the launch of the Leveson Inquiry. Whilst he had promised the BBC's Nick Robinson that he would implement the Leveson report provided it was not bonkers, he had to be backed into a corner by the opposition, his coalition partners and even some of his own backbenchers in order implement the main elements of Leveson through a Royal Charter. He had told Leveson that the PCC was a failed regulator, but was not prepared to fully implement Leveson's proposals for a tougher regulator.

Performance of the PCC

The Press Complaints Commission introduced a new era to complaint handling for the press in 1991. It measured complaints against a code of practice for the first time and obliged publications against whom it upheld complaints to publish its adjudication.

The PCC published reports and statistics about complaints received and its handling of them in bulletins, annual reports and on its website (www.pcc.org.uk). According to the annual reports, complaints received rose steadily over the years from 1,520 in its first year of operation to 12,763 in 2013, its final full year (it finished taking complaints in September 2014).

Figure 1: Annual number of complaints to the PCC



*In excess of 37,000 complaints were made in 2009. Approximately 21,000 of those concerned the Stephen Gately column by Jan Moir and have been removed from this table.

Whilst complaints rose steadily, and rather more rapidly in the last six years, this hides a slightly distorted figure. As complaints rose, so did the percentage involving accuracy, from a norm of around 60% in its first few years to 90% in its last three full years. This means that the number of complaints that did not concern accuracy remained remarkably stable; typically in the 700-1300 range each year (see figure 2).

Whilst the percentage of complaints concerning accuracy rose, the number of complaints received concerning privacy also rose (see figure 3), driving the percentage of privacy complaints from a typical 10% to 12% to more than 40% in its last two years (see figure 4). This is partly down to different counting methods. In its last three years, the PCC did not issue full annual reports and the statistics released in its annual review were limited to accuracy, privacy and discrimination. Assuming that privacy also included complaints about harassment, intrusion and hidden listening devices, statistics that had previously been listed separately, this might explain some of the increase. However, complaints about intrusion and harassment in earlier years had usually also involved a complaint about privacy so this may not be the case and those complaints about intrusion and harassment in the past had already included and been counted as privacy complaints.

Despite the strong rise in complaints received, including a large increase in the number of privacy complaints, the number of complaints adjudicated by the PCC, as reported in their monthly

Figure 2: Annual complaint numbers that did not concern accuracy

Figure 3: Privacy complaints

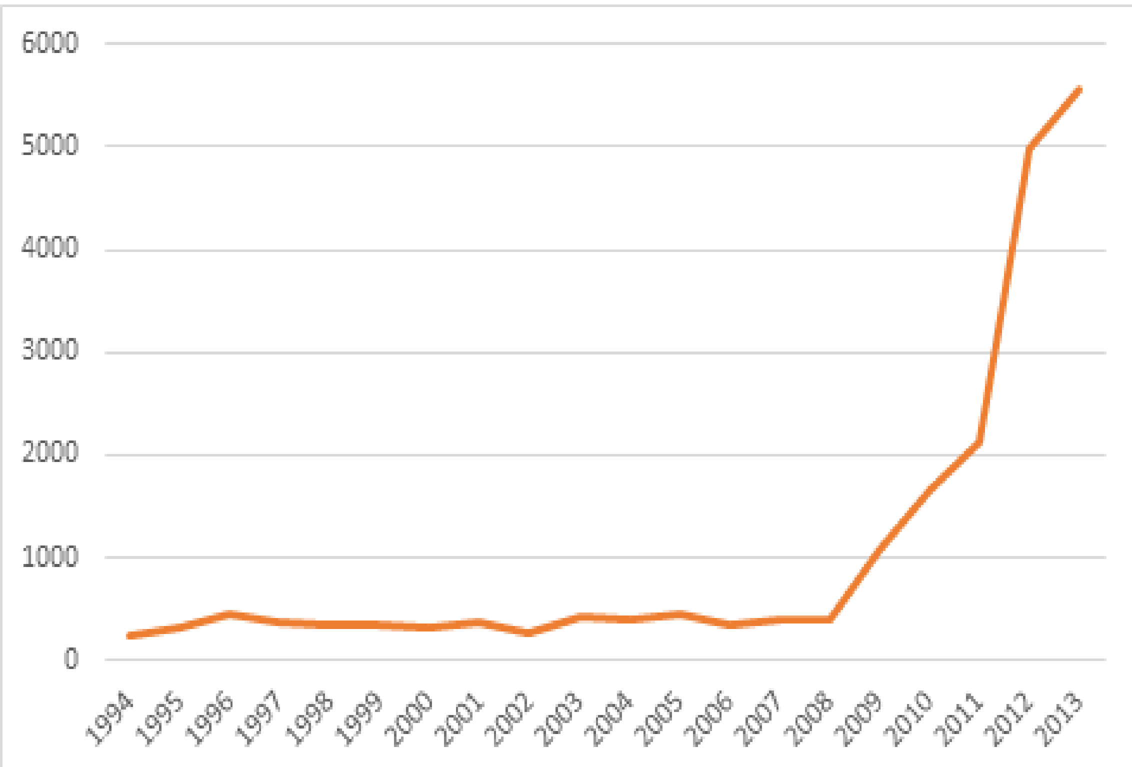


Figure 4: Percentage of complaints concerning privacy and accuracy

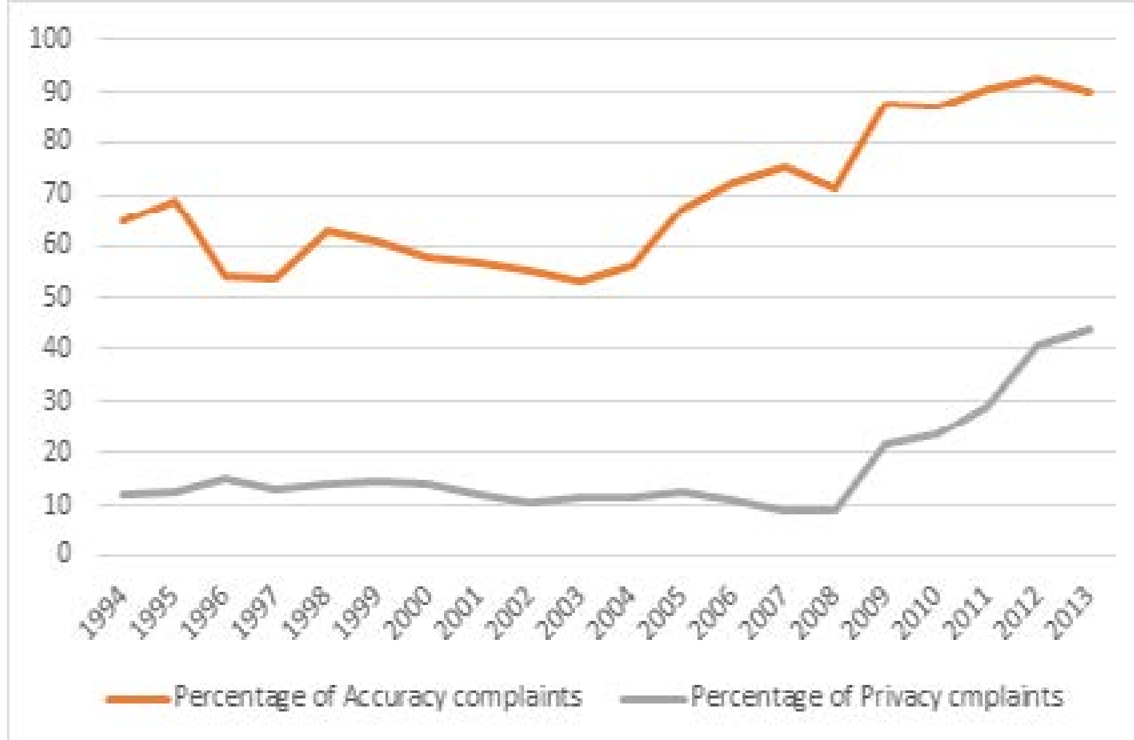


Figure 5: Annual adjudications by the PCC

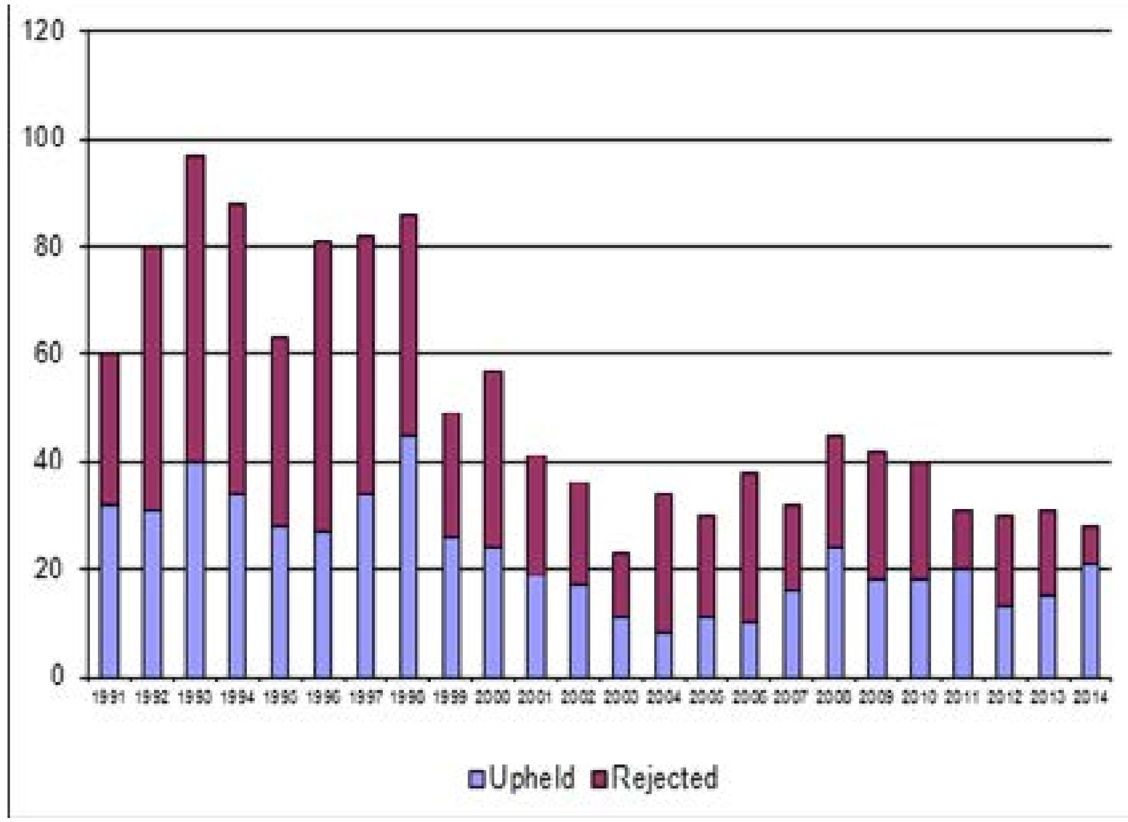


Figure 6: Annual adjudications by the PCC as a percentage of complaints

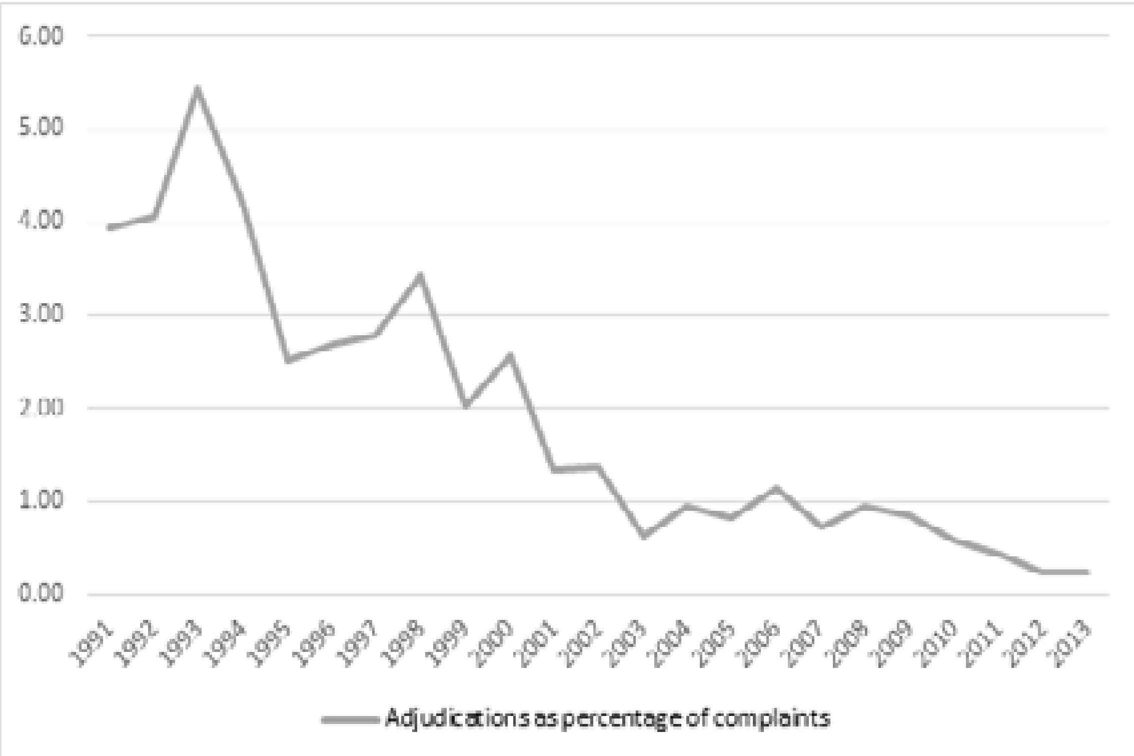
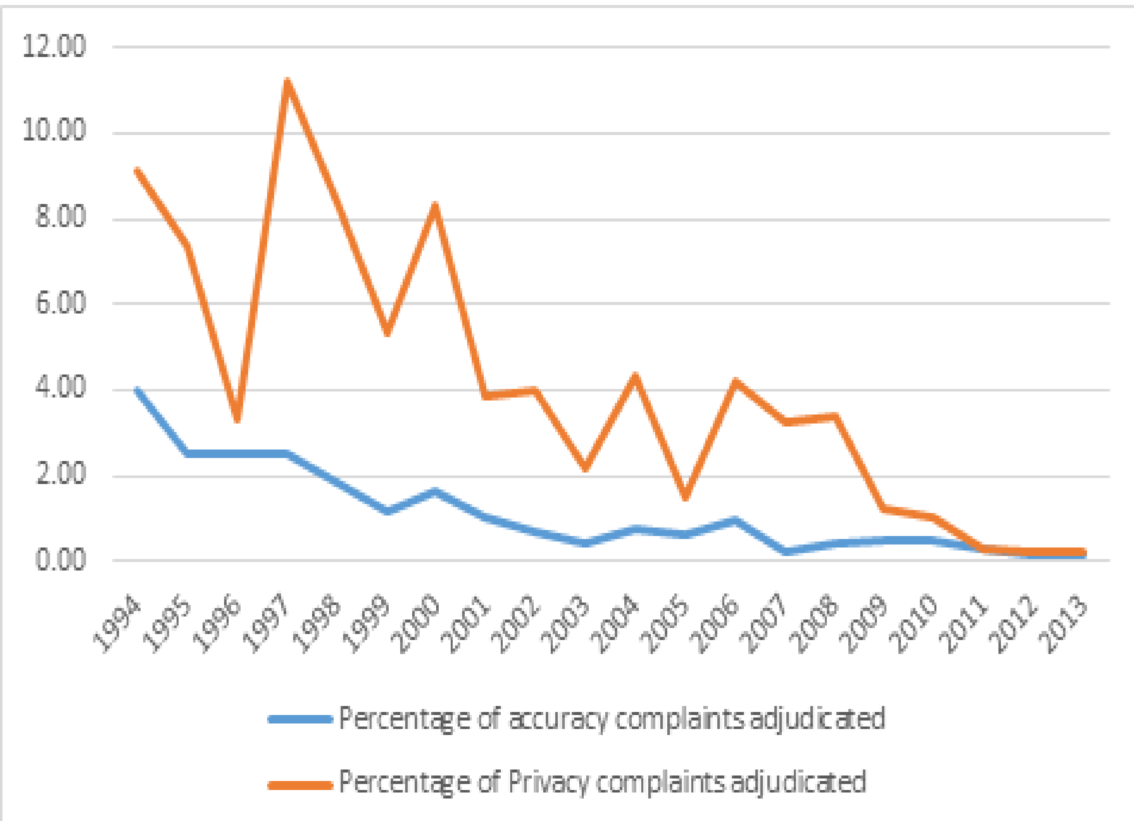


Figure 7: Percentage of accuracy and privacy complaints adjudicated



bulletins and then on their website, went down over the years. Figure 5 shows the number of adjudications both upheld and rejected and figure 6 shows the sharp decline in adjudications as a percentage of complaints received over the years. Figure 7 shows the inevitable matching decrease in adjudications on privacy and accuracy.

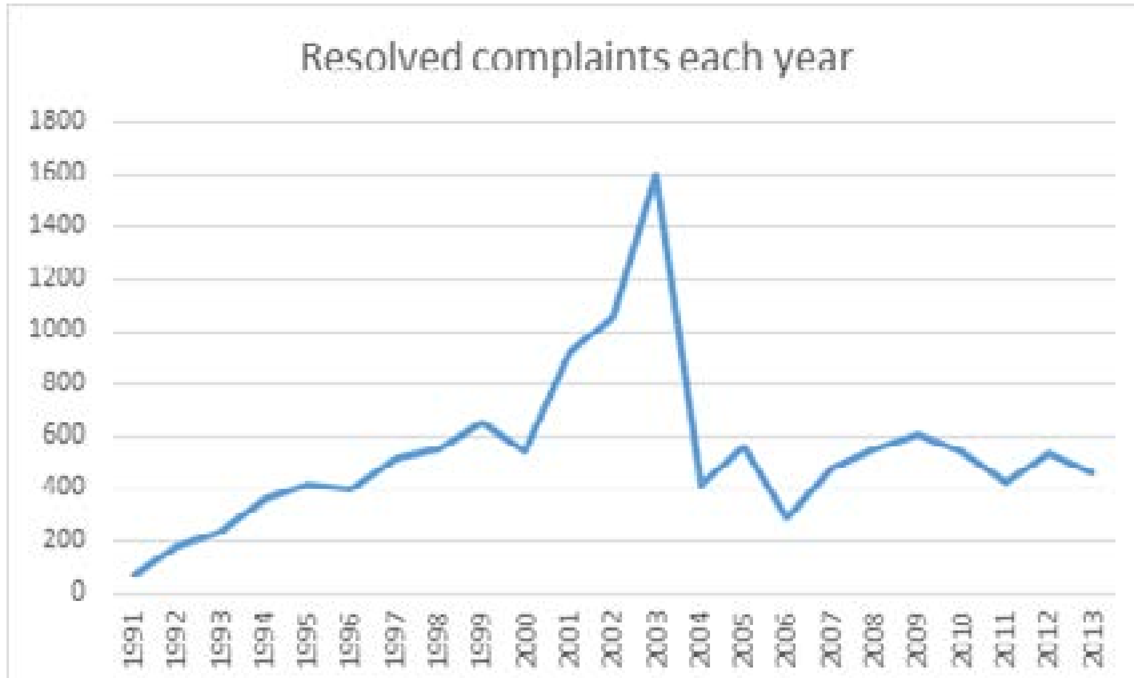
Partly this decline in adjudications is caused by an increase in the number of complaints resolved, but even this is largely caused by a peak of activity around 2003 and otherwise resolutions have remained largely the same over the past 15 years (see figure 8).

The PCC consistently boasted about the number of complaints resolved, identifying this as a positive benefit of self-regulation in several annual reports. However, others have suggested that resolution is not always in the complainants interests. The Culture Media and Sport Select committee heard evidence from one witness that:

"…even though she had, eventually, won the argument and got an apology, she was left with the feeling that the newspaper had 'got away with it' (and no sense that someone else would not get the same treatment). The PCC summary of the matter, under the heading "resolved complaints" read: "The newspaper published a full correction and apology". The complainant told us: 'I never had the sense … that at any time anybody actually sat down and made any decisions about it.' She described the to and fro of letters and added 'I kept saying 'I press you to adjudicate' … but, in fact I was pressed to accept the final offer of The Daily Mail, which was to publish an apology on page 31."

(House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, 2003, pp. 25-26; see also Frost 2012a and the House of Commons 2010).

Figure 8: Annusl complaints resolved by the PCC



The Leveson report also identified that the PCC was more likely to support the industry than complainants, showing that there was a clear 'inequality of arms' between newspaper managers and lawyers and the vast majority of complainants:

"…it would be fundamentally incorrect to suggest that the PCC represented the complainant in the process, and in so doing helped to bridge the even greater chasm in expertise and experience that existed between the vast majority of those who made complaints and the representatives of industry. In most cases, the PCC functioned as a letterbox, both for the complainant and the industry, passing on the accounts of events but more damagingly, particularly for the victims of press mistreatment, being unable to challenge in any way the version of events advanced by the industry even in those cases when these were clearly open to question." (Ibid. pp. 1552-1553)

It is also important when looking at the performance of the PCC to consider the league table of complained-of publications over the PCC's history to discover their relative performance. Table 1 shows the leading 30 publications in terms of complaints, with the Daily Mail and the Sun at the top of the league. One has the largest number of complaints that the PCC saw as potential breaches of the code and the other had the most upheld adjudications.

Table 1: League table of top 30 publications complained of to the PCC 1991-2014

Newspaper	Adj	upheld	part uh	reject	notpur	rem actio	resolved	total
Daily Mail	55	8	2	37	0	7	748	803
The Sun	72	28	1	39	0	4	423	495
Daily Mirror	56	14	5	30	0	5	215	271
Daily Telegraph	32	8	1	20	0	3	233	265
Mail on Sunday	53	17	3	30	2	2	199	252
News of the World	53	16	5	28	1	2	131	184
Evening Standard	37	10	1	22	0	4	131	168
The Times	14	2	0	11	1	0	154	168
Daily Express	23	6	2	15	0	0	127	150
Sunday Times	43	14	0	28	0	0	102	145
The Guardian	19	3	1	13	0	3	126	145
Daily Record	20	8	2	9	0	1	94	114
Daily Star	31	11	1	17	0	2	77	108
The People	27	10	1	16	0	0	79	106
Sunday Mirror	25	10	1	12	1	1	76	101
The Independent	13	3	0	10	0	0	74	87
Sunday Telegraph	17	2	0	10	0	5	68	85
Sunday Mail	22	8	2	11	0	1	60	82
Metro	1	0	0	1	0	0	65	66
Sunday Express	7	2	1	4	0	0	54	61
Scottish Sun	9	1	0	7	0	0	47	56
The Observer	7	4	0	2	1	0	45	52
The Scotsman	2	1	0	1	0	0	36	38
Daily Sport	10	9	0	0	0	0	25	35
Glasgow Herald	3	0	0	2	0	1	32	35
Evening News, Edin	4	0	0	4	0	0	30	34
Sunday World	9	6	0	3	0	0	23	32
Press And Journal	4	1	0	3	0	0	28	32
Take a Break	3	3	0	0	0	0	28	31
Scottish Daily Mail	3	1	1	1	0	0	28	31

Finally, there is a breakdown of the average number of complaints against various clauses of the code (table 2). Not surprisingly, accuracy and privacy lead the table. It is worth noting that complaints about discrimination are not very high up the table. This is partly, at least, because the PCC refused to take complaints from complainants not named in the story and many complaints about stories concerning discrimination have to be taken as complaints about accuracy. Otherwise there is little surprise that accuracy, privacy, harassment, children, intrusion and misrepresentation are the most complained about.

Table 2: Types of complaints made to the PCC 1991-2014

Total individual adjudicated complaints against a publication: 1193

	No	%
Accuracy:	662	55.9%
Opportunity to reply:	52	4.39%
Privacy:	387	32.7%
Harassment:	99	8.35%
Intrusion:	94	7.93%
Children:	117	9.87%
Hospitals:	30	2.53%
Innocent relatives:	43	3.63%
Listening devices:	22	1.86%
Victims of Sexual assault:	30	2.53%
Financial journalism:	3	0.25%
Confidential sources:	15	1.27%
Discrimination:	62	5.23%
Payments:	43	3.63%
Misrepresentation:	88	7.43%

All in all it is a dismal picture of a complaints-handling body that did not, in fact, handle that many complaints. Leveson quickly dismissed it as a regulator and, although he praised the hard-working staff, he was also clear it was not much of a complaints handler:

The PCC has very limited power to investigate complaints. In particular, it does not have the power to compel parties to produce documents or any other evidence in support of, or capable of contradicting, their account of events. The PCC does not have the power to ask for sworn evidence. There is no sanction for an individual who misleads the PCC, tells half-truths or fails to answer the PCC's questions. (Leveson, 2012, p.1545)

IPSO

The IPSO took over from the PCC in September 2014. Its structures and policies are largely the same. There are one or two differences in approach.

1. It has a wider remit for third party complaints;
2. It has a stronger commitment to investigations and monitoring press activity;
3. It can fine publications for systemic breaches of the code;
4. Complainants can now insist on going to adjudication.

At the time of writing IPSO had adjudicated 156 complaints, about double the number of the PCC in half the time. However, it no longer seems to publish details of resolutions. The ratio of types of complaint made are largely the same as the PCC in its last two years (see table 3). Of those 156 complaints, 27 were upheld (17.3%) a much lower figure than the PCC, but of course without going through the initial filter of the resolutions system.

Table 3: IPSO adjudications by type

Accuracy:	82.3%
Opportunity to reply:	17.7%
Privacy:	34.2%
Harassment:	7.59%
Intrusion:	12.7%
Children:	7.59%
Children sex cases:	1.27%
Hospitals:	0
Innocent relatives:	6.33%
Listening devices:	1.27%
Victims of Sexual assault:	0
Financial journalism:	0
Confidential sources:	1.27%
Discrimination:	1,27%
Payment to witnesses:	0
Payment to criminals:	0

Conclusions

It is clear that whilst the PCC's editors' code of practice did set up a basic standard of journalism and was not, despite its limitations, of itself part of the problem, the PCC's inability to regulate the press according to the code and only very limited ability to deal with complaints was a major problem in terms of raising standards. The IPSO looks likely to fare no better; another case of too little too late that has dogged the history of press regulation. At every stage, the publishers have failed to take the regulation deficit seriously and put into their self-regulator the recommendations made by those asked to investigate press standards. It is clearly their policy to do as little regulation as is needed to fend off statutory regulation. Publishers, through the Regulatory Funding Company, have agreed this time to sanctions such as fines, but measured by a regulatory system that is most unlikely ever to be able or willing to apply them. It has agreed that the IPSO can monitor the press and make its own investigations, but only using money raised and ring-fenced for the purpose by sanction fines. The argument given by publishers for the IPSO not being Leveson compliant is that this would be damaging to press freedom and therefore free expression. There is, of course, no evidence for this. The regulator outlined by Leveson and incorporated in the Royal Charter does not place any limit on what is published but only requires publishers to justify publication after the event or risk an adverse adjudication. Nor does it limit free expression, as the only limits here are on the press, not the internet (which has never sought regulation), broadcasting (already more heavily regulated), nor individuals with the many social media publication opportunities at their disposal. The press claims to be responsible and has set up a regulatory system to support responsibility in order to avoid the potential for further, and more draconian, legislation; but self-regulation is in the publishers' interests and has little public support, according to evidence given to Leveson. The risk of continuing to ignore the need to address press standards and their policing would be to risk a major blow to self-expression for the rest of us, as the government bows to public calls for restrictions and introduces more stringent legislation on freedom of expression that would impact badly on all of us in the era of social media.

Any improvement in standards, then, must come from education and training, both in terms of

providing students with the tools for ethical decision-making to the standards the public expects, but also providing them with the confidence in their abilities and standards to cope with the newsroom culture that they will face.

Education at university must involve not just understanding of the code of practice and the regulatory system, but the importance of all editorial staff being equally involved in an open and honest approach to high standards. This means students understanding and operating an appropriate code, whether a journalists' code such as the NUJ's or a publishers' or broadcasters' code, and also being taught in an environment, whether newsroom or classroom, that encourages critical analysis, evaluation, a willingness to challenge and the tools and skills of argument and interpersonal relations to be able to challenge effectively. For students to understand this, "that's the way we've always done it" is not a good enough answer to the question "why". We must teach our students about democracy, the will of the majority, the rights of the minority and our part in its process as journalists, supporting its operation by discovering the truth as far as we are able and presenting it to the public in order to aid their decision-making. The freedom of the press to write what it likes, true or not, invasive or not, should not be controlled by a handful of rich publishers rather than the will of the majority. We must also have more confidence in our own teaching; to realise that it's not good enough to accept the double standard of "this is what we teach, but this is what it is like in the newsroom". If we are confident of our teaching then there should be no double standard, and if we're not confident about it, we should teach something else.

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'The imminent death of the British local press'

Mick Temple, Staffordshire University

Introduction

This paper takes a clinical look at the current state of one of Britain's most treasured artefacts – the local printed newspaper – and points the way towards the likely future.

The evidence is overwhelming: rapidly declining sales and radical cost-cutting exercises indicate the daily local printed newspaper will soon be dead. The traditional audience is also literally dying – and to most of our young people, the idea of getting news twelve hours after it has happened in a form which dirties your hands and involves felling half a forest, looks as quaint as relying on a carrier pigeon for the latest football scores. Not only that, but there has been a failure to both prepare and then adapt to the new media landscape. Responding far too late to the online revolution, the conglomerates, who hesitated to invest and now offer user-unfriendly, PR-dominated and print-heavy online sites, face increasing challenges from a new breed of independent local journalism. This does not mean that more considered printed assessments – perhaps a weekly digest and analysis of the last seven day's events – will not continue and perhaps even prosper. But those who insist upon the continued health of the Evening Herald et al (and there are many within the industry who do so) are ignoring the evidence. Given this, the insistence of the main training and accreditation body on training future journalists according to the wishes of the representatives of a dying industry might seem perverse, and this article will briefly assess the implication of this for journalism educators.

The evidence

The printed local press is dying and the evidence is clear and compelling. In the second half of 2014, ABC figures show that all paid-for regional daily newspapers in the UK saw a continuing decline in circulation. To stress, every single paid-for local daily audited by ABC lost readers and the average decline was just over 10 percent in one year (Ponsford, 2104b).

Press Gazette reported that the Birmingham Mail (down 20.5 per cent to 30,597) and the Sunderland Echo (down 16.8 per cent to 18,876) 'were the worst performing titles year on year'. Even the Belfast Telegraph, the best performing title, in terms of declining circulation change, lost 3.4 percent of its customers. The three biggest selling local newspapers did not escape the downward trend: 'the Express and Star (down 13.1 per cent to 72,072), the Manchester Evening News (down 4.1 per cent to 66,521) and the Liverpool Echo (down 11.7 per cent to 61,902)' illustrate the depth of the malaise (Ponsford, 2014a).

Just twenty years ago, the Express & Star sold 217,000 copies, the MEN was only just behind with sales of 214,000 and the Echo sold 173,000 copies every day. So in two decades, three of our most distinguished local titles have lost nearly two-thirds of their customers

It is not all bad news. One sector, the free local and regional newspaper, appears to be bucking the trend. The biggest circulation regional newspaper, the free London Evening Standard, increased its circulation by 21.9 per cent to 824,515. Notwithstanding this, within the paid-for sector, there is not only a clear decline in readership; the decline is highest among younger read-

ers, those who are potentially the future champions of local journalism. The younger you are, the less likely you are to read a local newspaper (Newspaper Society, 2013). Those most committed to buying a newspaper are, literally, a dying breed.

The decline in sales is not because of the technological revolution of the internet, although the net has certainly accelerated the sickness. The fall in sales precedes the World Wide Web (Gentskow 2014). The reasons are complex. Briefly, they include changing work patterns, the rise in car travel and the increasing reliance on relatively up-to-date television news. The arrival of commercial television and later, commercial radio, also put great pressure on advertising revenues. The industry has not been helped by the failure of local newspaper groups to invest when times were good. Local papers were cash cows, with profit margins ranging from a minimum of 20 percent up to almost 40 percent well into the 21st century: for example, as noted in a report by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ):

> 'Between the start of 2003 and the end of 2007, Media Wales's profit margins averaged 34 per cent, peaking at 38 per cent for the 12 months to the end of 2005. These profits made Media Wales one of the most profitable companies in Wales of any kind, let alone in the media industry. The profits were not invested in the businesses; they were being creamed off by shareholders and used to pay newspaper executives enormous sums' (NUJ, 2103).

Even David Montgomery, the controversial CEO of Local World, agrees: 'when times were good, the newspaper chiefs squeezed profits, made unwise acquisitions, built up debts and failed to invest in journalism' (Hollander 2013).

The industry response

Despite the falls in circulation and revenue, the big newspaper groups remain bullish. The public optimism of many local news organisations and their champions in the face of the evidence is touching (see Mair et al, 2012). At a major conference on "local and regional journalism after Leveson" organised by Chester University, Anthony Longden of the Society of Editors urged critics to 'stop being cynical', arguing there were many positives to be upbeat about. If owners got 'back to basics' the 'trusted, quick reference source' that is the local paper would have a healthy future (Longden, 2014). Tor Clark, a former journalist and now a journalism lecturer at De Montfort University, maintains that the regionals remained 'trusted and authoritative brands' whose digital audiences was growing (Clark, 2014). The independent newspaper owner Sir Ray Tindle remains convinced of the traditional local paper's continuing viability and maintain that those who forecast its early demise are mistaken. Tindle argues that 'most people still want it in its present printed form' (In Publishing, 2014). It is unarguable that many people may still have an emotional attachment to their local newspaper but the circulation figures don't lie.

The belief of owners (especially) that quality is being maintained in the face of declining circulation has been challenged by a number of observers. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ), admittedly with an axe to grind, brought out a detailed report on the future of local papers in December 2013 and argued:

> 'Cuts in the numbers of journalists, the closing and mergers of titles, the move from daily to weekly titles and the production of local newspapers many miles from the communities they serve have all had a serious effect on the quality of local papers'.

For example, Newsquest has made a number of redundancies by moving the production of the Oxford Mail and other titles to Newport in Wales, following similar moves by their papers in York, Darlington and Blackburn (Snoddy, 2015, p.14). The growth of subbing hubs, with its loss of experienced local journalists, arguably increases inaccuracies and can hardly be said to serve the local public sphere. Indeed, while Anthony Longden (2014) was recently bullish about the future of the local press, just one year earlier he had remarked how 'one of the most bizarre things to have happened in this long period of decline is how such a pivotal newsroom role as that of the sub editor could have collapsed so completely' (2013). The NUJ agrees, arguing that the reality increasingly means:

> 'reporters sitting at their desks pouring press releases into pre-determined page grids. Sub-editors, the people who check copy for accuracy, are seen as surplus to requirements' (NUJ, 2013).

Sir Ray Tindle's optimism about the future may reflect a short-term response to his company's similar acts of surgery. For example, "printing costs are pared by sticking firmly to weeklies, which allows time for contracting out … the Tenby Observer, for example, is printed in Bristol' (Wainwright, 2008).

Sir Ray is convinced that profits are 'beginning the long climb back'. In contrast, Keith Perch of IPSO argues the economics of the local press is 'shot to pieces'. As he points out, there are not enough staff to report properly in the public interest and some local newspapers are effectively 'withdrawing from the public sphere'. Revenues are declining in real terms and the number of reporters is rapidly decreasing. For example, the much admired Leicester Mercury has gone from 123 editorial staff in 2003 to 46 in 2014: in addition, instead of seven editions there is only one, a pattern reflected elsewhere (Perch, 2014). The Stoke-on-Trent Sentinel is now a single edition morning newspaper, printed overnight and with no updates during the day, and the number of editorial staff has drastically declined in the last five years. These trends are repeated across the country.

The NUJ's belief that the crisis in the local public sphere is so grave that government intervention should be sought to 'shore up the local news sector by subsidies, tax relief or the support of new ownership models such as co-operatives … and look to new models which provide funding for newspapers in return for providing a public service' (NUJ 2013) is highly unlikely to find favour, especially with the current Conservative government.

The impact on quality local journalism

The decline in sales has been accompanied by accusations of a decline in 'quality' journalism and of a failure to adequately serve the local public sphere. Readers providing local sports results and photographs of fund-raising events do not hold local decision makers to account. The belief that small numbers of journalists, supported by 'reader-generated copy' can continue to produce high quality public service journalism receives short shrift from the NUJ.

Local journalists recognise the criticisms of 'pouring press releases into pre-determined page grids' (NUJ, 2103) as an increasingly accurate description of much of their work. It may be cheap journalism, but it does a disservice to the increasingly suspect notion (or myth) of the press as a 'fourth estate'. In private, every local journalist will admit that lack of resources means council meetings and court cases are not being covered, contributing to a declining local accountability. This alleged local 'democratic deficit' arouses much concern among distinguished local journalists:

> 'I wince when I hear people waxing lyrical on the vital role played by local papers in holding authority and powerful individuals to account. Perhaps they *used* to, I like to think they did. But they have shrunk to such an extent many can no longer hope to perform that essential journalistic function to any valid extent. Until the early 1990s, there were enough reporters to attend courts and council meetings. This could be worthy, often dull, but it was proper public scrutiny just the same. With very few noble exceptions, this scrutiny of public bodies at a local level is not happening now.' (Longden 2013).

Arguably, local papers of the past, when editors were almost exclusively local men who shared the same social circles, failed to hold local councillors and businessmen to account and they are now far less deferential to local dignitaries (Temple, 2008: pp.182-3). Despite recent concerns about the coverage of elections, the local dailies still cover local politics in some detail and their

coverage is arguably 'less sycophantic, less boring and … superior to the endless committee meetings reported in the local press of old' (ibid.: p. 112).

Keith Perch of IPSO noted the wholesale printing of police reports of court cases, with no interrogation of those reports. In effect, the police view of cases and their outcomes was being published (2014). Other criticisms are potentially even more serious. The Tindle press has also been accused of perhaps a more disturbing failure in the local public sphere: the Guardian reported that Tindles's 'strength of feeling about the services led him to ask his editors not to report anti-war events once the 2003 invasion of Iraq was under way' (Wainwright, 2008).

Many owners appear unconcerned about criticism. Local World publishes 83 weekly and daily local newspapers; in evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport select committee, its CEO, David Montgomery, foresees the future role of journalists as 'harvesters of content'. As reported by Press Gazette, Montgomery told the committee:

> 'We are going to have to reinvent the model … we can't keep taking costs out but employ the same production techniques in print. We have to be truly digital, so that in three or four years from now, much of our human interface will have disappeared. We will have to harvest content and publish it without human interface, which will change the role of journalists (Hollander, 2013).

Chilling words to describe the consequence of sacking people: 'much of our human interface will have disappeared'. Earlier, Montgomery was reported as saying that he wanted to see a '20-fold increase in content' and a phasing out of sub-editors: sub-editing was 'a twilight world, checking things you don't really need to check'. In such circumstances, the demands that will be made on the few remaining journalists are many:

> 'The journalist will embody all the traditional skills of reporter, sub-editor, editor-in-chief, as well as online agility and basic design ability, acquired partly in training but in the case of on-screen capability this is expected as a basic entry qualification as it is now generally present in most 12-year-olds' (Hollander, 2013).

All these skills demanded from current and future journalists, and for so little money. In 2013, a survey by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) found that the average salary for a newspaper journalist is £22,250 and starting salaries could be as low as £12,000 (http://www.prospects.ac.uk/newspaper_journalist_salary.htm).

Never mind, the future's online ?

In 2009, the online guru Clay Shirky noted that the problem was not that the newspaper industry did not see the internet coming – they saw it miles away but believed that the original form of the newspaper as 'a general purpose vehicle for publishing a variety of news and opinion was basically sound and only needed a digital facelift'. They failed to understand and get to grips with social media and changing patterns of interaction. Their current attitudes indicate they may still not have understood and faced those changes.

For some local newspaper owners and journalists the decline of printed copies doesn't matter. 'Online is the future;' they maintain. Local media groups talk up their increasing online traffic which is, at least superficially, impressive. For example, Johnston Press, Newsquest and Local World all reported increase of up to 90 percent in terms of monthly unique browsers in 2014: press releases lauded this 'surge in online readership', proudly declaring that the South Wales Evening Post has increased online traffic by an impressive 61.5 percent in the previous six months. (Turvill, 2014). But all online media are increasing traffic: what is more pertinent is whether that surge can be maintained and what users feel about their online visits. The belief that with only a fraction of the previous staff they can continue to maintain their unique selling points to readers (for example, locality, brand name and trustworthiness), overlooks the nature of the current online experience.

A visit to the South Wales Evening Post's online site in November 2014 dispelled any notions that the surge in views will result in consistent traffic. Within two seconds, unbidden, an ad for

Chicago Deep Dish Pizza whooshes across and fills the screen. Close the ad and another immediately appears for Vodaphone, blaring loud music into my ears. A video ad then appears with a voice declaring 'It's A Boy' which I close without knowing (or caring) what it's selling and click on the sports section. I start to scroll down the page and as I scan the stories the audio for a loud car advert blasts out – where is it? Before I can find it, it ends and a video interview with then Queens Park Rangers manager Harry Redknapp (of doubtful relevance to South Wales) begins which I eventually locate at the top of the scrolled page and close. The only video content on the site are advertisements and irrelevant PR material, presumably distributed to all the newsgroup's outlets. I repeat the process on the Leicester Mercury site with similarly depressing results.

Astonishingly, journalists who complain about this to management are told that readers enjoy 'pop-ups': where they get the evidence for this assertion is not known. The increase in online traffic for local papers is unsurprising: almost every online news site's audience is rising as the online migration accelerates, but customers for local news will not return if this is their repeated experience.

By contrast, most hyperlocal/citizen journalism sites are clear and clean. They don't tend to bombard the viewer with unwanted ads and they also welcome very local content. If the concept of a local public sphere is important for the maintenance of democratic legitimacy then citizen journalism sites should be seen as an essential complement to mainstream sites. Instead, some citizen journalists believe that their larger local newspaper sees them as rivals and their content as 'fair game', frequently helping themselves to stories without crediting the source. The Nantwich News hyperlocal site, run by one former local journalist, has almost as many unique users and page views per month as its commercial rival the Crewe Chronicle (with six reporters and a news editor). Perhaps they would gain from utilising and acknowledging the contacts and stories of their smaller 'rival'. The relationship could be mutually beneficial rather than antagonistic.

The traditional local brand names argue that the future is online but appear to just push out the same stuff as before, only with fewer reporters and less subbing and fact-checking. The other key imperative seems to be get it out there quick. 'Be first' is increasingly the key mantra. Lily Canter, a former local journalist and now a journalism tutor at Sheffield Hallam University, recently called the current 'Digital First' approach suicidal and told of her recent 'workout' experience at Derbyshire Times (updating her technical skills to ensure her students receive up to date advice). She told Holdthefrontpage how being first with the story resulted in cutting and pasting, cutting legal corners and writing straight to the web with no checks (Hudson, 2104: see also, Canter, 2014).

Her reward for noting this drew hostile comments to the Holdthefrontpage comments feed. Instead of her points being addressed, the majority response was personal attacks of the sarcastic 'tell me something I don't know' variety. What such comments miss is that perhaps the most important asset of the local newspaper is that, unlike their view of national journalists, the public trust their local rag. How long will this continue with few if any checks on their online content, a continuing reliance on press releases, PR and syndicated material and cut and paste from other sources? The response of a Johnston Press spokeswoman to Canter's concerns was that 'consumers expect immediacy when it comes to their news consumption and journalists today don't always have the luxury of time as they strive to get online quickly' (Hudson, 2014). The spokeswoman added that their journalists' NCTJ pass rate of 88 percent in journalism law was proof that the lack of proofing was not a problem with regard to libel or contempt. One worries about the 12 percent who fail and who are posting content without a sub-editor's watchful eye.

The consequences for our students

Dr Canter says that her multi-tasking duties included 'shooting video, taking photos, uploading content to the paper's website and to social media, importing photos, writing captions and headlines, laying out pages, editing video and creating photo-slide shows' (Hudson, 2014). One wonders where this multi-media content appeared. Despite the insistence of local and regional

newspaper groups that students on accredited journalism courses are taught multimedia skills, local or regional news stories with video or audio content on local newspaper online sites are very much the exception rather than the rule.

The lack of such content, and the low levels of salary offered to our highly-skilled journalism graduates, leads me to question why we are continuing to guide our student into local print journalism. Talking to journalism tutors, the anecdotal evidence is that fewer of our graduates are entering the local press. Given the decline in jobs this is inevitable, but the reasons also include student reaction to their work placement experience. Their range of skills is often barely utilised. Weeks of cutting and pasting press releases and generic content mean many are disenchanted by the prospect of working in a local newsroom, and more attractive and better-paid jobs in the booming PR industry (and even producing content for private and public sector online sites) look more alluring.

The inevitable question that must be addressed is why are we still producing journalists largely according to the dictats of the owners and editors of a local press whose future is uncertain and who undervalue the tremendous skills our students bring? This is not to deny the value of accreditation – NCTJ and BJTC accreditations continue to demonstrate to students, parents and the industry that accredited centres are providing courses with high standards. Nor is it to deny the value of traditional subjects like shorthand. Some broadcasters now insist on 100 words a minute shorthand for successful applicants: that level of achievement demonstrates commitment and shorthand is still a potentially valuable skill. It goes without saying that the need for students to have good writing skills and be competent in media law is still essential.

But undergraduate journalism students are emerging with online and broadcasting skills – and increasingly, skills in data manipulation (Long, 2014) - which the local press is underutilising. So, given the widely-acknowledged poor practices, we need to ask if we serve the best interests of our students, especially those on NCTJ accredited courses, by stressing the local newspaper as a good place to seek a placement or to start your journalistic career.

Conclusion

So, what's the future of the local press? Briefly, who knows, but it is increasingly inconceivable that it will be in a daily printed format. There is not one future, like the monolithic newspapers of the past and the future cannot be churning out copy, or more accurately 'churnalism'. Many new and independent sites are setting alternative news agendas which challenge the hegemony of the traditional press (Temple, 2013). The online Chronicle, Sentinel, Post, etc., will not dominate the local news agenda and they will have to cooperate with this growing network of 'citizen journalists' in order to survive. They may also need to swallow their prejudices and cooperate with other long-time 'enemies', and perhaps respond to the recent overtures of the BBC with regards to the offer of free licence-fee funded content and the BBC 'picking up the tab for local court reporting' (Plunkett, 2014). There is an increasing understanding among some industry voices that they have to find new ways of doing things which do not simply involve reducing their work force.

Despite Anthony Longden's optimism about the future for the local press, he recognises that unlike in previous transitions, the experiences of the past provide little guidance to the 'future of journalism in general, and local news provision in particular'. Change has been 'fast, dramatic, widespread and, in its earlier stages, it was completely unpredictable'. Many would disagree with his assertion that 'we have now got used to living with the problem' but totally agree that the funding of all journalism 'remains the Holy Grail [but that] once we've figured out how to pay the bill, the journey can continue' (Longden 2013). Unfortunately, the industry has not yet figured out how to pay the bill while maintaining a high quality contribution to the public sphere.

To paraphrase Clay Shirky (2009), society does not need local newspapers, but it does need local journalism. If local newspapers fail to provide this in sufficient depth and quality, the public will go elsewhere for their local journalism, perhaps to the new breed of independent citizen journalism sites. Like the News Chronicle, the Daily Sketch and the Daily Graphic, our local Heralds, Posts, Sentinels and Echoes have no divine right to exist. And unless they up their game, especially online, these much treasured local brands will follow the town crier and cinema newsreel into the footnotes of journalism history.

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"Too ghastly to believe"? Liverpool, the press and the May Blitz of 1941

Guy Hodgson, Liverpool John Moores University

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Liverpool endured more air raids in the Second World War than any British city other than London, suffering 2,736 casualties, with a further 1,173 in neighbouring areas (May Blitz, 2015). Merseyside suffered around 80 bombing raids between August 1940 and January 1942, the peak coming at the start of May 1941 when the Luftwaffe dropped 870 tons of high-explosive bombs and more than 112,000 incendiaries over seven consecutive nights (May Blitz, 2015).

In one week 1,741 people from the city, Bootle, Birkenhead and Wallasey were killed (Gardiner, 2011), which, to put this into perspective, represented nearly three per cent of every Briton killed in air raids in six years of war. The docks, through which 90 per cent of imported goods came into Britain, were the principal targets, but the damage to domestic property was considerable. More than 50,000 Liverpudlians were made homeless, only 15 per cent of Bootle's housing stock was undamaged leaving 25,000 without a home (Gardiner, 2011), and city-centre St Luke's Church, whose ruins now form a memorial to the dead, was gutted. Other important buildings destroyed included the Mersey Dock Office, the Corn Exchange, the city's main post office and public library and several more churches. The casualty list could have been worse, but thousands fled to the countryside including the Wirral and north Wales. Maghull, a small town with a population of 8,000 to the north of the city, had made provision for 1,750 refugees but was inundated with 6,000 (Gardiner, 2011).

War is the ultimate news story and circulations rose during the Second World War. According to the Royal Commission on the Press 1947-49, the number of national daily newspapers sold in Britain rose by an average of 55.9 per cent from 1937 to 1947 (86.5 per cent for Sundays), but, paradoxically, the influence of the press declined. Radio audiences boomed so that the BBC became the first point of news, and trust in the press diminished as the public, on the front line for an extended period for the first time, could compare their newspapers to what they could see for themselves (Report on the Press, 1940).[1] This decline was the continuation of a process that had begun the First World War and is an important focus of study for journalism educators, scholars and anyone with an academic interest in the history of the press in Britain. Liverpool's May Blitz encapsulated that gap between the printed word and what readers were experiencing, so much so that wild rumours about the city spread through the country. It was the ultimate indictment of the credibility of the press; no-one believed what was being printed so the public, in a 1940s form of citizen journalism, invented their own exaggerated version of the news.

Mass Observation and Home Intelligence, two organisations used by the government to monitor morale between 1939 and 1945, chronicled this rising distrust and Liverpool was a particular point of interest. The city was visited in December 1940 and May 1941 and the Home Intelligence reports measure a drop from "reasonable cheerfulness" (Liverpool and Manchester, 1941) to an atmosphere where there was "no power and drive left in Liverpool to counterattack the Luftwaffe" (Liverpool, 1941). With the 75th anniversary of the May Blitz next year, this article will examine the reports that appeared in The Times, the Daily Mirror and the Liverpool Echo and hold them up to the official reports that were being read by the Ministry of Information in the first instance and, ultimately, by the Cabinet.

1 By 1944 the BBC's 9 pm news programme was estimated to reach 43 to 50 per cent of the population and the BBC recorded its audience at 34 million (out of a population of 48 million), A. Briggs, A., *The War of Words, 1939-45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 43.

Literature Review

Gramsci (2005) argued that the ruling classes cannot enforce control over the population unless intellectual methods are used, including the media, to create an acceptable consensus and, in the case of the Second World War, that insisted the war had to be fought no matter the sacrifice. Winston Churchill, as the Prime Minister during the Blitz, had a vested interested in maintaining a narrative of enduring resilience and for two decades after the war his six-volume work, The Second World War (1952), set the template:

> These were the times when the English, and particularly the Londoners, who had the place of honour, were seen at their best. Grim and gay, dogged and serviceable, with the confidence of an unconquered people in their bones, they adapted themselves to this strange new life, with all its terrors, with all its jolts and jars (p. 293).

His positivist argument was so persuasive that historians subscribed to the tale of unyielding morale until the late 1960s. Taylor, usually a challenger of historical clichés, recorded that, for every civilian killed, 35 were made homeless, with all the social problems that implied, yet wrote of "the unshaken spirit of the British people" and that the raids "cemented national unity"(1988, pp. 502-3). Taylor's evidence did not come from analysis of contemporary correspondence but was inferred by two votes in Parliament, the second of which was the overwhelming backing of the suspension of the Daily Worker in January 1941. "Not a dog barked," he wrote (1988, p. 503), failing to take into account the "deep sense of disturbance" expressed by the National Council for Civil Liberties, concerns on the political left and a number of readers' letters that appeared in the Manchester Guardian and other newspapers.

The generic beatification of the British civilian in the Second World War was challenged by Calder's The People's War (1969) that drew on oral testimony and the work of Mass Observation and, along with his subsequent Myth of the Blitz (1991), stated that the conventional version of events, while true in parts, did not remain intact when confronted by the evidence. The popular image, he stated, was the creation of propagandists with the willing acquiescence of the press:

> "Some journalists of the period created a myth of the Cockney wisecracking over the ruins of his world, which is as famous as the myth of the Few soaring into battle with laughter on their lips, and equally misleading" (1969, pp. 165-66).

Although Calder's assertions provoked a fierce counter-reaction - Ray (1996, p. 12) described the 12-month period from September 1940 as an "annus mirabilis in British history" – he was hugely influential. In recent years modern academics have used Mass Observation and Home Intelligence reports to revise the story of steadfast spirit and, while none has suggested that British morale was broken by the Blitz, they have qualified the exaggerated claims of universal selflessness and enthusiastic cooperation that were made, frequently by the press. Typical of this approach is Ponting's 1940: Myth and Reality which reported fluctuating morale, including "depression" and "open signs of hysteria" in Coventry, looting and "wanton destruction" in Portsmouth and Plymouth people questioning whether it was worth fighting on (1990, p. 164). Gardiner (2011) illustrated the state of fear that existed in 1939 when she noted that, within minutes of war being declared, sirens sounded over the capital, Londoners hurried to the nearest shelter and braced themselves for an attack. But they were not in danger; it was a false alarm; the terror and subsequent relief that would mark the Blitz had begun without a bomb being dropped. Gardiner used many of the same sources as Calder, including Mass Observation, but covered the bombing of provincial cities in greater detail and provided more statistics in charting the rise in crime during the war. She noted:

> The Blitz has given the British – politicians in particular – a storehouse of images on which to draw at times of crisis… There were thousands of examples of extreme bravery, fortitude and selflessness. There was also a pervasive sense of exhaustion, uncertainty and anxiety, and acts of selfishness, intransigence and contumely (p. xv).

The role of the press in wartime has been debated at length. Carruthers (2000, p. 55) wrote that to maintain morale on one's own side, and attack the opponents', "munitions of the mind" were an integral part of total war and the media received their call-up with other vital industries. Ruling elites, she wrote, echoing Gramsci, had to generate support for the conflict and enlisted the media to help bolster the case. This was particularly the case in the Second World War when the British population was under fire and, as Curran and Seaton observed, "extensive censorship controls were needed, it was claimed, in order to combat the new, deadly technology of aerial warfare" (2003, p. 56). Newspapers, as the principal sources of news at the start of the war, became the focus of this censorship and the consequence was a shaping of content that did not sit easily with the self-proclaimed role of the press as public watchdog. Journalists reporting on the Second World War were faced with a dilemma that, Knightley (2004, p. xi) maintained, remains unresolved to this day:

> If doing that as objectively and as truthfully as possible means writing and broadcasting stories damaging to their nation's war effort, what are correspondents to do? Does the journalist within the correspondent prevail? Or the patriot? And what if reporting patriotically involves telling lies? Is that journalism or propaganda?

That dilemma is central to this article.

Methodology

This will be a qualitative study using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework (2010) and its application to newspapers as outlined by Richardson (2007). The publications, two national daily newspapers and a regional evening, were chosen because they represented publications with different proprietors, target audiences and political leanings. The Times was owned by the Astor family and was the newspaper of the establishment and a supporter of the Conservative Party. Its editor in May 1941 was Geoffrey Dawson, a personal friend of several leading Tory figures, and its circulation in 1939 was 213,000 (Butler and Sloman, 1980). The Daily Mirror, selling an average of 1.367 million copies a day in 1938 (Butler and Sloman, 1980), was owned by a public company and was aimed at the middle and working classes. It was a supporter of the Labour Party, was viewed disparagingly by Churchill – "It makes me spit" – and was threatened with suppression in 1942 (Margach, 1978, p. 83).[2] The Liverpool Echo was controlled by local men who descended from the Nineteenth Century original proprietors and had a daily sale, almost exclusively in Merseyside, of 236,986 in 1939 (Popular Newspapers in World War II, 2015). Originally, the newspaper group, that also included the Liverpool Daily Post, supported the Liberal Party but after the First World War became more independent in its politics (Royal Commission, 1949).

The study period is from 2 May, the first edition in which news of the raids could appear, until 15 May, comprising 12 editions of each newspaper and allowing time for reflection in the aftermath of the week-long Blitz. The first bomb landed at 22:15 on 1 May, so deadline pressures and delays in relaying news from Merseyside to Liverpool would have made it virtually impossible

2 This followed a Philip Zec cartoon in March 1942 that that depicted a half-drowned merchant seaman clinging to some wreckage and carried the caption "The price of petrol has been increased by one penny – Official".

for detailed news of the first night of raids to appear in the London-based Times and Mirror the following day. However, the Echo, an evening paper that appeared on the streets several hours after the national mornings and who had reporters in the city, would, in normal circumstances, be expected to report fully the previous night's bombing and any omissions would be down to the censor, who was reluctant to release information for fear that it might aid the enemy by confirming the Luftwaffe had hit its intended target. For that reason many newspapers used vague expressions such as "north west town" until German sources announced the city had been raided.

Attention was also paid to the structure in reports. Normal news values dictate that the most important elements should be at the top of the story, so a report on heavy bombing should concentrate on the number of casualties and the extent of the damage. Any variation on this - emphasis on the work of fire-fighters for example - could be due to either censorship or an attempt at propaganda to rally morale or demonise the enemy, although the subjective judgements of reporters, sub-editors and editors, or the influence of proprietors, should not be entirely discounted.

The Newspapers

The Times, which ranged between eight and 10 pages in the study period, first reported Liverpool's Blitz on 2 May, stating: "Raiders were reported over a Western town last night and in other parts of the country, including the Merseyside area" (p. 4). The following day there was a more comprehensive report, but it still comprised only two paragraphs. It stated that "many high-explosive bombs" had been dropped, but in a clear deviance away from normal news practice, which would have led on the number of deaths, the copy emphasised hitting back at the enemy. "Night fighters were in action as well as A. A. [anti-aircraft] guns," the piece read. "One German machine was shot down in a wood and a member of the crew captured. Police are searching for the others" (3 May 1941, p. 4). The censor would have ensured no civilian casualty numbers would be released; and the success did not deserve the trumpeting given that the one downed aircraft marked 1.5 percent of the 65 bombers over Merseyside, on 2 May (Ramsey, 1988).

Both the above reports were on the main news page, but were close to the bottom. The first time the Liverpool Blitz reached the top of the page was in the edition of 5 May, although Merseysiders hoping to have their suffering fully acknowledged after four successive nights bombing would have been disappointed. The lead story on page 4 was about a raid by the RAF on Baghdad that had destroyed 22 Iraqi aircraft and the report about the Liverpool raid was a single-column story on the far right of the page. It also emphasised success, the third headline of three claiming a "Night fighters' record", and the report read that 16 enemy bombers had been shot down, 13 by Fighter Command. The first indication that Liverpool was suffering came on 6 May when a statement from Liverpool's Emergency Committee acknowledged that the city had passed through "a serious trial" and a "crisis" (p. 2). The statement continued: "It is a great inspiration to know that Liverpool has not been behind other cities in its realization of the importance of maintaining the steadiness of our civic life." The fact that the committee felt the need to issue the statement was an indicator of the city's death toll and damage, although no numbers of the dead were published.[3] On page 4 of the same edition the newspaper mocked Hitler for announcing to the Reichstag that only 5,500 German troops had been killed, wounded or gone missing in Greece. "Past experience shows that the faking of casualty lists is part and parcel of the Fuhrer's tactics." The irony was, as this article will show later, it was the British figures, not the German, that had lost credibility with the home newspaper audience.

The Times might have been hypocritical, but it could not be accused of labouring Merseyside's problems because it quickly slid down a news agenda that had other priorities including the landing of Rudolf Hess in Scotland (13 May 1941, p. 4). On 7 May Liverpool was mentioned, but

3 Gardiner (2011, p. 322)) stated that the government was "even more careful than usual" in making sure casualty figures in the May Blitz were suppressed to ensure the Germans did not realize the devastating effects of the raids.

lower down the story and not in the same detail as a raid on Clydeside (p. 9), the following day the area was referred to in a report hailing the shooting down of 10 bombers (8 May 1941, p. 4) and by 12 May the only reference to Liverpool and the surrounding area was that it, and other heavily bombed areas, would be the only British cities to receive a shipment of oranges (p. 2). Two Liverpool casualties were reported: the deaths of the stage and screen actress and former fiancé of Fred Perry, Mary Lawson, and her husband Francis Beaumont, who had been visiting friends in the city (10 May 1941, p. 4). She was 30.

The Daily Mirror, eight pages in each of the 12 editions, did not acknowledge Liverpool's May Blitz until Monday, 5 May, when its front page carried a report on the city being bombed for the fourth night in succession the previous night. A more detailed report, on Saturday night's raid, appeared on page 3 under the headline "Liverpool's worst Blitz" and, while it gave greater details of the death and destruction than The Times, it had a strong undercurrent of propaganda. "Last night demolition and rescue squads were still at work," its second paragraph read." A heavy pall of smoke hung over them. They brought out many dead." The short sentences were used to create impact, a literary device that continued lower down when the list of casualties read like a charge sheet against the Luftwaffe: a deputy matron, doctors, nurses and ambulance men. The ones who escaped were cast in a heroic light, so the nurses showed "exceptional courage and coolness" while patients "showed no sign of panic". The contrast of the callous Germans and brave Brits was stark, demonstrating newspapers' predilection to apply Van Dijk's (2000) ideological square - positive self-representation and negative representation of others - in times of war.

The surviving nurses and patients also provided examples of role models, conforming to Jowett and O'Donnell's (2012, p. 299) assertion that messages are more resonant when "they seem to be coming from within the audience", and the Mirror publicised another on 6 May. She was Sarah Mawson, 68, who had rescued her four grand-children from the bomb-wreckage of her Liverpool home. There was no report, just a headline, "Granny saved the family", and a caption under a posed photograph on page 5 of Mrs Mawson and her relatives sitting on chairs balanced on the rubble. The picture, designed to embody resilience, might have been taken in the aftermath of the May bombings but the words suggested otherwise, referring only to "when a Blitz hit Liverpool". News, by its nature, needs to be new and a journalist is taught to make reports up to date, so the photograph either related to an older raid, or the censor had insisted on the ambiguity. The following day, the role model was a "weary-eyed" Liverpudlian in his 60s who was watching rescue workers trying to find the bodies of his two sons amid "charred ruins" (7 May 1941, p. 3). The sons, both in the Auxiliary Fire Service, had been trapped after going into the building to rescue a fire-watcher, and the heroic narrative was underlined by the father's wearing of "frayed war medals on his chest". He refused to give his name, but was quoted as saying: "This is a war for nameless heroes. The lads would sooner have it that way."

The man may have been genuine, a fiction, or an amalgam of several images by the reporter, but he marked a high point in terms of coverage. By 9 May, Liverpool was becoming stale news and a seventh successive night of bombing was marked by only a small story of 70 words on page 3. The number of casualties was described as "heavy" and the negative representation of the attackers was underlined by a list of damaged buildings: three hospitals, a maternity home and churches. It required celebrity status from that point for the Mirror to report on Liverpool, the May Blitz being mentioned only once more in the study period, a short story noting the death of Mary Lawson (10 May 1941). Her demise merited a photograph and a place on the front page.

The size of the Liverpool Echo, four to six pages, underlined the difficulties caused by the rationing of newsprint, and the editorial challenge of providing adequate coverage in such a limited space. The first night of the May Blitz was reported on 2 May, and it was not difficult to detect the influence of the censor or the propagandist. The story appeared inside (p. 5), when a raid on the city in a Liverpool newspaper would normally be the lead on the main news page, there were no details of where the bomb landed, nor the number of casualties, and the headlines emphasised the positive. The lead read "Hero in night fighter" and the sub-heads below it played down the effects of the bombing: "Short, sharp raid"; "Few Merseyside casualties", "A bomber down"; and

"Fire-fighters again do good work". The copy used the pejorative "raiders scuttled for home", when an objective report could have used "turned" or "headed". The following day's coverage led the edition but followed a similar template, so that, although the Air Ministry anticipated a large number of casualties, "the Echo understands that, happily, they are not so heavy as was feared" (3 May 1941, p. 4). The cross heads emphasised the German crimes - "Hit a cemetery" and "Four hospitals" - which contrasted the targets of the RAF in an adjoining report where "fires were seen in the industrial areas and docks".

The night of Saturday/Sunday marked the heaviest bombing of the May Blitz, although the Echo, which did not have an edition on the Sunday, could not reflect on it until the edition of Monday 5 May when a comment piece on page 2 praised the resilience of the air defences. Under a sub-headline "Merseyside carries on", it noted that 16 bombers had allegedly been shot down, adding: "Some of our best-known landmarks have been damaged; hospitals, churches and many houses have been hit and the loss of life will be heavy….that we can bring down 16 enemy planes in a night should indicate that our defenders can give a bit back too." On a main news page that included seven photographs on the Blitz, a message from the Lord Mayor, Sir Sydney Jones, asserted: "No efforts are being spared to see that all the services which so vitally affect the city and the life of the people at the present time are being maintained to the fullest possible extent" (p. 4). This article will show that, contrary to Alderman Jones's assurance, an independent report revealed that Liverpudlians had lost faith in the local authority.

Even though the Echo was a Liverpool paper, the interest in the raids began to dwindle, possibly because the censors' insistence on lack of detail meant that reports full of un-named civilian targets became repetitive. A report on 6 May introduced a literary flourish by describing a blazing Liverpool church (St Luke's) where "the ever-changing patterns of the flames as seen in the many windows appearing like living stained glass", but the reference was towards the end of a long report on page 6 that was led by an attack on the Rhine headed "RAF Attack Mannheim". Instead of reporting the bombing there was a search for heroes: fire-fighters and an ARP [Air Raid Precaution] telephonist who matched "the courage of her soldier fiancé, who took part in the epic of Dunkirk" on 7 May; and three women who had put out fires in "one of the city's fashionable shopping streets" two days later. To discover the extent of the problems in the city the reader had to look at a large display advertisement that urged Liverpudlians affected by the bombing to boil water for at least two minutes with the accompanying information: "Do not be alarmed if the water to your premises has the taste of chlorine. This is an indication that the purity of the supply has been safeguarded" (10 May 1941, p. 3). Only on 15 May (p. 4) was the newspaper able to identify which famous buildings that had been damaged, including Liverpool Central Library, Liverpool Museum and the Rotunda Theatre. Earlier mention had been prohibited.

Home Intelligence

While the newspaper reports about the May Blitz consistently stressed the fortitude of the Liverpool people, another analysis of the mood of the city was less upbeat. A Home Intelligence inspector, who had lived there as a child and who had good links with the university, the Conservative Association, social welfare movements and the ARP, wrote a report on 22 May 1941 after a personal visit (Liverpool, 1940). He conceded that this was not the "penetration study" of normal HI reports on morale, but did include contact with a wide range of people including officials, the clergy, a doctor, policemen and many "ordinary people". Interestingly for this article, one of his interviews was with the editor of one of the Liverpool newspapers – there were three: Liverpool Echo, Liverpool Daily Post and Liverpool Evening Express – but did not specify which. The author, too, was not identified but had been to "nearly every important Blitz town and studied it".

The report listed two most striking features: the almost universal criticism and dis-satisfaction with the city's post-Blitz administration; and an atmosphere of ineptitude and a "relative lack of energy". The author noted that dis-satisfaction was prevalent in most bombed cities but "never from so many sources and such vehemence as in Liverpool". He also wrote about the absence of vigorous reconstruction and rehabilitation:

> The general feeling – it is difficult exactly to express it, but residents spoken to felt it too – that there was no power and drive left in Liverpool to counter-attack the Luftwaffe. It was being left to the citizens of Liverpool to pick themselves up.

Elaborating on the above, the inspector made a series of observations that contradicted the resilience being reported in the press. He noted that, for the first time in any town, a conversation was heard where "one side argued in favour of our surrender"; that morale, while impressive, particularly among the young, was not good enough to stand up to further long series of raids; and of a "complete divorce" between key local politicians and the "worried or bewildered 99 per cent". The author's criticisms of the local authorities included lack of information, inadequate planning with regard to rest centres and the feeding arrangements that "completely collapsed". Yet he noted that no-one had been dismissed or penalised for these confusions, "on the contrary, there is said to be talk of honours".

A cause for concern for the inspector was the spread of rumours that stemmed from the lack of information. The first concerned a peace demonstration in Liverpool, that has been a point of contention ever since. The Liverpool Echo journalist Arthur Johnson comprehensively dismissed the rumour in his diary (2005, p. 155) – "A man was sent to prison for a month at Manchester for spreading such rumours, all of which were completely baseless"– but Herbert Anderson, who was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum sound archive, stated: "There were small groups marching with banners indicating that they wanted an end to the war" (Levine, 2006, p. 412). The Home Intelligence inspector acknowledged that some of the most responsible people in Liverpool said there was substance to the story, but came down on the side of denial. "No doubt they are wrong," he wrote (Liverpool, 1941). He was similarly dismissive of gossip that said the city had been placed under martial law and cordoned off from the rest of Britain, again blaming the local authorities: "Never before has the absence of information and explanation been so apparent." As a consequence, when cars had been refused access into and out of Liverpool so that debris could be cleared from the streets, people jumped to conclusions:

> From this simple source the rumour spread like wildfire. It has been heard., for instance, by one person in London within three hours, from a responsible MP, a BBC official, a senior civil servant, the editor of an important paper, and a senior officer in the Services.

He asked for stories to appear in national newspapers and the BBC to refute the rumours and for the speedy restoration of phone and telegram services that were still not operating nearly a fortnight after the May Blitz. He also recommended that mobile telegram units should be sent to cities after they had been bombed. This, he wrote, would reduce rumour and ensure that members of the armed forces would receive news of their families with the beneficial consequence of improving morale and reducing absenteeism.

"Have you heard about Liverpool?"

Even in the early weeks of the Second World War, Mass Observation reported that people said it was "useless to buy newspapers since all the front pages were identical and could not be trusted" (Hylton, 2001, p. 151), and in May 1940 Home Intelligence reinforced this estimate: "The general curve of distrust of the news has been rising during the last year" (Report on the Press, 1940). This became more pronounced by personal experience. Rita Maloney, a 20-year-old clerical worker and Mass Observation diarist, responding to the Manchester Blitz of December 1940, was typical:

> When we heard the BBC's summing up of our Blitz, making it sound rather like a village which had had a stick of bombs dropped on it, along with many others, we wondered how true the reports on Coventry and Liverpool were, and all the other towns. We are carrying on and "taking it" because we've got to, but we aren't very happy about it (Liverpool and Manchester, 1941).

When Coventry had been badly bombed a month earlier a Preston salesman, Christopher Tomlin, said people did not believe the casualty figures they were reading. "Some of my customers say: 'If they mention 1,000 killed you can take it for granted there are lots more'" (Garfield, 2005, p. 413).

The danger of gossip, spurred on by a near vacuum of news, was detailed by the Home Intelligence inspector in an appendix of "typical extracts" that he added to his report (Liverpool, 1941). The main one was from a member of the WAAF [Women's Auxiliary Air Force] stationed near Preston and written on 10 May 1941. She quoted a colleague called Jean: "Have you heard about Liverpool?... They say people want to give in." A second quotation was indicative of cracks in the veneer of togetherness:

> I don't believe it's the people. I think it's those wretched Irish trying to create panic. It's very easy to. They're going around shouting "Stop the War" and "We've had enough!" English people wouldn't do that… I was told they have got martial law there, and that if anyone is found saying they want the war stopped, they're shot on the spot.

Later the correspondent and her colleague hitched a lift in a lorry that had come from Liverpool. The following conversation was reported:

> Jean: They're saying terrible things about Liverpool. Some of the stories are too ghastly to believe.
>
> Driver: However bad they are, they can't be worse than the truth, that's a fact… There's 50,917 dead, and God-knows-how-many wounded, just walking the streets, with their bandages on.
>
> Jean: There's martial law, isn't there?
>
> Driver: Well, not exactly. But there is a lot of military with bayonets – they've more or less taken over.

The surprise was the detail. Where the figure of 50,917 came from is unknown, but the driver, who said he had been taking Liverpool's people to the county to escape the bombing, clearly had more belief in the source than in his newspaper. The WAAF correspondent heard similarly worrying conversations, including that between two women, one of whom wanted to see relatives in the city. "They've got martial law there. There's a lot of fifth column business, and they've been told to shoot on sight."

Another observer, a "working man" from Leek, Staffordshire, also had a grim story. Reporting that general morale was "very unsteady", he had a litany of rumours emanating from Liverpool including "train loads of corpses have been sent up from Merseyside for mass cremation". The other rumours included: martial law in the city; homeless and hungry people marching round the bombed areas, "carrying white flags and howling protests"; and food riots.

Conclusion

None of the rumours was confirmed, and the press was correct not to print them, but so much was withheld because of censorship and newspapers' inclination to support the war effort that people would have assumed reports had been modified for propaganda purposes even if they had done. The disbelief, the exaggerated stories and the falling levels of trust could hardly provide a more damning verdict of the press in May 1941. A Home Intelligence report published in three months earlier (Morale in 1941, 1941), quoted a remark "(private of course) by a famous columnist" that read: "Journalists report the cheers. No one dare report the tears", and this was borne out by The Times, the Daily Mirror and Liverpool Echo in the two weeks during and after Merseyside's May Blitz. The press's narrative could be summed up by James Kelbrick: "There were so many buildings just smashed to pieces – but the spirit of Liverpool was so good. There was such togetherness and sharing" (Levine, 2006, p. 412). But there were other stories such as Marie Price's:

> Churchill was telling us how brave we all were and that we would never surrender. I tell you

something – the people of Liverpool would have surrendered overnight if they could have. It's all right for people in authority, down in their steel-lined dugouts, but we were there and it was just too awful (Levine, 2006, p. 412).

Her story and others like it that revealed normal human reactions from people who were afraid, weary and fed up, were ignored by a media wary of government censure and, as with many cities outside London, Liverpudlians were left to feel their suffering had not been properly represented. Gardiner (2011, p. 167) wrote:

> Aggrieved citizens felt that the singular nature of their suffering was not given due acknowledgement: they just became part of the aggregate of incidents. People in Bristol, Liverpool, even Ramsgate, felt that it was invariably the London Blitz that was given most attention by the media, with an occasional exception such as the high profile raid on Coventry, while the rest of the nation took the usual back seat. This was clearly not good for morale.

The Home Intelligence report on Liverpool and Manchester in January 1941, stressed that the local press can do much for morale, but queried the inclination for positivism. Bomb victims, they wrote, wanted praise and emphasis, not the belittling of their suffering. The inspectors asked: "How far do the morale effects of Blitz censorship outweigh the military necessities of suppression" (Liverpool and Manchester, 1941). It was a valid question that was never properly answered and there were consequences beyond the standing of newspapers. Harrisson's report (Morale in 1941) of February 1941 stated that the "intense ballyhoo" about wonderful morale after each town has been blitzed had been a formula that "infuriated each place in turn". He added that the effect of the journalism was that it made it "practically disloyal to suggest that morale is not perfect" and that the "rosy atmosphere of 100 per cent morale had been so pronounced that Home Intelligence inspectors had begun to doubt their findings about weak morale in Manchester, Portsmouth and Bristol."

Newspapers did not report the worst effects of the bombing and, in so doing, undermined the genuine courage showed by many people; if the norm was bravery then the truly brave were just normal, not exceptional. The public, many of whom harbored natural concerns that fell short of that image of relentless stoicism, did not always relate to that ideal and, consequently, the messengers in the form of the media were met with skepticism or were simply ignored. Worse, when towns and cities were bombed, they caused more harm than good. In short, propaganda often had the opposite effect to what was intended.

Seven decades on from Liverpool's May Blitz, that is an outcome worthy of consideration for journalism educators, who frequently confront the issue of propaganda and also stress the need for reporters and editors to write with the target audience in mind, but are confronted with contradictory outcomes when looking back at the Home Front in the Second World War. The top-down model of news remained intact between 1939 and 1945, in that what appeared in British newspapers reflected the views and values of an elite anxious to create an impression of universal resolution under fire. The readers at the bottom of this paradigm only embraced this narrative, however, when it suited their self perceptions and rejected it comprehensively when they were the victims of the Luftwaffe's bombing, very notably in the case of Liverpool in 1941.

Yet - and this ought to intrigue anyone teaching journalism - newspaper circulations rose during the Second World War, even though the shortage of newsprint meant that editions were drastically reduced, in the Liverpool Echo's case to just four pages, The press's ability to provide entertainment and divert minds from the dreadfulness and tedium of war seemingly outweighed the public's disinclination to believe what they were reading. So, to paraphrase C. P. Scott's famous statement about news values, were facts sacred? Or were the British public prepared to come to an unspoken agreement about what they were reading, accepting that, like so many other commodities, accurate reporting of the Blitz was rationed to help the war effort? The evidence suggests they were.

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Genesis and Dissemination: Some Thoughts Concerning Journalism as Knowledge

By Pradeep Nair, Harikrishnan Bhaskaran and Navneet Sharma all of Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala, India

This article attempts to explore the viability of journalism as academic research, asking the unasked question about the mandate of Journalism as theory, practice and in praxis.

Though the question has been much discussed and debated from different perspectives by the stakeholders of the discipline, this article argues that the present mandate of journalism and its history shows that it is mainly aimed at knowing knowledge or disseminating knowledge to empower people or to help them develop perspectives than producing knowledge, unlike the mandate of academic research. Different traditions and discourses through which Journalism has evolved into a practice and discipline and the ideals and ideologies guiding it as a profession or passion, envi-

sion it as a major force that facilitates the public sphere by catalysing dissemination, classification and verification of information/knowledge. This article argues that the functions of Journalism as a professional practice is disseminating knowledge rather than 'producing' knowledge per se. Journalism as a discipline, practice and praxis does not produce knowledge in as much as it engages with the adaptation, accumulation and acclimatization of knowledge produced.

The discourse of journalism has raised questions about its practice and output as falling within the conventions of academic research. This article will attempt a philosophical enquiry into the epistemic question of whether Journalism functions as a producer of 'new' knowledge, which, we argue, falls more within the ambit of academic research.

We shall not address the question of legitimisation and dissemination of knowledge though these do raise pertinent questions about knowledge, and knowledge as 'justified true belief' (O'Connor & Carr 1982; Berger & Luckmann 1966, p3) which is to be explored in the paradigms of epistemology, sociology and political economy. Instead, while not affirming that only 'theorization' – as in academic research - constitutes production of knowledge, we submit that the 'production' of knowledge, which is the primary role and function of academic research, may not be the most important element in Journalism. The important elements of journalism described by Golding and Elliot (1979) and Merritt (1995) are public service, objectivity, autonomy, advocacy and ethics. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) further identify obligation to truth, loyalty to citizens, verification, and independent criticism as elements of journalism. According to them, the most important element is to "provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing."

Various scholars have tried to explain journalism as a profession and its role in society from different perspectives (Allan 2005; Allan 2010; McNair 2009). Functional theorists have charted four major functions of the 'press' in society, which include surveillance (collecting and distributing information); correlation – (explaining, interpreting, and commenting, transmission of the social heritage); and communicating social norms and providing entertainment (Weiss 2009, p574-579). Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) argue that "Journalism was for building a sense of community, which the government could not control." However, they observe that the norms of the trade or the definition of journalism has stretched in the digital era where technologies have enabled easy access to abundant information and multimedia delivery platforms. However, they observe that "the purpose of journalism is defined not by technology, nor by journalists or the techniques they employ, but by something more basic: the function that news play in the lives of people" (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2014). The issues and concerns important to the discourse and discipline of journalism are seldom philosophical or are least epistemological. It might raise axiological issues and take a normative stance, but theory and theorization about knowledge and its production is less of a focal point for journalism than in academic research.

Whether the output of Journalism as a professional practice can be equated to academic research is highly contentious among journalism academics who have attempted to draw parallels between the two (Duffield 2009; Weaver & McCombs 1980). We would, however, argue that the present mandate of journalism and its history shows that journalistic practice is mainly aimed at knowing knowledge or disseminating knowledge to help the public develop perspectives of the world around them, than in actually producing 'new' knowledge. It is important, however, to emphasize that knowing or dissemination of knowledge, which is akin to validation, classification and categorisation of knowledge, and is epistemically equivalent to the production of knowledge, is still distinguishable as free from stipulated paradigmatic constraints for the production of knowledge, whether scientific, linguistic or socio-cultural.

The jury is still out on whether journalism outputs should qualify as academic research as defined by university research committees and grant agencies (Bacon 2006; Duffield 2009; Niblock 2012). The research studies in the form of pre-doctoral and doctoral thesis submitted to the Departments of Mass Communication and Journalism of Indian Universities in last decade are mostly impact assessment studies on various conventional sub-disciplines of Journalism, Advertising, Public Relations, Television and Radio Production. This information is collected from 25 central and state universities which are offering pre-doctoral and doctoral programmes in Journalism and Mass Communication. Few studies have tried to explore the increasing human involvement in constant advancement in communication technologies. As in the West, specific studies have not been done so far to critically interpret the new emerging forms of media as technology and as source of information and media content. At the same time, studies conducted by independent media organizations and research institutions also were not able to develop a critical and practical knowledge of how audiences interact with the media and how media influences human behaviour, choices, and decision making abilities. The course work conducted for the students of research degree programmes by the State and Central Universities of India were not able to engage the students in a theoretical and methodological understanding of the social and psychological impact of evolving media applications like social networking, digital broadcasting, and how they are practiced for socially constructive purposes.

After the new guidelines for award of research degrees formulated by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2009, the statutory body of Government of India to co-ordinate, determine, and maintain university education standards, the approach to conduct research studies at University level is going through a radical change. Some premier media institutions in India like Anwar Jamal Kidwai – Mass Communication Research Centre (AJK-MCRC) of Jamia Millia Islamia and Mudra Institute of Communication Ahmedabad (MICA) have started practice-based PhD programmes which relie on a model of experimentation where the researcher is supposed to think through art. This research is already introduced in the journalism schools of the Universities in the West and now the journalism schools in India are also taking the initiative to bridge the gap between research and practice. It is seen as a new mode of knowledge creation which integrates theory and practice. The primary aim of this research is to create 'knowledge' through art practice rather than through some scientific inquiry, which journalism is already doing and to articulate it in the historical and theoretical context, which academic research is expected to do. The introduction of Practice-based research in Indian Universities should encourage the journalism practitioners to situate their practice within a theoretical framework which will be constructed by using their own understanding of critical discourses. In this kind of research, practice is the major component of research process and it will be considered as the end product. The requirement is to contextualise the practice in the form of a written academic thesis which is a mandate for a University system.

The idea of journalism as having the major mandate of facilitating democracy by empowering people by ensuring free flow of information was equally shared by journalists and non-journalists as well. The idea of journalist as gatekeeper was again not based on production of knowledge, or about deciding to produce what knowledge, but rather about deciding what information to transfer and what not to disseminate in the society. And this particular idea about the role of journalism is becoming faded with the phenomenon of information getting more accessible in the digital era, even for common people. However, still, as Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) observes, the role of journalism in the digital era or internet era may have changed from one of informing to that of verifying. The process of verification, authentication and classification are the secondary level attempts equally important and relevant as primary production of knowledge. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014), journalists now have a set of new roles to play, which are not similar to the traditional one of information dissemination, but a set of closely related tasks - as an authenticator of information, as a sense maker who brings some order to the chaos of information overload by putting it in context. This approach admits that the role or the purpose of journalist is largely changing or is being transgressed in the networked era. So, in this perspective, new roles such as journalists as curators, as empowerers, community builders or forum leaders are emerging. Many of these roles, if examined closely, reveal that they mainly depend on the traditional idea of journalist as information disseminator who empowers and facilitates the democratic discourse. Whereas, the National Academy of Sciences have clearly mentioned that the role of research is to discover and extend human knowledge of physical, biological and social world beyond what is already known by using scientific methods.

Looking at journalism's definitions, it can be seen that many scholars have placed the idea of the mandate of Journalism close to the idea of it being a mediator. For instance, scholars like Dons-

bach (2010), while looking into the question of what is journalism, have identified three distinct traditions in the profession which answers this question. One of the strongest among them – the public service tradition – according to him, focuses more on the idea of journalism as "telling about events, supplying novelty, and, from the process, discerning factual truth." However, 'novelty' and its supply are not to be perceived as in the Kunhian approach to the 'extra ordinary science' (Kuhn 1970) but as value of being exclusive. The definition of Research is more concerned about the creation of new knowledge and or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes (Australia Research Council 2008, p1).

Journalism as a profession, whereby a profession is a practice by a group who shares a cognitive knowledge base and codes of practice, which are taught by the educational institutions of that specific profession (Örnebring 2010, p38-42), has seen the emergence of exclusive Journalism Schools as Institutes and Departments in the Universities. The presence of professional associations is also a factor which helps a practice to get the identity of a distinct profession. The ideals and idea about the commercial viability of journalism as a distinct profession do depend on a set of similar codes of practices like news values, idea of objectivity (though challenged and debated) and certain ethical norms. Looking at journalism as a professional practice, as many journalism historians suggest, the identity of journalism as a professional practice originated from the public service tradition of journalism (Donsbach 2010, p38-42). The importance gained by news and facts with the rapid progress of democratic systems supported and facilitated by capitalist interests, according to Donsbach, turned journalism into a "professional service whose unique selling proposition is the validation of assertions about reality with a high degree of responsibility." The economic tradition of journalism exclusively focus on the products of journalistic practice as cultural products of commercial viability and about making profits by their mass dissemination. The goal, in this tradition, is about giving people infotainment products which they vie for and are decided by the economic interest of owners of the corporate media houses (Donsbach 2010, p38-42).

Though academic research is supposed to be free from commercial interests, it has been observed that the shrinking public funding for academic research and the funding agencies' interest on targeted research, have brought down the growth of fundamental research (Geuna1999). Apart from interests of funding agencies, another economic factor which influences the kind of knowledge produced from academic research is academic publishers and the monopolised ranking and indexing systems. Biesta (2012), examining the political economy of academic publishing, observes that knowledge production and dissemination is strongly influenced by academic publishing houses. The point is that journalism and academic research are influenced by the commoditisation of their respective products, but the influencing factors are very different.

The subjective tradition of journalism focuses more on individuals who used the technical capabilities of media to disseminate information about ideas or political rights they were advocating (Donsbach 2010, p38-42). This subjective tradition, often takes the practice closer to the idea of a passion than that of a profession. In line with the idea of journalism being the corner stone of creating the public sphere which encourages plurality of voices (Habermas 1962) and thus, empowers the democratic process, many journalists considered themselves as freedom fighters who fought for democratic values, freedom of expression, etc. It is the influence of this tradition that brings in the question or practice of journalism as something of a passion rather than that of a profession. Being passionate about a concept, idea or set of ideas makes one an activist or ideologue. However, though there is no knowledge ever produced even in sciences which is bereft of stance and influence yet an academic research vouches for unfound neutrality which is hailed as for objectivity in Journalism.

According to Donsbach (2010), the subjective tradition counts the journalist as an individual writer who advocates for certain values while the public service tradition expects the journalist to be a professional practitioner who verifies and provides vital information with high responsibility. It is this second tradition that brought out objectivity as a major value in the practice of journalism.

In Journalism discourse, objectivity has been mostly discussed and debated in and around subject and object, fact and values, etc. Journalism practitioners often criticize it by saying that it is very demanding as it sets some strict ethical standards that forbid viewpoints, analysis and interpretation and adhered to non-biased factuality (Ward 2010, p137-152). Whereas the philosophers reject the concept of journalistic objectivity by saying that it presents a 'non-perspectival perspective' by doing things not accepted philosophically (Nagel 1986; Putnam 1990). From a positivistic-empiricist point of view of academic research, there are a set of values or norms which validates the practice and legitimises the output as knowledge, or as justified true belief. This includes norms of scientific inquiry which suggest that it should be objective, replicable, cumulative and systematic (Wimmer & Dominick 1994, p11-13).

Thus having a contrast with academic research, journalism is mostly seen as a medium-dependent form of communication rather than a discipline and its existence is seen as an epistemic practice providing knowledge of current affairs. Journalistic products such as news stories or editorials are mostly accepted by the academic world as representation of reality. This representation of reality is known as a social practice in which known knowledge is disseminated and left further to the perspectives and interpretation of the readers/audiences (Kaplan 2010; Schudson 1990). Journalists produce news stories within the accepted conditions of justification of Journalism. The knowledge claims in the news stories are mostly not verified but are justified by citing bureaucratically credible sources and following the other conventions of objectivity. In research, the truth claims are mostly defended by the researcher by some empirical methodology. Journalism practitioners often argue that the absolute sense of objectivity cannot be treated as it is in journalism despite journalists often striving for it. As far as the disciplinary sense of objectivity is concerned, there are certain parallel between journalism as a practice and as an institution. Journalism as a practice mostly abides by a set of professionally shared values and epistemic norms, but as a disciplinary sense of objectivity, it is more close to professional practices like medicine and law. So in the case of journalism practice, a neutral view is mostly absent, and the sought for epistemic authority in journalism, trustworthiness and credibility, is attributed to the producer of news (newspapers, channels, websites) rather than to the medium of transmission (Haskell, 1998).

The dialectical sense of objectivity in journalism as a practice is more on knowledge as knowing, rather than knowledge as doing and acting in the world (Megill 1994, p1-10), which comes closest to academic research. Whereas, the procedural sense of objectivity is more subjective in journalism as the news-stories are mostly produced on the belief/or the existing knowledge of the journalist who is covering the event, rather than based on some scientific methodologies/techniques of gathering the fact. There are correct and incorrect ways to cover a news event, and the regular editorial meetings, the fact-checking processes are routines for ensuring correctness. The objective and mandate of journalism as a practice is to bring things out of obscurity, interpret them rationally and explain complex events and phenomena, summarizing the essential (Ward 2004). Thus journalistic inquiry moves towards judgements better supported by evidence and argument whereas the academic research is more tuned towards a logical explanation of all the observed behaviour.

Journalism, in its historicity, beginning with printed newspapers in the seventeenth century through to the live 24 X 7 news channels, engages with the adaptation, accumulation and acclimatization of produced knowledge. Its freedom from the constraints of 'producing' knowledge as mandated for academic research needs to be celebrated with a more scrupulous questioning of the legitimisation, distribution and dissemination of knowledge for a pan-egalitarian edict of journalism rather than for academic armchair scholarship.

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Reviews

The reviews pages are edited by Tor Clark. If you have a book you would like to review or have come across a new book we should know about please get in touch. Also if you have recently had a book published and would like to see it reviewed, please contact Tor on tclark@dmu.ac.uk

Welcome to our biggest ever Reviews Section

by Tor Clark, Reviews Editor, De Montfort University, Leicester.

Welcome to the biggest most eclectic Reviews Section yet published in Journalism Education.

A huge thank you to our growing band of new reviewers as well as the stalwarts from past editions, all of whom have rallied to the appeal in the AJE Newsletter to get involved in our journal by reviewing books which will be of interest to both Journalism academics and their students.

This edition features a hot-off-the press review of Jean Seaton's newly-published, widely covered and critically acclaimed Pinkoes and Traitors, a history of the BBC in the 1970s and 80s. Find out what all the fuss is about as reviewer John Mair enjoys her meticulous scholarship and brings back a few memories.

Meanwhile, Sarah Chapman appreciates the contrasting fortunes of the Freedom of Information Act Ten Years On in another new book, this time a collection looking back on a decade of FoI, co-edited by Tom Felle and John Mair.

Still focusing on newly published works, Alan Geere salutes the rich context to the global media environment offered by established and respected authors Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Cees Hamelink.

Many of us will have received review copies of Key Readings in Journalism and not known quite which reading list to put it on. Emma Hemmingway offers us a pointer or two on its value across a range of possible courses.

The Reviews Section never forgets either Journalism's rich history or our coverage on both sides of the Irish Sea, and regular reviewer Michael Foley combines both these areas in a useful double review of two new texts covering Irish publishing history.

Gary Hudson reviews the latest edition of Tony Harcup's Principles and Practice of Journalism while to acknowledge the new expanded Reviews Section, this edition offers readers not one, but two Classics from the Journalism Bookshelf. Prolific author of many valuable Journalism texts Richard Keeble, salutes the Journalism scholarship of David Deacon of Loughborough University, in his classic text about the reporting of the Spanish Civil War. Meanwhile top media consultant David Hayward, formerly head of Journalism at the BBC College of Journalism, directs us to Bad Science, a now classic text illuminating all that's good and bad in science journalism, to prevent today's journalists repeating some of the mistakes of the past in this crucial but complex area.

To get involved in the next Reviews Section of Journalism Education, either to suggest a text for review or offer a review, contact Reviews Editor Tor Clark at TClark@dmu.ac.uk

Pinkoes and Traitors: The BBC and the nation 1974-1987

by Jean Seaton

Review by John Mair, editor or joint editor of 13 recent books on aspects of journalism, including Freedom of Information at Ten, reviewed elsewhere in this section

The BBC is at the crossroads. It is facing the biggest existential crisis of its 90 year old life. Both the licence and the Royal Charter will be up for grabs after the general election. The BBC could start 2017 with a clean, or even an empty slate.

The corporation needs friends in high places to survive. When the charter and licence fee come up for debate later this year many will be gunning for the BBC's scalp. The Tories naturally dislike what they view as state, left-wing, non-commercial broadcasting. Labour are not exactly onside either.

But worse for the Corporation, the umbilical cord that tied to the nation to the BBC and the licence fee shows perilous signs of breaking. There has simply been one scandal too many. There is also the paradox of choice brought about by the Murdoch TV revolution, though fans of Murdoch fail to point out the BBC licence fee costs just three months of an average subscription to Sky. The BBC is having to fight for air space, audience and its very life.

Time for friends in the academy to stand up. Jean Seaton is the official historian of the BBC following in the footsteps of the great Asa Briggs. Her long awaited new book 'Pinkoes and Traitors' is simply brilliant. It looks at the BBC, warts and all, in a critical period - the Thatcher Years. The BBC was lucky to survive the 'Blessed Margaret' and did so only thanks to the beneficence of a succession of 'liberal' Home Secretaries protecting it

Seaton's book is thorough but it is also well written and a cracking read. Her sources are primary - interviews with the movers and shakers - as well as the opening up of official BBC and Government records for the first time.

She understands the BBC and understands it is about making programmes for people to listen to and watch. Great programmes made by great programme makers, often maverick and sometimes crossing all sorts of lines.

She could have done the exercise as a dull chronology, instead she does it by programme and genre themes. She salutes the big hits like Eastenders, Life on Earth, That's Life and their deliberately populist appeal which justifies the licence fee. But she understands and explains the range and universality elitist pieces like Smiley's People, Boys from the Blackstuff and The Proms. To justify itself the BBC has to serve audiences from cradle to grave. It is 'Our BBC' or it is nobody's. As she observes the Corporation is poor at communicating its virtues to the captive audiences it attracts day after day.

In times of crisis, wars and big national events, the BBC comes into its own and is the default choice of the nation. It is then the national broadcaster. It is here the pinch points and territory skirmishes with politicians occur far too often

Maggie showed her militant anti-BBC tendency over the reporting of her zenith, the Falklands War in 1982. The BBC dared to be equivocal calling 'our boys' 'British Soldiers'. She virtually had to held back from turning her armed forces on Broadcasting House. When ambushed on a Nationwide phone-in the next year by an ordinary citizen with extraordinary knowledge of the Belgano sinking, she was livid as was husband Denis in the Green Room. The title 'Pinkoes and Traitors' comes from one of his more publishable comments about the BBC.

Some of the 'storms' over the BBC came unexpectedly. A central problem was that the BBC never properly 'got' Margaret Thatcher and the values she stood for. With both her and Mary Whitehouse, they hoped if they ignored them, they would go away. They did not. The 'metropolitan liberal' values the BBC represented were not those of Finchley Woman.

The BBC in full flow is a sight to behold. It shows it off at general elections with its blanket results coverage. 'Auntie' showed her best over Band/Live Aid in 1984/5. That started with a stunning tear-jerking news item on famine in Ethiopia by Michael Buerk on October 23 1984. This as Seaton reveals was set up as a 'spoiler' to an ITV documentary which did not appear due to industrial action. That was picked up by Bob Geldof turned into an Xmas appeal record which raised £8m for famine relief. Live Aid raised £100 million. That could not have been done without the BBC. This was public service at its very best.

I read this book almost in one sitting it was that good. But, as always, there is a but. Proof reading might have been sharper. Is Mark DamazEr or Mark DamazAr, he was never editor of Newsnight nor was Tim Orchard. There are several small errors like these, but all correctible for the paperback edition.

But these are minor flaws in a work of monumental scholarship; a popular readable history of the modern BBC. Jean Seaton deserves huge praise for delivering it. For anybody with more than a passing interest in the media and the big beast of the BBC past, present and future, this is a must-read.

'Pinkoes and Traitors' The BBC and the Nation 1974-1987 by Jean Seaton, Profile Books, 2015, 384pp, £30 ISBN 978-1-84668-474-6.

Media Imperialism by Oliver Boyd-Barrett

GlobalCommunication by Cees J Hamelink

Reviews by Alan Geere, Southampton Solent University

For many of us, the road from journalist to academic is a minefield of dead-ends, u-turns and blind alleys. At first the language is strange, the language tortuous and the concepts hard to grasp.

So, it's important to find a friend early on in the research process who can hold a metaphorical hand and shine a light on the difficult path ahead.

Two veteran thinkers, Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Cees J Hamelink, have been just that torch to many of us taking our first steps down that course. And now they have both published important new volumes looking at the media from an imperialist and global perspective.

In Boyd-Barrett's *Media Imperialism* the opening chapter 'Redefining the Field' is a useful primer, defining both 'media' and 'imperialism' before going on to conclude by just page 14 that media imperialism "should not be thought of as a single theory but as a field of study that incorporates different theories about the relationships between media and empire".

Despite having set his stall out so early the author does not disappoint those readers looking for background and context. Innis, Schiller and Chomsky get their just rewards in the chapter on 'Classic Approaches' and there are historical perspectives ranging from the sinking of the USS Maine in 1898 to the current War on Terror.

The most dynamic chapter is 'Towards Digital Media Empires', taking in a thorough appraisal of media output from news, movies and television through to music, software and computer games. While these areas are a fast-moving target this section provides a reliable snapshot for any student grappling with the complexities of this field.

Boyd-Barrett's conclusion 'New directions for the study of media and empire' makes it clear media imperialism has far from run its course. Acknowledging the 'weaponized manifestations in robotic, drone and cyber warfare' he concludes that "...communications infrastructures will continue to be critical to both the exercise of power and resistance to it, both materially ands ideologically".

This is a solid volume, not overlong at 181 pages and divided into readable chunks. There is nothing fancy to it, written in traditional academic style with a useful index as well as bibliography. Students looking for an introduction to media imperialism as well as those seeking an update on current thinking will not be disappointed.

Cees J. Hamelink is a Dutch media thinker and commentator and never one to embrace the status quo. His ingenious volume provides a source of both information and inspiration on the 'complex terrain of global communication', as the book's cover blurb calls it.

Each of the 13 chapters starts with an 'inspirational source', a veritable who's who of media minds from Innis and Schiller (yes, them again) through to Galtung and McLuhan. Leicester's own James Halloran, who was instrumental in the success of the Centre for Mass Communication Research, gets a look-in as does Austrian composer Joseph Haydn, who Hamelink says was "constantly a great source of inspiration for thinking and writing about global communication".

Each of the elegantly argued chapters comes with a 'Reading spotlight' highlighting particularly relevant texts, online resources via the publishers website, further reading and an innovative research assignment.

In the preface Hamelink describes this feature as trying to combine standard academic requirements with the "possibility of creative thinking, innovative exploration and the art of posing questions".

This is an accessible book for the novice and experienced researcher alike. Always readable and often provocative Hamelink cements his own position as one of the most pre-eminent world thinkers in this field.

Media Imperialism by Oliver Boyd-Barrett, Sage, ISBN 978-1-4462-6820-4, ISBN 978-1-4462-6871-1 (paperback) RRP Hardback £70.00, paperback £23.99

Global Communication by Cees J Hamelink, Sage, ISBN 978-1-84920-423-1, ISBN 978-1-84920-424-8 (paperback) RRP Hardback £70.00, paperback £23.99

Key Readings in Journalism

by Elliot King and Jane L Chapman

Reviewed by Emma Hemmingway, Nottingham Trent University,

Key Readings in Journalism is a fascinating digest which presents an ensemble of more than 30 extracts from journalistic writing and research from which every journalism student would benefit.

It is structured clearly with sections that move logically from the development of journalism as both a practice and as a recognised craft, to a section which seeks to show students how to do journalism day today. These readings include Herbert Gans' Deciding What's News, Martha Gellhorn's illuminating and personal experiences of war reporting during WW2, and it concludes with the beautifully crafted but razor-sharp prose of Woodward and Bernstein's All the President's Men, detailing their investigation, which brought down President Nixon. A biography section includes the work of Lincoln Steffans, Vicki Goldberg and Carl Rowan who the book rightly credits The Washington Post as dubbing America's most visible black journalist during the 1950s. This was a journalist who witnessed and worked in an era still uninitiated in the rite of passage that was to become America's civil rights movement, and then continued working into the early 80s and 90s, where such issues as race, poverty and inequality were still so prevalent in a so-called developed America. I would have relished more writings from the early years of Rowan's career, though his audacious and sometimes bombastic observations of the Reagan era are also thrilling. Although the book is arranged thematically to enable students to explore broad themes within journalism such as its development as a profession, its everyday routines and practices, its role within the wider society of the time and how key individuals and institutions play a role in that social fabric, yet it is also very much a 'dip in and read' volume as each section is self- contained, and engaging of and in itself. It is this aspect of the book which from my experience as a journalism lecturer is the most attractive element for students. It is also what makes it such a key text for many varied journalism modules ranging from journalism practice, ethics and regulation, global journalism, journalism history, war reporting and documentary practice.

If I have any criticism of this fine publication, it would be in the way in which each of the sections, wherein the individual extracts stand alone, are introduced and explained. Each is supplemented by a preface which seeks to provide historical context to the following extracts, and to broaden their appeal and resonance by situating them within a wider social and historical field. It is here the book could have taken on a bolder pedagogic role in terms of engaging students with the development of journalism from such key readings, to what they will witness today and in their lives as working journalists, should they go on to practice the craft. With a slighter clearer explanation as to the agenda of some of the writings throughout the book, I would suggest this may encourage students to engage with other, sometimes even oppositional readings, be they content analysis, or more pragmatic, ethnographic studies of news that have become more popular. This is a volume that is presenting 'key' readings in journalism - but by 'key' are we actually saying 'classic' as more modern day practices or readings of journalism are not presented in this volume? There may be no intention to do so, but it could seek to engage more with contemporary debates very easily. Once again take Carey's fascinating extract on the use of the telegraph in news production. A few paragraphs in the preface to this extract would immediately permit the student to engage not only with the more classical readings of journalism presented here, but to recognise the relevance to today's journalism these key readings afford and signify. This is but one example of where a theoretical nod to the future, or a signpost for the student as to how such key readings have also paved the way for that future to be built as we recognise it today, would add further resonance and a crucial currency to what could otherwise be simply described as a beautiful crafted view of journalism history.

This book offers so much more. I would embrace a future edition of this publication that did provide such a parallax whereby we might glimpse back into the illustrious past of journalism endeavour and by doing so, recognise the strands of its struggles and triumphs in its uncertain but fascinating future, so as well to develop further theoretical methods by which to explore and study journalism practice today.

Key Readings in Journalism by Elliot King and Jane L Chapman, Routledge, 2012, ISBN 978-0-415-88027-5, 413pp

FOI 10 Years On: Freedom fighting or lazy journalism? Edited by Tom Felle and John Mair

Reviewed by Sarah Chapman, Staffordshire University

The Freedom of Information Act has been a valuable tool for journalists for 10 years and this book examines the Act's importance and its impact on newsrooms through a series of essays.

In my experience as a lecturer who teaches first-year students of journalism about how the Freedom of Information Act works, I have noticed how this is an especially daunting subject to the aspiring journalist. Students lack confidence in challenging authorities, such as police forces and local councils and are unsure as to where to begin.

The real gem in this book is the essay by investigative journalists Guy Basnett and Paul McNamara – 'Uncovering the state's secrets: how to use FOI effectively (by two experts in the trade).'

The two trade experts go on to explain with the utmost clarity how they routinely use FOI to uncover the sort of things our public bodies would not want us to know about. They explain how their FOI requests have resulted in jaw-dropping exclusives - how foetuses were incinerated as clinical waste, how police have shot children as young as 12 with Tasers and how vulnerable young people have vanished from council care.

Not only is this the sort of inspiring journalism that makes you want to punch the air as a reporter, but the duo tell us plainly and simply how to get the most from FOI requests by generating ideas and using the Act smartly and effectively. It is well written and clear.

Backing up the valid points made by them is another practical guide from online journalism expert Paul Bradshaw, who offers practical advice for reporters on how to make the Act work for them.

Adding to those crucial tips is a piece by veteran BBC journalist and producer Martin Rosenbaum, who writes about his extensive experience of using FOI and how public authorities have responded, drawing out lessons for media requesters on what works and what does not.

And this is where the problem of this book lies. It successfully gives FOI novices hints and tips for how to use the Act, but the rest of the content left me wondering who the target market for this book is. Is it a book for academics or is it a practical guide?

Understanding FOI is vital to journalists and by reading this book, we have 200-plus pages that provide an in-depth analysis on how the Act was introduced in what former Prime Minister Tony Blair described as his 'biggest mistake,' providing the essential context for how the FOI Act is used by journalists. An insight into the global perspective is also, helpfully included. It's a good read for FOI geeks like me, but there is not enough practical information to commend this book to students on NCTJ courses about using FOI effectively.

It might be the reason why the book falls between two stools in its purpose is because, as the title suggests, the editors cannot decide whether the FOI Act is freedom fighting or lazy journalism.

There is plenty of cheerleading about how FOI symbolises freedom for reporters to uncover the failures of our public bodies, but this is contrasted with the assertion the Act is used as a 'fishing expedition' and this is 'lazy journalism.' Several of the essays, including a particularly trenchant one from Alan Geere, conclude local hacks are far from being switched on to the full potential of the Act and in many cases don't use it at all.

This book provides a good background from worthy and knowledgeable contributors about FOI in the decade since it has been used by journalists. The stand-out essays for me were the practical guides by journalists who have used FOI to excellent effect. But it's perhaps the problem alluded to in the title which means the overall result is a little mixed.

The book cover may be reminiscent of Joy Division's seminal album Unknown Pleasures, but it falls some way short of being of equal classic wavelength.

FOI 10 years on: freedom fighting or lazy journalism? Edited by Tom Felle and John Mair, Abramis Academic Publishing, 302 pages, ISBN 978-1845496463, RRP £19.95 (paperback).

Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth Century Ireland. By Mark O'Brien and Felix M Larkin (ed)

Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the Mid-Nineteenth Century By Ann Andrews

Reviewed by Michael Foley, Dublin Institute of Technology, and founding chair of the Newspaper and Periodical History Forum of Ireland

Not long ago it would be hard to find any decent histories of the press or journalism in Ireland. The fact Brian Inglis's Freedom of the Press in Ireland, 1784-1841 still holds sway is testament to that, as Inglis's elegantly written work was published in 1954.

In recent years that has begun to change and there is now a growing list of books being published. The first of the two books under discussion is somewhat typical in that it is a collection of essays, very popular in Ireland, as if historian and journalism scholars see the essay form as a quick way to fill the void. The second, Ann Andrews' work is different as she has delved into the earlier part of the 19th century, whereas most work currently being undertaken has been in the later period.

Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth Century Ireland is a somewhat eccentric work, which includes Colum Kenny on Arthur Griffith's many editorships and so does not deal with one periodical at all, and ends with Kevin Rafter on *Magill*. The path to *Magill* goes via *An Claidbheamb Soluis agus Fáinne an Lae* by Regina Uí Chollatáin to the scholarly study of DP Moran and The *Leader* by Patrick Maune to Sonja Tiernan's study of the suffrage journal, the *Irish Citizen,* edited Francis Sheehy-Skeffington and James Cousins and then the short lived, *The Worker*, edited by James Connolly by James Curry.

Ian Kennealy's study of the *Irish Bulletin* between 1919 and 1921 is probably best described as a public relations publication as it was sent to journalists from the head of propaganda for the first Dáil (Irish parliament) Desmond FitzGerald and not available in your corner newsagent. The *Irish Stateman's* survival was dependent on centrist opinion winning, which says Ian d'Alton, 'by the summer of 1920, they were evidently not'. Felix Larkin, unsurprisingly, given his interest in cartoons has an excellent essay in *Dublin Opinion*, while the two essays on the Capuchin Annual and The Furrow, by Sonya Perkins and John Horgan respectively give an insight into two very different Catholic periodicals. Horgan is fascinating on how The Furrow managed to weave his way through the minefield of Catholic Church censorship and the creative balancing act in reporting the papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae.*

Mark O'Brien in his study of The Bell suggests it was the beginning of what he calls Documentary Journalism, or social issue journalism while the last three essays on *Hibernia, Hot Press* and *Magill,* were concerned with issues of the 1980s and 1990s, the rush to modernity, the social, political and moral battles. Not only did they report and comment on the issues, but were part of those same battles. They had little concern about nation building or the nature of Irishness, as obsessed some of earlier periodicals. *Hibernia, Hot Press* and Magill were vehicles for strong journalism and, became nurturers of journalistic talent.

There is little coherence in terms of choice of periodical chosen for inclusion, but that is the charm. It reads like an alternative history of modern Ireland and a volume which includes both the *Capuchin Annual,* a conservative Catholic periodical, and *Hot Press*, still Ireland premier rock music publication, must be welcome.

Ann Andrews' work steps into an earlier period, dominated by the Great Irish Famine. She has used a study of newspapers and journalism to delve into the start of modern Irish nationalism and shows the centrality of the newspaper to building the modern political movement. Many of the publications she mentions might have been short lived, but they contributed to the movement that eventually led to independence 70 years later.

The newspapers of this period played a huge role in the development of a public debate about nationalism, but also left a legacy of writing by men such as James Fintan Lalor, John Mitchel, Charles Gavan Duffy, who would influence a later generation of nationalists.

This is an original study of the press, something many historians have ignored or whose role has been misunderstood, and a valuable contribution to the historiography of Irish nationalism and 19th century Irish history. It is an important work in that the press generally before 1850 has tended to be neglected by press historians.

Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth Century Ireland, by Mark O'Brien and Felix M Larkin (ed), Four Courts Press, Dublin, 240pp, ISBN 978 1 84682 524 8, €55.

Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, by Ann Andrews, Liverpool University Press, 286pp

ISBN 978 1 78138 142 7, £70.

Journalism: Principles and Practice (3rd edition) Tony Harcup 2015 Sage ISBN 978-1-4739-3033-9

Reviewed by Gary Hudson, Staffordshire University

This is simply the best book for journalism students and their teachers that I have ever seen. That may seem like a sweeping statement, but it took some time to reach that considered opinion and I hope to justify it.

Just over a decade ago Tony Harcup raised the bar when he used an innovative split-page technique to marry the often conflicting interests of journalism practice and the theoretical and ethical environment in which journalists operate. He has now upped the ante again with the e-book version of the third edition.

There are two new chapters – predictably one on ethics and another on social media – a refreshed and updated text retaining the helpful split-screen approach, no photographs, but lots of graphic symbols. In those graphics lies the hidden treasure that makes this edition so special.

I say hidden advisedly, because of the time-consuming aspect of my quest. If Blind Pew had knocked on my door bearing the black spot it is unlikely it would have led to a lengthier treasure hunt. And this was no rollicking pirate adventure but a rather tedious engagement with invalid engagement tokens, clunky drop-down boxes, password refusals and verifications and ultimately a string of communications with an online help desk.

In short, the instructions pasted into the front cover of the hard copy about how to download your 'FREE eBook' are woefully inadequate. The helpline chap lived up to his job description by being extremely helpful and redeeming the code for me to download the book onto my iPad. I have no idea how he did that and after three days of the darker arts of online engagement, I still have no idea where to download the eBook from. But I now have it and it is a revelation.

Assuming you don't suffer the same delays as me (and I am sure the publishers are learning from their mistakes), you are in for a treat – almost a one-stop shop for all journalism training. There are links to the relevant sections of academic journals, interviews with practising journalists, online articles, the BBC Academy and – unguarded by Ben Gunn - a treasure chest of other sources.

There are better books on the mechanics of modern journalism, particularly on the use of broadcast and online technologies, but the practice of journalism within an ethical and theory-based framework is nowhere better expressed. And Harcup still finds time for the quirky quote boxes. I would have felt cheated if the priceless gem from Chico Marx were missing (yes, Chico not Groucho): "Who you gonna believe, me or your own eyes?"

The cover of this third edition is uninspiring, amateurish even, with black and gold lettering on bright yellow, and the spine is slightly presumptuous with the title reduced to "Journalism … 3rd edition".

But that title is all I am likely to see of the hard copy, as it is the electronic version I am most likely to consult. Slightly worryingly, the instructions suggest the embed code allows 24 months free access to the eBook. What happens after that? Do I have to buy the book again? It would probably be worth it, although preferably without what John Lennon described as the 'stockade and that', or the online equivalent of hiding in a barrel of apples.

A classic from the Journalism bookshelf:

Bad Science by Ben Goldacre

Review by David Hayward, Hayward Black Media consultancy and Coventry University, previously BBC College of Journalism head of journalism.

Bad Science by Ben Goldacre is one of those books you pick up and simply can't put down, apologies I'm fully away this is a terrible cliché, but it is.

It caused a very frosty atmosphere for me one holiday, when I metaphorically went missing for a couple of days, lost in the world of the MMR hoax, homeopathy, snake oil salesmen, rogues, charlatans and Dr Gillian McKeith PhD.

Written in 2008 it was revelatory. It spoke out against the prevailing misunderstanding of science and statistics by journalists and the media as a whole.

Along with 'The Tiger that Isn't: Seeing through a world of numbers', by Michael Blastland and Andrew Dilnot, see review in previous issue JE 3(2), it became a vital tool for any journalist who wanted to better understand the world. The recommendations on the front page of my well-thumbed edition say a lot about it.

"The most important book you will read this year, and quite possibly the funniest too." Charlie Brooker and "Bad Science introduces the basic scientific principles, to help everyone to become a more effective bullshit detector." Sir Iain Chalmers, founder of the Cochrane Library.

At the time the book was first released, it would have been perfectly fine for journalists to admit they knew nothing about science or statistics. This was okay because journalists were then and still are predominantly arts graduates.

Why then, did we not listen to scientists and take what they were saying seriously? There was an air of arrogance about journalism and the news industry. Eloquent speakers were far more likely to be believed than people who actually knew what they were talking about.

The MMR debacle or hoax is an excellent example of this. Chapter 15 of the book is dedicated to it, as Ben Goldacre says,

'…. It is the proto-typical health scare, by which all others must be judged and understood. It has every ingredient, every canard, every sleight of hand, and every aspect of venal incompetence and hysteria, systematic and individual.'

I'm not being preachy here. I count myself in the ranks of the many journalists, editors and producers who got the story wrong.

I was an assistant editor at BBC Midlands Today, when the MMR 'crisis' was at its height. We would do story after story about the dangers of the MMR vaccine. It was received wisdom that the combined jabs were dangerous and the Government was misleading us. We had the evidence in Dr Andrew Wakefield's study. It fitted the story narrative and we wanted to report it.

When the scientific community, overwhelming came out with evidence-based contradiction to the study, we as journalists and the media ignored the boffins in spectacles and leather elbow patches. Instead we took the views of vocal columnists as gospel. It was one of the worst examples of science reporting and I am embarrassed to have been part of it.

This is just one of the issues Bad Science tackles. With precision and clarity it tells us what is right and what is wrong about homeopathy, health scares, bad stats and how the media promote the public misunderstanding of science.

Thankfully the world of science journalism has improved radically over the past six or seven years. I don't think it's over stating things to say, a lot of this is down to Dr Ben Goldacre.

Some excellent work has taken place since. The Royal Statistical Society spent considerable time and money holding training programmes for journalists. Fiona Fox and the science media centre are fearsome advocates for excellence in science reporting, and the BBC College of Journalism has some exceptional advice on its website.

Add in the work of Jim Al-Khalili, Brian Cox and the brilliant site IFL Science (it stands for "I fucking love" science) and the world of understanding and giving respect to scientists is a very difference place to 2008.

There is still some way to go. We remain susceptible to rogue surveys and quack cures, if they make a good headline. But things are improving and a lot of that is because of Bad Science.

The last word must go to one of the best put downs I have read in any book or article. It's about the media darling of nutrition and stool inspection Dr Gillian McKeith PhD. It's at the beginning of chapter 7, titled Dr Gillian McKeith PhD.

"I'm going to push the boat out here, and suggest that since you've bought this book you may already be harbouring some suspicions about the multi-millionaire pill entrepreneur and clinical nutritionist Gillian McKeith (or to give her full medical title: Gillian McKeith)"

Bad Science by Dr Ben Goldacre, Harper Collins, 2009, 338pp, £12.99

ISBN: 978-0-00-724019-7

A classic from the Journalism bookshelf:

British News Media and the Spanish Civil War by David Deacon

Reviewed by Richard Lance Keeble, Lincoln University

While cooped up in a Barcelona hotel during the Spanish civil war in 1937, George Orwell noticed a "fat Russian agent cornering all the foreign refugees". With his typically droll wit, Orwell added: "I watched him with some interest, for it was the first time that I had seen a person whose profession was telling lies – unless one counts journalists."

Yet Orwell's quip obscures an extraordinarily rich tapestry of journalistic endeavour which David Deacon is at pains to reveal in some considerable detail in his British News Media and the Spanish Civil War (Edinburgh University Press, 2008). For me, this text is an example of journalism research at its very best. Reviewing it for the European Journal of Communication in 2009, I

described it as a 'brilliant, concise and original study' bursting with insights and ideas.

The book could, indeed, serve as a useful primer for research students given the way in which it combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods so imaginatively. For instance, a table lists the news agencies credited – accounting for 15 per cent of all news items. Those most commonly used were Reuters (481 items), British United Press (198), Associated Press (50) and Exchange (48). Ninety per cent of the articles on Spain were news items, while features and commentaries accounted for only 1 per cent, readers' letters 4 per cent and leader columns 5 per cent. Deacon concludes (p. 119): "…these general distributions demonstrate that 'news' about the war dominated 'views' about it, something that contrasts with contemporary trends in the British press, where columnists and opinions abound."

Another chapter concentrating on women correspondents provides a list of all the 23 women who reported from Spain together with the sectors in which they worked. Eighteen were based in the Republic sector only – including Dorothy Parker, of New Masses, Gerda Taro, of Ce Soir, Vu and Life, Paula Leclerc, of the Daily Telegraph, and Elizabeth Wilkinson, of the Daily Worker. Rather than describing the drama and horrors of open combat, women's reports focused more on the impact of the war on ordinary people and their everyday lives. But Deacon stresses that this observation should not serve to demean and patronise women's contributions. "Although highly educated, these women lacked status within their occupational field and were often reliant on the sponsorship and support of male colleagues and editors. This restricted their news gathering opportunities both in terms of access to senior political figures and physical mobility. Thus, their interests in reporting the impact of the war on everyday lives was, to some extent, a case of making a virtue of necessity" (p. 79).

The text is fascinating in the way in which it delves deep into the archives of such organisations as Reuters, Manchester Guardian, News International and the BBC. For instance, in a chapter on the news management strategies of the Nationalists and Republicans, Deacon quotes from a Reuters editorial memo dated 4 May 1937 to report that in late 1936, Franco issued a decree that any journalist who had reported from the Nationalists' side ran the risk of being executed if they were later captured by the Republicans.

Deacon, moreover, identifies a complex mix of attitudes amongst the journalists – describing them as either propagandists, partisans, sympathisers and agnostics. Amongst the first group he lists Louis Fischer (the Nation) and Jim Lardner (New York Herald Tribune) who joined the Republican International Brigades. Claud Cockburn, of the Daily Worker, was, like many of the propagandists, a member of the Communist Party, and he regularly invented stories for their military and political advantage. Partisans were those journalists who were passionately committed but had an associative rather than formal relationship with a cause or party. On the Republican side, for instance, there were such iconic figures of twentieth-century journalism as Robert Capa, Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn. Continuing to explore the subtle distinctions, Deacon identifies the sympathisers as those journalists whose support for the cause "was more measured and conditional" than that of the partisans. Finally, the agnostics were those reporters who stressed their "professionalism" and focused on the war's intrinsic value as a news story.

Paul Preston's We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil (Constable and Robinson, London, 2008) is another vital text which draws extensively on diaries and personal correspondence to provide a marvellously detailed narrative. More recently, Amanda Vaill's Hotel Florida: Truth, Love and Death in the Spanish Civil War (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014) has provided a glitzy, romantic account of the adventurous journos (such as Hemingway, Gellhorn, Capa and Taro) and press officials (Arturo Barea and Ilsa Kulcsar) who congregated at the Hotel Florida, Madrid, during the conflict. Read together, these books offer fascinating insights into the world of the press corps Orwell deliberately ignored while he was fighting for The Cause in Catalonia.

British News Media and the Spanish Civil War by David Deacon, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, Hardback: 196pp. ISBN 978-0-7486-2748-6

Information for contributors

We accept original articles about journalism education and topics linked to journalism and education that are not offered for publication elsewhere at the time of submission. Articles for peer review should be in the range of 5000-7000 words.

Articles for Comment and Criticism should be shorter at about 3,000 to 4,000 words.

The copy deadline for the next issue is: Aug 30, 2012 but material sent earlier would be appreciated. Articles should be submitted to the editors at ajejournal@gmail.com together with a 100-150 word abstract. Comment and criticism articles can be more polemic and do not require an abstract.

Presentation and submission:

Articles should be produced in Word format, double spaced and set in Times New Roman 12pt with the minimum of formatting. Please do not press the “enter” button to put a double space between paragraphs and do not use specialist templates. Referencing should be in standard Harvard form with citations in the form: (Simmons 1955, p404) whilst notes should be set as endnotes.

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Reviews of appropriate books should be approximately 400 words. We do not accept unsolicited reviews of books, but are always grateful to be given the opportunity to consider a review proposal. Please contact Tor Clarke, the reviews editor, if you wish to submit a review. All book reviews should include author, title, ISBN number, publisher, number of pages and price.

Presentation and submission:

All tables and figures should be produced separately either at the end of the article or in a separate file. Each should be clearly labelled Tab1e 1:….. Table 2…… Fig. 1:…. Fig. 2: etc and a note inserted in the text identifiying approximately where it should be placed.

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