Challenge & Change: REASSESSING JOURNALISM’S GLOBAL FUTURE
CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

Reassessing Journalism’s Global Future

Edited by Alan Knight
# Table of Contents

**Chapter One**  
Journalism re-defined: *Alan Knight*  

**Chapter Two**  
The rise and fall of newspapers: *Paolo Hooke*  

**Chapter Three**  
One World? Globalising the Media: *Tony Maniaty*  

**Chapter Four**  
Reporting a world in conflict: *Tony Maniaty*  

**Chapter Five**  
Networked journalism in the Arab Spring: *Alan Knight*  

**Chapter Six**  
Ethics in the age of newsbytes: *Sue Joseph*  

**Chapter Seven**  
Data Drive Journalism: *Maureen Henninger*  

**Chapter Eight**  
Information Sources and data discovery: *Maureen Henninger*
The future of journalism can and will be better than its past. We have never had a more open ecosystem for the expression of information and ideas.

Richard Gingras, Director of news and social products at Google, August 9, 2012 in Chicago.¹

Journalists were once defined by where they worked; in newspapers, or radio and television stations. Now, the internet promises everyone, everywhere can be a publisher. But not everyone has the skills or training to be a journalist; defined by their professional practices and codes of ethics. Such journalists will continue to

¹ Richard Gingras, Director of news and social products at Google, at the opening keynote of the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) on August 9, 2012 in Chicago. (Gingras, 2012)
authorise information, providing signposts for discerning audiences. Journalism is merely evolving, as it has done many times before to exploit newer media.

Private newspaper’s financial base, which underpins journalism shifted ground, as advertising revenue withdrew from traditional newspaper groups. This process is particularly marked in the United States and in Australia where the small size of the media market has made some operators particularly vulnerable to cost increases and the threat of takeovers.

Yet even there, we were seeing new green shoots. While the venerable Washington Post lost more than 200 journalists in a year, al Jazeera America hired 700. In Australia, the Guardian has established a successful online edition, joining Crikey, Online Opinion and the Drum.

**Rupert Murdoch Sees The Future**

The US based media magnate, Rupert Murdoch was early to identify the impact of new internet technologies on established communications industries. In a speech to the American Society of Editors as long ago as 2005, Murdoch warned that newspapers must adapt or become “also rans”:

> Newspapers as a medium for centuries enjoyed a virtual information monopoly – roughly from the birth of the printing press to the rise of radio. We never had a reason to second-guess what we were doing. Second, even after the advent of television, a slow but steady decline in readership was masked by population growth that kept circulations reasonably intact. Third, even after absolute circulations started to decline in the 1990s, profitability did not (Murdoch 2005).

Speaking in 2008 on the ABC's Boyer Lectures, Murdoch said that the internet allowed “a direct attack” on journalists’ judgment. “Journalists like to think of themselves as watchdogs, but they haven't always responded well when the public calls them to account,” he said (Murdoch 2008).

> The challenges are real. There will be probably never be a paperless office, but young people are straying paperless homes. Traditional sources of revenue – such as classifieds – are drying up, putting pressure
on the business model, and journalists face new competition from alternative sources of news and information (Murdoch 2008).

Yet Murdoch expressed confidence in the future of journalism and newspapers, provided journalists served their audiences with quality material.

He said that News Corporation sought to take advantage of digital content by offering three tiers of involvement:

The first will be the news that we put online for free. The second will be available for those who subscribe to wsj.com. And the third will be a premium service, designed to give its customers the ability to customise high-end financial news and analysis from around the world (Murdoch 2008).

Murdoch had diversified his former newspaper chain, News Corporation, to include movie companies, news as entertainment, satellite television, sports teams and more recently internet social networking sites.

News Corporation content, including, music, text, movies and animation was distributed by new media, leapfrogging over traditional distributors including terrestrial broadcasters, print publishers, record shops and cinema chains.

Murdoch identified the internet as the medium of the future.

**International News**

The old style exclusive, international news order was already long dead, even in mainland China where the government strenuously and unsuccessfully attempts to enforce official accounts of international events. It has been effectively replaced by blended and multi sourced information, which collectively contributes to the new global media environment. The Internet allows the creation of multi-layered reports, which are embedded with images, video, and animation.

Accuracy has become a key issue as diligent consumers compare journalists' analysis with their sources original words. Authenticated websites which aggregate these reports, such as the BBC, New York Times and the ABC (Australia) have experienced rapidly rising page views. Social media and individual websites, such
as blogs, which may offer previously unrepresented opinion, already attract much larger audiences than some conventional columnists.

Individual conventional news stories, delivered in text with summary leads and one or two quotable sources are fast becoming irrelevant to the individual news consumer. Such stories are often more useful as the raw source material for online databases, such as Factiva, operated by the wire service, Reuters. The information they contain can then be archived, considered and compared.

However, some things remained constant. Journalists were still required to create summaries of ideas, expositions and events. But if their reports were to have veracity they must be buttressed by supporting documents and sites. The International Federation of Journalists Declaration of Principles on the conduct of Journalism stated that respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist:

> Media must respect the professional and ethical principles upon which the freedom of expression and opinion relies. In doing so, journalists advance the public interest by publishing, broadcasting or circulating facts and opinions without which a democratic electorate cannot make responsible judgments (IFJ 1986).

Professional journalists were trained to synthesize and present ideas. By publication through recognized channels, they became part of identifiable information brands and could be judged accordingly. Anonymous web postings would, and on reflection, should not be granted similar credibility. Mainstream media framed this certified news in ways, which news consumers should be able to comprehend integrate and apply. This demand for authenticated information should continue to create a need for mediation by journalists. Journalists will still be needed to bear witness to events.

Australia’s Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulation saw the newsmedia as continuing to play key roles in contemporary democracies. It cited;

> Information: the news media can provide fair and full information so citizens can make sound political choices
**Investigation:** the news media can investigate concentrated sources of power, particularly governmental power

**Analysis:** the news media can provide coherent frameworks of interpretation to help citizens comprehend a complex world.

Social empathy: journalism can tell people about others in their society and their world so that they can come to appreciate the viewpoints and lives of other people, especially those less advantaged than themselves.

**Public forum:** journalism can provide a forum for dialogue among citizens and serve as a common carrier of the perspectives of varied groups in society.

**Mobilisation:** the news media can serve as advocates for particular political programs and perspectives and mobilise people to act in support of these programs (Finkelstein 2012).

**Tipping Towards Asia**

The second major impact on journalism was the shift towards Asia a global cultural and information axis.

In the last two centuries information distribution was constructed to serve European centred colonial empires. These information networks evolved from the telegraph to the telephone to satellite communications networks. Production centred on the old metropolitan centres, London, Paris and Amsterdam, more recently shifting to New York and Los Angeles. International journalism has been driven by these new communications technologies.

William Russell's dispatches from the Crimean War were delivered by steamship. Reuters, the first major international news agency, later in the nineteenth century used the telegraph to collect and systematically distribute global news. Photography illuminated the American Civil and First World wars. The telephone was used for live radio descriptions of the bombing blitz in London in World War...
two. Mobile movie cameras were deployed in the Vietnam War while satellite television revolutionised coverage of the first and second Gulf wars.

These high technologies required sophisticated technical skills, complex support systems and significant financial backing, concentrating power in the hands of the specialists, journalists who delivered the news.

However the internet, a decentralised information system initially designed to survive nuclear attacks on metropolitan centres, has atomised communications. The Net with its ability to distribute, research and interact, promises the greatest revolution of all...and the war that is being reported this time is one of the survival of journalism itself.

Western journalism is said to be in crisis, as a result of the internet. Citizen journalists are seen to be challenging reporters' roles as mediators of public information. The internet is eroding the financial basis for the powerhouses of western journalism, the newspapers. Young consumers, raised on a diet of computer games, internet chat and networking sites, appear to be redefining news itself.

Internet Usage

According to Internet World Stats, there were 578 million internet users in Asia² in 2012, representing a penetration of 15.3% of the population. However internet penetration was widely disparate with South Korea (82.9%), Hong Kong (70.7%), Japan (73.8%). Indonesia, a large and disparate developing nation was estimated to have internet penetration of 10.5% (but with usage growth of 1,150% from 2000 to 2008). These rates might be compared with the United States (72.5%) Australia (79.4%) and the United Kingdom (68.6%) (Internet World Stats 2009).

However, Asia already represented 39.5% of global users in this survey, compared to Europe with 26.3 % and North America with 17%. China boasted of 253 million users, Japan 94 million and Indonesia 25 million (Internet World Stats 2009).

² This relates to 35 countries and regions, from mega states like China and India to small entities such as Bhutan and Myanmar.
Internet usage could be expected to increase throughout Asia as literacy rates improved, business demand rose, economies modernised, computer costs.

**Western Pessimism**

Much of the pessimism expressed about journalism's future and the negative impact of the internet, emanated from western countries, where journalism often has been dominated by large, traditional, privately owned, newspaper groups, which often created news agendas followed by less well-resourced journalists in television and radio. The profitability of these groups and the viability of the journalism they supported were being directly threatened by the shift of advertising revenue to the web.

A report presented in June 2008 by the British House of Lords communications committee warned that the race to pursue advertising cash on the internet was damaging “news gathering”. Committee Chair, Lord Fowler said media companies were having to make savings which had a particular impact on investment in news gathering and investigative and specialist journalism - including a reduction in foreign correspondents.

> The news media is experiencing a period of unprecedented change. There is considerable uncertainty about the future. The newspaper industry is facing severe problems as readership levels fall; young people turn to other sources of news; and advertising moves to the internet. Even when newspapers run successful internet sites the value of the advertising they sell on these sites does not make up for the value lost (House of Lords 2008).

The increase of news platforms and new high tech ways of accessing the news had not been matched by an increase in resources for news gathering, the Lords committee concluded.

Journalism used to be defined by where you worked. Journalists once had privileged access to the tightly held means of mass distribution. In Australia, this meant the few who worked in newspapers could influence the news agendas of radio and television.
Journalism had been redefined internationally by:

- Democratisation of media production with the rise in new digital technologies;
- The atomisation of the distribution of information through the internet and social media:
- The challenge to western paradigms by the rising intellectual and cultural influence of transitional societies;
- The decline of the traditional media economic models;
- Influence on media uptake of rising levels of education and literacy levels.

**Newspapers**

Newspapers, like the automatic wrist watch or the big gun battleship, were inventions of the mechanical age. Journalists were at the front end of an information assembly line where reporters collected the raw materials, sub-editors refined it, lay out staff boiler-plated the words together and printers manufactured the industrial output. Newspapers were called “the daily miracle”. But it couldn’t last. To make a newspaper you had to cut down half a forest in Tasmania and convert it to wood chips. These were fed through a toxic chemical process to create tonnes of newsprint which was then carted in oil burning ships to ports along the Australian coast. The newsprint was then fed into steam and later electric powered factories which at dawn each day, reproduced images and text on sheets of paper. These were sorted and packed before being trucked to shopfronts which employed child labour (paper-boys) to hawk the final products to people on their way to work.

Compared to a click on a computer link, it was slow, carbon intensive and increasingly expensive. Perhaps it’s worth reflecting on what journalism was like before computers. George Richards was a journalist in Sydney for more than half a century. He was a sub-editor, a London correspondent, a Chief of staff, a cadet trainer and editor of Column 8 at Fairfax newspapers. Richards came from a family of newspapermen, with a father, Chas, an uncle Len, and a brother, Dick in the trade before him. But George Richards would help change newspapers forever, introducing computer systems which would revolutionise journalism culture.
When he started as a copy boy in 1950, he said a lot of the subs were “old diggers” and the women journalists who had taken their places during WW2 had gone; sent “back to the kitchen”. “The [news] copy was either typed or hand written with 6B pencil on copy paper,” he said. The sub-editors round desk was all male, with the chief sub-editor at its centre. Copy was re-written and re-typed with amendments stuck on with Clag glue. “It was a dog’s breakfast”, he said.

The Herald subs room was closed. I would get in there on late shift at eight o’clock at night and there would be this almost visible fug of cigarette smoke coming down from the ceiling as the room filled up. About three or four of us didn’t smoke and everybody else did. The room was pretty daggy. The lino was peeling a bit. It wasn’t air conditioned until 1961. The masters on the fourteenth floor [the Fairfax executive offices] got it first of course, then the compositors and then us (Richards 2012).

International news came in on tele-printers, typed in capitals. Sub-editors cut sentences into strips and glued them onto paper backing. Reporters copy was also “pretty daggy”, Richards said. Some journalists were ordered thinkers who could produce “clean copy where you just had to put a few paragraph marks in it and put a heading on it”. Other stories however came in scraps and had to be heavily sub-edited before being put into type.

Reporters often operated out of pubs, where they would carouse for much of the day with their sources. Richards worked with the then famous Industrial reporter, Jack Simpson, who sat on a stool next to the servery at the Trades Hall Hotel. When officials who ran the unions (and the state Labor government) stopped to buy a beer, Simpson would swap tips on the races for inside information. “Newspapers stopped recruiting the rough and ready guys,” Richards said. Fairfax started hiring reporters with university degrees.

When I was a cadet, you would be going out interviewing lottery winners. The next day you would do a car smash. You might do a bushfire and go out there and live with the fire-fighters. Now days that’s left to AAP. The hard news stories, describing what was going on, now goes to television. There’s no point in describing a fire when people can go and watch it on television. The reporters we got were interested in smart writing and sometimes even spelling (Richards 2012).
Richards was in the London office in 1976 when he was asked to go to Amsterdam to look at a new system, Arsycom. “The instructions were in Dutch and it had a terrible keyboard,” he said. Richards then went to the United States to look at computers in use at the Detroit News, “risking life and limb” in the tough neighbourhood. Fairfax printers went on strike in that year, in an unsuccessful attempt to take control of the new technology. However, first systems were unreliable and clunky. “The Arsycom system was pretty awful and kept on falling over,” he said.

A more effective computer system was needed. In 1984, Richards led the training team to introduce Systems Integrated Incorporated with its Coyote terminals to about 800 Fairfax staff.

It was a beauty. It was a Rolls Royce of computer systems. It had been devised for newspapers…. It had been used widely in the United States for advertising and editorial. One of the best things about it was that it was something you could customise yourself. It taught you how to customise it to meet your own requirements…it was so good they kept it on in classified until 2011. It lasted for twenty seven years. For a computer system that’s amazing (Richards 2012).

Computerisation allowed reporters to type directly into the system. “When you went to computers, everything was neat and tidy on the screen”, he said.

“It was the silence you noticed. Typewriters, teleprinters and shouted exchanges made a lot of noise. “With computers all you heard was click, click click,” Richards said. The conversation around the news desk was muted.

**Computerisation**

Computers were introduced into Australian journalism in the early seventies by Australian Associated Press (AAP), a news wholesaler owned by the major newspaper groups. I encountered them at Queensland Regional News, which distributed stories to Queensland’s regional newspapers. Before that, carbon paper was used to create multiple copies of stories banged out on manual typewriters. The Regional News sub-editors, who favoured green eyeshades and wore steel arm bands to keep their sleeves up from the ink, collected these copies twice a night. They would check stories and fling them to the teleprinter operators who punched paper rolls which could then be fed into a mechanical device which converted
them to an electronic signal. As the sub-editors waited on the ebbs and flows of the news copy, they played cards and drank rum.

The early AAP computers were simple monochrome terminals connected to a mainframe in Sydney. They had limited capacity to progressively save copy and lacked even a spell check facility. But they allowed stories to be accumulated in centralised files which could be processed by editors employed on twenty four seven shifts. There was little time for rum and cards.

The new newspaper computer systems were unstable. A red light would flash in the Fairfax newsroom, the system would go down and stories would disappear. One sub-editor was so enraged that he smashed his keyboard with his fist.

But it was the printers who were to become the first casualties. By the late seventies, newspaper groups had acquired word processing networks which allowed journalists a paper based system which did not need words to be cast in hot lead on a Linotype machine and then bolted together by compositors on “the stone”, to make pages. The introduction of this new technology prompted Australian journalists to go on strike in 1980, complaining that reading computer screens might affect their eyesight. However their industrial action was not in support of the printers, who drank at other pubs, belonged to another union and whose jobs would be lost. Journalists successfully sought extra allowances for using computers.

In the eighties, laptops, or more correctly luggables, arrived. This allowed reporters to write and file without having to make a telephone call to a news copy taker to take down the story. Modems which clamped on telephone handsets became plug ins and then wireless. Ethernet networks became more powerful. Much later in the nineties, the internet allowed sub-editors to operate off shore. There was a pioneering South China Morning Post sub-editor who did his work from a beach shack on the Sunshine Coast, while linked to Hong Kong.

**Pagemasters**

Pagemasters was founded in 1991, initially compiling TV listings and sports results. This company, which became an AAP subsidiary, evolved into an operation which sold page ready news and sport, magazine material and centralised sub-editing.
Printing presses, which once rumbled in the basement of newspaper buildings became remote suburban operations, allowing the old press buildings to be capitalised and journalists installed in leased office accommodation, preferably located away the pubs. Australian Provincial News meanwhile developed a network where sub-editing of century old mastheads was located far away from the rural communities they served, so that local newspapers became templates filled by teams of young reporters.

However, computers and the internet did more than allow newspapers to economise on their operations. They allowed new players to compete for advertising revenue and claim the papers’ future audiences. In a watershed speech in 2005, Rupert Murdoch warned the American Society of editors that younger readers were rejecting newspapers. Murdoch said that unless newspapers recognised changes in the way people used media, “we will as an industry, be relegated to the status of also-rans”. Four years later, a survey of more than 200 Queensland journalism students showed that two thirds read newspapers once a week or less. One had to ask, if elite journalism students didn’t read the papers, who would?

News Corporation acquired popular websites, cross promoted company cultural products including news, music and movies and erected pay walls around its most valuable information. Fairfax established Fairfax Digital, placed its classifieds on the web and launched an online newspaper, the Brisbane Times. But revenue was still down.

In 2012, Fairfax outsourced much of its sub editing to Pagemasters, ending a 150 year continuity of in-house editing for its broadsheet newspapers. Fairfax Managing Director, Greg Hywood, said that he was seeking to establish “sustainable publishing models”, with $25 million worth of redundancies.

Gaining these efficiencies from our production processes is also facilitating further investment in the creation of quality, independent journalism. Fairfax will be investing in more high calibre reporters and writers, an expanded trainee program and multi-media training and equipment (Hywood 2012).
Outsourcing News

Networks of outsourced sub-editors, linked by computers, could edit most newspapers, according to Bruce Davidson, the CEO of Australian Associated Press (AAP).

Australian Associated Press was established by a syndicate of Australian newspapers in 1935 to gather, edit and distribute news stories. It generated its own news, written by its own reporters, edited by its own sub-editors and then distributed to newspapers, radio and televisions. Sub-editors employed at the final news outlets would incorporate this syndicated material into their own newspapers and bulletins. AAP news was frequently unattributed in this process. The final outsourcing of news to AAP mostly abolished this final step in the process.

Pagemasters operations in Australia, New Zealand and the UK provided complete design, editing and production services for a range of metropolitan, regional and community newspapers and weekly and monthly magazines. It specialised in administering content online and on digital platforms. Bruce Davidson in 1991 was a founder of Pagemasters since incorporated into AAP. Dispersed newsrooms of editors, linked by computers and broadband, could more flexibly respond to the ebbs and flows of newspaper copy, Davidson said. Previously production had been constrained by internal departments within newspapers. There was a lot of down-time. In contrast, newsagency editors worked shifts which stretched 24/7.

It was very much silo-ed into segments on the paper. There were feature subs, sports subs business subs, general news subs and advertising and commercial content subs. A lot of newspapers started to break that down to create more of a pool scenario. In the UK and the US there are broader sub-editing teams subbing across multiple sections of newspapers, rather than being segmented (Davidson 2012).

It varied from newspaper to newspaper. “But there is still a need for specialist knowledge,” he said.

We don’t have a one size fits all, generic, assembly line approach to this. We sit down with the newspapers and work out the best ways they want to change their structures. AAP is [already] a big part of the landscape for the media industry. We provide a large proportion of the content that’s in our media every day, not just
stories but now pictures and video, and audio grabs for the radio. Pagemasters expands this to providing services around that content. We are also re-purposing content so that it can be populated on websites and digital platforms that much more easily (Davidson 2012)

Efficiencies came from breaking down the silo culture, changing expectations and changing what journalists did on a daily basis. “If you talk to our sub-editors, they don’t see that as onerous,” Davidson said, “they just see it as a good solid work flow”. “We have at our disposal a large pool of skill which we can deploy as the load dictates,” Davidson said. “We can do the work as it arrives”.

Group Managing Editor for Pagemasters, Peter Atkinson (2012) described the process.

The copy really moves around in the models that we use. In both the New Zealand operation in Auckland, where our team is doing sub-editing for the New Zealand Herald and the APN (Australian Provincial News) regional titles, our teams work in a system that networks directly back into the newspaper. Similarly with the work we do for Fairfax, our Brisbane office producing feature sections for the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age, we connect by high speed Firewire directly into the Fairfax mainframe.

We work as if we were in the very next office.

We provide solutions to some of the challenges facing newspapers and their businesses in a fairly dynamic environment. For a lot of our history we offered work that was a on a page ready basis, that is prepared and ready for press. Particularly regional publishers who had less resources could download out work and send it straight to press. It was completed in house and syndicated via the web. More recently we have got into providing editing services, where we provide sub-editing power… (Atkinson 2012)

But what of quality?
We have the same aims as our clients. We hire the same qualified staff and give them the same excellent working conditions. We train them to be at the cutting edge of the profession. We have the same commitment to the end product and good journalism as any newspaper (Atkinson 2012).

Pagemasters was tied by contract to meet key performance indicators of quality. “We meet substantial financial penalties, if the standards of our work are not up to an agreed level, or even if we fail to meet deadlines”.

**Newspaper Ownership**

Australia had among the most concentrated newspaper ownership in the developed world with only four major publishers. The US based, Murdoch family led, News limited was by far the largest, followed by Fairfax Media, WA Newspapers and Australian Provincial News (APN).

At the opening of the 20th century, competition in the industry was vibrant with several titles vying for customers in each of the major cities. Shortly after Federation, the six state capital cities between them had 21 daily newspapers with 17 independent owners. The zenith came in 1923 when there were 26 capital city dailies and 21 independent owners. The trend towards increasing concentration began with the impact of the Depression, which led to several closures and weakened other titles. It was then that the Melbourne-based Herald and Weekly Times Company led by Sir Keith Murdoch began acquiring titles interstate. In subsequent years, concentration in the industry increased progressively with both the number of titles and number of owners declining significantly. By 1960, the number of capital city dailies had declined by almost half to 14, and the number of independent owners had declined to seven, one-third of the number in 1923 (Finkelstein 2012)

The numbers dwindled in the 1980s when most afternoon newspapers closed. By 2012, only Sydney and Melbourne had competing locally based daily newspapers.

---

Daily newspaper titles ownership shares, Australia, 2011

- News Ltd: 23%
- Fairfax: 40%
- APN: 29%
- WA Newspapers: 4%
- Other: 4%

Daily newspaper aggregate circulation, shares by owners, Australia 2011

- News Ltd: 58%
- Fairfax: 28%
- WA Newspapers: 8%
- APN: 5%
- Other: 1%
Metropolitan/national dailies, ownership shares, Australia, 2011

- WA Newspapers: 9%
- Fairfax: 36%
- News Ltd: 55%

Metropolitan/national dailies circulation, shares by owners, Australia, 2011

- WA Newspapers: 10%
- Fairfax: 25%
- News Ltd: 65%

Finkelstein Report 2012
News Corporation

In 2012, the largest newspaper group in Australia, News Limited abandoned its traditional newspaper structure to meet the demands of 24/7 multiplatform journalism.

The legacy of a series of takeovers and expansions, News Limited had 19 Divisions, including The Herald and Weekly Times in Melbourne, Queensland Newspapers, and Nationwide News in Sydney. Under the new organisation, management was reduced to five divisions with multiplatform responsibilities.

News Limited, owned by the US based News Corporation, published most of Australia’s major newspapers, including the Herald Sun, the Courier Mail, the Sunday Mail, the Adelaide Advertiser and the Sydney Telegraph. In 2012, News claimed that “each week the papers the News Ltd prints, were read by more than half the population of Australia”.

While Rupert Murdoch was one of the first newspaper publishers to warn against the impact of the internet, News Corporation’s attempts to diversify into new media, such as My Space, floundered. Newspapers nevertheless became a relatively minor part of international News Corporation operations dominated by cable television, satellite services, movies, and other entertainment. News Limited’s Chief executive, Kim Williams said his company was re-balancing its activities and revenues in an integrated way. Multi-platform journalism would become universal.

Digital technology and the ever-increasing array of consumer devices and connectivity points represent an important core to the future of our company. To realise the huge opportunities presented we must ensure we have world-class resources supporting our editorial and sales teams. Those resources – people and technology – must be integrated across our editorial product development and execution to be truly successful. Therefore we will no longer run News Digital Media as a separate operating division, but instead embed the knowledge, energy, resources and talent of our digital experts into every part of News (Williams 2012).

News transformation had three pillars, according to Williams.
• Put consumers and advertisers “front and centre”.
• Invest in journalism which could be “seamlessly delivered” across platforms.
• Effectively monetise operations.

Williams maintained that traditional journalism values would continue to be at the core of News newspapers.

At the heart of our relationship with customers is great journalism. We aim to offer it all. More exclusives than any other media company. Analysis that sets the agenda. Investigative journalism that holds diverse leaders to account – like our coverage of Haneef, the AWB scandal, Wivenhoe Dam and the pink bats. Stories that connect with our communities – that make us proud to live where we live, and about the people we live with. Stories that provide real solutions to complex social problems. And stories that illuminate and inform people about the things they love – fashion, cars, food, bringing up their kids or any of the vast pallet of things that interest us (Williams PANPA 2012).

“I have an aversion to words that work on a page that don’t work online,” he told staff in a video link up. Journalism would be offered on a series of platforms. News adopted a one city, one newsroom strategy, allowing stories to be rapidly offered across platforms. “This single newsroom concept will transform operations and unlock strengths. Regional editorial managers would be appointed to take responsibility for all products in New South Wales and Queensland. “We need digitally literate thinking in our DNA” he said.

News Limited spent A$60 million purchasing an information management system, Eidos Methode, to support a “create once, publish many times” editorial approach. “We must change to ensure a viable and sustainable future,” Williams said.

**Fairfax Media**

Australia’s leading quality press, Fairfax newspapers, moved towards becoming a virtual news group.
In 2012, Fairfax Media, which published the Age, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Financial Review, announced the closure of its major printing presses and dumping the traditional broadsheet format, while foreshadowing more than 1900 redundancies.

The impact of the announcement reflected the narrow ownership of Australia’s news media. Fairfax might be centred in only Sydney and Melbourne, but it represented a liberal alternative to the dominant Murdoch press and the government funded Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

While Australian newspapers had not suffered internet driven advertising declines comparable to their American counterparts, the Fairfax move followed falls in revenue accompanied by the threat of a takeover bid by right wing mining billionaire, Gina Rinehart. Rinehart had been acquiring Fairfax shares at reduced prices. A Rinehart advisor, Jack Cowin, the founder of Hungry Jacks burger chain, said that newspapers were a business and that “the purpose of the newspaper … is probably to portray the facts in a manner that is going to attract readership”. A critic of liberal newspaper journalism, Rinehart demanded three places on the Fairfax Board.

Fairfax announced four major measures “to match the reduced significance of print readership to an increasingly digital business”.

- Metro Mastheads to Move to Compact Format: The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age moved to “compact” formats similar to The Australian Financial Review, with the first copy released on 4 March 2013.
- Digital Subscriptions Introduced to Metro Mastheads: Digital subscriptions implemented across The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age during the first quarter of calendar 2013. A “metered” model would be adopted with a base level of free access to the websites retained.
- Closure of Chullora and Tullamarine printing plants by June 2014. Both sites were commissioned when almost all of Metro Media’s content was delivered through the printed newspaper. They had legacy presses with significant surplus capacity which was no longer required. Printing of Metro papers was reallocated to the Fairfax printing network.
- Digital-First Editorial Model: The editorial function was restructured to ensure full integration across digital, print and mobile platforms. There
was intended to be increased flexibility with greater sharing of editorial content across geographies and across platforms.

Fairfax Media Chief Executive and Managing Director Greg Hywood said:

No one should be in any doubt that we are operating in very challenging times. Readers’ behaviours have changed and will not change back. As a result, we are taking decisive actions to fundamentally change the way we do business.

The package of strategic initiatives is bold, and several are difficult, particularly as they will impact on some of our people. However, we believe that they are in the best interests of Fairfax, our shareholders, and ultimately the majority of our people. They are necessary to ensure Fairfax retains its position as a leading independent media company and a key voice in our markets (Hywood 2012).

The National Broadcaster: The ABC

Australia's public funded broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) restructured in 2007 to place its online convergence at the centre of its operations. 4

Digital media, in particular digital journalism moved from the periphery to the centre of ABC operations. Announcing a corporate restructure, ABC Managing Director, Mark Scott. said that:

Digital media is now integral to everything we do.” Scott said the corporate changes reflected “the shift of digital and new media from the fringe of ... operations ten years ago to the very centre of ... Television, Radio and News and Current Affairs output (Scott 2007)

4 The ABC operated four national radio networks, nine metropolitan radio stations and 51 regional stations. Radio Australia, the international service, broadcasted on shortwave, online, satellite and local rebroadcasts in six languages including English. Digital Television was distributed through 177 transmitters. (Jolly 2006)
The ABC re-organisation recognised that radio, television and text were no longer separate products, couched in discrete production cultures. Rather these ABC divisions were content producers serving digital delivery systems, which might include radio, television and websites. It was a belated admission that multimedia journalism was a core practice rather than an experiment. “It is not an add-on, it is not a novelty, it is the present reality as well as the future,” Mr. Scott said.

The ABC outlined its future in a 2020 document which said that, “By reaching all Australians, with a presence on all major delivery platforms, and a comprehensive range of news and quality, trusted programming, the ABC ensures all Australians can participate in the national debate, and is integral to the development of a population with wide-ranging intellectual and creative curiosity.”

The ABC in its 2020 proposal said that there would be expanded online services including:

- Internet TV, providing catch-up and specialist genres.
- Internet Radio, accessing digital radio content nationwide.
- Archival access to a wealth of Australian audiovisual content.
- Local broadband sites providing local communities with their own “town square” for information, video, audio and community participation.
- Constantly updated news and information.
- Partnerships with universities, think tanks, research and government agencies to deliver a series of websites providing public access to unprecedented depth of content around key genres including, Rural and regional Australia, Science, Education and Asia and the Pacific (Scott 2008).

So what would the overall media scene be like in 2020?

According to the ABC, there would be:

- Increasing availability of content. Multichannel television and high-speed broadband connectivity provide audiences with exponentially greater choices of media content from providers anywhere in the world, bypassing local content regulation.
- Increased range of media forms and delivery platforms. Audiences expect to access content across an increasing range of devices and contexts.
- Personalised media. Audiences expect increasingly personalised media experiences, including time- and platform-shifting of content consumption.
- Participatory media. A growing proportion of the public is interested in active engagement with media content creation, ranging from voting and forum discussion, through to collaboration in content creation.
- Audience fragmentation. Greater content choice and delivery platforms fragments audiences, but screen-based content delivered free-to-view will continue to aggregate the largest audiences, particularly around major events, sport and high quality entertainment.
- Increasing concentration of media ownership. As the media environment becomes increasingly global and converged, larger media firms seek greater scale.
- Digital production. Low-cost, professional-quality digital production Equipment allows cheaper production of content, at the same time as the cost of high-end production increases as major media organisations seek to differentiate their output (Scott 2008).

It should be noted that the ABC's ambitions would be framed by series of issues largely beyond ABC management's control. These included: Australian government funding for the ABC declined by 24.36% since 1985-86 (the high point of ABC funding) (Jolly 2006). During the term of the Howard government, there was a move to switch funding from triennial grants to funding which targeted politically favoured projects. During the last election, government ministers actually announced new ABC bureaus in marginal electorates. The need to find funds has resulted in outsourcing of some production, cuts in staff numbers and an emphasis on projects which attract external support.
Clearly to achieve its ambitious aims, the ABC needed substantial government funding. In the 2013 federal budget, the Labor government increased the base ABC funding to $2.5 billion over three years. ABC base funding increases to $2.5 billion over three years.

In addition $69.4m was allocated over four years for the continuation of an enhanced news service and to place more journalists outside of metropolitan areas. $30m was allocated over three years to help meet the increasing demands for digital services like iView and live streaming.

**ABC Reporting**

ABC journalists were required to operate in multimedia environments. What began as peripheral operations, which were extended to rural and regional areas, became mandatory in core newsgathering in 2013.

Under the News system introduced in 2013, desk editors and producers were working with Chief of Staff desks and day editors in the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane newsrooms to coordinate national stories, from commissioning through to production – across all platforms. Reporters working on the new system were supported on news angles by a story producer and a day editor, chasing talent or identifying interstate material.

Reporters were asked to consider five key priorities:

- **SMS a one sentence news flash on breaking news stories.** “If you have a smart phone and can grab a still or moving images we’d like you to email it so it can be used immediately by online and other programs or bulletins going to air.
- **File five comprehensive paragraphs of copy to their local subs which can be used across ABC News output.** “But remember, the overriding objective is to get the story out as quickly as possible, so if you’re hard up against a broadcast deadline – radio or 24 – then do that first.”
- **File radio news voicers.**
- **Do live crosses to News 24 or radio programs.**
- **Construct television news packages.**
ABC Editor Craig McMurtrie said that although many ABC journalists were already working across all platforms, others would need training “to get everybody up to speed”. “We don’t expect that you will be able to do all these things straight away,” he said.

Each story is different. We may have someone dedicated to live and/or digital content or we might divide the workload up between radio and television. It will depend entirely on the assignment. …ABC News has been through many changes over the years, this is a big one, but our focus must stay on what always matters most – compelling storytelling. Whether it’s for online, radio or television the mission is the same…delivering relevant, original and accurate reporting (McMurtrie 2013).

ABC News Priorities confirmed that prospective journalists must be able to practice convergence. Specifically, they needed to be able to;

- Write what News agencies called Snaps; Tight sentences which quickly and accurately summarise the key point of breaking stories.
- Write longer scripts which include key points, sources and context.
- Craft, articulate and record voice reports, using both studios and remote locations.
- Be informed and confident enough to engage live with presenters
- Be able to produce simple television packages and contribute to more complex visual reports

**Practising Convergence**

Convergence, according to the Convergence Review report of 2012, offered great opportunities to innovative players, as well as threats to practitioners unwilling or unable to change, “creating a need to transform both business and delivery models to keep up with changes in user behaviour”.

Users were “increasingly at the centre of content service delivery”, the report said. “They are creating their own content and uploading it to social media platforms. They are controlling what content they want to view and when they want to view it, for example, through podcasts of popular radio programs and catch-up television services provided by free-to-air networks,” the report said.
Australia’s creative industries are well positioned to seize the opportunities offered by this new environment, and to ensure the development of our digital economy. Australian industry can expand our traditional screen businesses and develop excellence in emerging areas like smartphone and tablet apps. These industries can flourish in a converged environment that opens up new trade opportunities and cultural interactions with the rest of the world, where global distribution is virtually free (Convergence Review 2012).

While the internet enabled freelance journalists to self-publish, it also meant that independent journalists no longer had an umbrella of employers’ legal protection. Australia has no constitutional guarantees of free speech, allowing the wealthy or well connected to target their online critics with costly legal actions. Journalists have been faced with the choice of going silent or talking a loan to pay for a lawyer. In modern authoritarian states like Singapore, defamation has been routinely deployed to silence and even break opposition.

The Media Alliance’s insurance scheme introduced in 2013 recognised the shift away from assembly line news in old style newsrooms, to a de-regulated, atomised journalism, defined not by place of employment but rather by professional and ethical practices. The Alliance’s Freelance Pro initiative was said to allow members protection for up to $1 million professional indemnity and public liability. The Alliance used its strength in numbers to negotiate cut rate insurance levies.

Freelance Pro members will be required to do an online, self-guided course on the Media Alliance Code of ethics. You will need to have done a refresher course in Australian media law in the last five years or participate in an at cost course available through the Walkley Foundation.

Media Alliance NSW Secretary, Marcus Strom said that in a fragmented media landscape, it was increasingly important for freelancers to stand out as legitimate practitioners of the craft of journalism.

Since our foundation in 1910 as the Journalists Association, we have always been both, a professional association and an industrial organisation.
With the changing nature of journalism, we want to be sure we are relevant to growing number of freelancers.

The old news factories are undergoing a metamorphosis. Society is changing. Priorities are changing. I think they will survive and if they get their business models right, may even thrive again. But what they will rely on is a growing army of freelance journalists. We want to make sure those journalists are professional, well paid and respected (Strom 2013).

Discussion

It’s old news that the media world is changing fast. The growth of the internet abolished journalist’s monopolies on the mass communication of news. The swing to Asia has profound implications what was an Anglo centric, metropolitan focused, mostly one way news flows.

Digitisation and the production of inexpensive, high quality audio and video equipment empowered non mainstream producers wherever they might be located. The multiplication of new platforms, particularly mobile phones, has made distribution of this material pervasive.

Networks of consumers, working with journalists, such as India’s SWARA, have already created viable alternatives to mainstream media. (SWARA was a voice-based portal, freely accessible via mobile phone that allowed anyone to report and listen to stories of local interest. Reported stories are moderated by journalists and become available for playback online as well as over the phone, the Swara site said).

News organisations will have to reshape and re-organise to meet the new demands. Some won’t survive or will only continue with greatly reduced influence and authority.

Australia’s primary news content providers, the major newspapers and the ABC have all restructured to address multi-platform journalism. In doing so they have begun operating like Australia’s news agency, Australian Associated Press;
working twenty four/seven schedules, creating multiplatform news and acting as verifiers and authorisers of information.

Future journalists who might hope to work for them will have to be multi skilled; being able to report, write in text, able to produce audio and create short television packages. Their tools will be their lap tops and increasingly mobile phones. They will have access to data banks, global audio text, audio and text links and websites.

But the core requirements, the ability to quickly and concisely summarise complex events and accurately communicate outcomes, can be expected to provide journalists with work for some time to come.
References


Chapter Two:

Newspapers rise and fall

Paolo Hooke

Newspapers are widely held to be in serious crisis. In the Western world, the rise of online news and new multiple sources of news and information have changed the economics of newspaper publishing. The impact of the Global Financial Crisis and the associated downturn in newspaper advertising spending has only exacerbated the economic difficulties confronting the industry.

The crisis has been felt most painfully in the United States, where even as online audiences grow, print circulation continues to decline. Even more critically, so does advertising revenue. When circulation and ad revenue are combined, the U.S. newspaper industry has shrunk 43 per cent since 2000, while it’s estimated the number of full-time employees has dropped below 40,000 for the first time since 1978. The worry is that fewer reporters mean things don’t get covered, with democracy diminished. In the United Kingdom, where newspapers are less
dependent on advertising revenue than their trans-Atlantic counterparts, the effects have been less marked.

The digital revolution is undermining the business models that see consumers pay for print news, with a younger generation accustomed to the idea that news is free. Newspapers are struggling to try and find a way to make money online, hamstrung by the lack of a viable revenue model. To make matters worse, newspapers make only about a tenth from their print readers as what they make from digital readers. According to the Newspaper Association of America, a print reader is worth an average of US$539 in advertising alone, while an average online reader is worth US$26.

However the crisis of the newspaper is far from universal. In China and India, newspaper markets are growing strongly, fuelled by robust economic growth and demand from an emerging urban and literate middle class that is enjoying higher incomes and a rising standard of living.

In China, newspapers have evolved from being the ‘tongue and throat’ of the Communist Party to being commercialised. This development means that while newspapers in China will not challenge the Party, they are asking lots of questions, so the country is more open as a result. In India, the growth of a popular vernacular press is skewed towards entertainment, celebrity and sports with some coverage of public affairs; which while not being a perfect development, supplements what the Indian media system has offered to the country’s citizens in the past.

This is no time for fatalism or simplistic predictions of the supposed ‘death of the newspaper’ with the Internet cast as the chief villain. Newspapers will continue to exist but are at a watershed moment: buffeted by the digital revolution yet with a unique opportunity to reinvent themselves - never more important considering the vital role that journalism plays in society and democracy.

**Academic Opinions**

That the business of journalism is changing is an often discussed but infrequently written about subject. Nicholas Lemann, Dean and Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, describes a situation usually discussed on the basis of anecdote and unproved assertion.
Indeed the only global survey of its kind is *The Changing Business of Journalism and its Implications for Democracy*. This groundbreaking book is the first major overview of how the news industry is dealing with several unprecedented challenges, in particular the rise of the internet and the draining of advertising revenue from traditional media platforms. *The Changing Business of Journalism* provides a detailed analysis of structural changes in journalism, outlining the threats and opportunities facing legacy news organisations across the world, including those in the U.S., U.K. and India. Rejecting simplistic predictions of the technologically determined death of the news industry, it argues that the industry’s latest downturns are more closely related to its dependence on advertising and the impact of the Global Financial Crisis (2007-2009) than with the spread of the Internet, so that it’s “premature to announce the death of the newspaper” (Levy & Nielsen 2010, pp. 1-14).

A second key work is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s [OECD] *News in the Internet Age: New Trends in News Publishing*, which outlines the radical changes to the economics of news production and distribution. The study says that after very profitable years, newspaper publishers in most OECD countries face increased competition and often declining advertising revenue and circulation. The economic crisis has only exacerbated this downturn while in some 20 out of 30 OECD countries newspaper readership is on the decline, especially among younger people. *News in the Internet Age* charts the evolution of the global newspaper publishing market, with an emphasis on the development of online news. It provides some striking statistics: the newspaper publishing market shrunk by an estimated 21 per cent and 30 per cent respectively between the years 2007 and 2009 in the U.K. and U.S. (OECD 2010, pp. 9, 30).

*News in the Internet Age* concurs with *The Changing Business of Journalism*, that newspapers are far from finished. It points out that the data and large country-by-country differences do not lend themselves to make the case for ‘the death of the newspaper’, in particular if non-OECD countries and potential positive effects of the economic recovery are taken into account (OECD 2010, pp. 3-4).

Notwithstanding the fine scholarly work in *The Changing Business of Journalism* and the wealth of statistics in *News in the Internet Age*, there is a major research gap on the extraordinary changes affecting the global newspaper industry. This essay will address this gap, by investigating the decline of newspaper markets in
the U.S. and U.K. and their growth in China and India. It offers scholarly and journalistic outcomes through analysing implications for the practice of journalism, which affects journalism students, academics and practitioners worldwide.

Data

Newspaper publishing market – print circulation 2008-2012 (US$ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012p</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>10,087</td>
<td>10,067</td>
<td>10,049</td>
<td>9,989</td>
<td>9,890</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>4,873</td>
<td>4,620</td>
<td>5,031</td>
<td>4,607</td>
<td>4,540</td>
<td>-6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4,023</td>
<td>4,417</td>
<td>4,436</td>
<td>5,036</td>
<td>5,405</td>
<td>+34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>+24.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newspaper publishing market – print advertising 2008-2012 (US$ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012p</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>34,740</td>
<td>24,821</td>
<td>22,795</td>
<td>20,692</td>
<td>19,352</td>
<td>-44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>4,410</td>
<td>3,499</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,196</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>-29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>5,202</td>
<td>5,598</td>
<td>5,735</td>
<td>7,014</td>
<td>7,196</td>
<td>+38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,711</td>
<td>1,785</td>
<td>1,989</td>
<td>2,228</td>
<td>2,488</td>
<td>+45.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = projected. At average 2012 exchange rates. Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2013-17

The United States And United Kingdom

“American journalism is at a transformational moment, in which the era of dominant newspapers and influential network news divisions is rapidly giving way to one in which the gathering and distribution of news is more widely dispersed,” says Leonard Downie Jr. and Michael Schudson in The Reconstruction of American Journalism, a report commissioned and published by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. “As almost everyone knows, the economic foundation of the nation’s newspapers, long supported by advertising, is collapsing, and newspapers themselves, which have been the country’s chief source of independent reporting, are shrinking - literally. Fewer journalists are reporting less news in fewer pages, and the hegemony that near-monopoly metropolitan newspapers enjoyed during the last third of the twentieth century, even as their primary audience eroded, is ending” (Downie & Schudson 2009).
The State of the News Media 2013, the Pew Research Center’s annual report on American journalism, says that estimates for newspaper newsroom cutbacks in 2012 put the industry down 30 per cent since its peak in 2000 and below 40,000 full-time professional employees for the first time since 1978. “Print advertising losses continue to far exceed digital ad gains. For 2012, the ratio was about 15 print dollars lost for every digital dollar gained - even worse than the 10 to 1 ratio in 2011,” says the report. It points out that U.S. print advertising fell for a sixth consecutive year in 2012, dropping US$1.8 billion, or 8.5 per cent, in a slowly improving economy (Pew Research Center 2013). This gloomy picture is confirmed by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers; according to their 2012 World Press Trends update North America accounts for 72 per cent of the decline in the value of newspaper advertising worldwide (World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers 2012).

Sociologist Paul Starr of Princeton University highlights three points of vulnerability behind the U.S. news media’s crumbling economic foundations. “First, American newspapers have derived 80 per cent of their revenue from advertising, and much of that advertising revenue has been irreversibly lost. Metropolitan newspapers used to enjoy a stranglehold on certain categories of advertising. The Internet has now broken that monopoly and provides advertisers with alternatives that are often better and cheaper than what newspapers can offer. Second, chiefly as a result of generational change, American newspapers have experienced comparatively large, long-term losses in circulation that have intensified in recent years. So income from circulation as well as advertising is under pressure. Third, through mergers, acquisitions, and leveraged buyouts, many newspaper companies took on heavy debt burdens just before their advertising revenue began to collapse. Unable to deliver expected profits, the newspaper industry lost nearly all of its market value, and eight major newspaper companies went bankrupt” (Starr 2011, pp. 27-28).

Nicholas Lemann says there is a general feeling in the U.S. that the newspaper industry has stabilised and that the steep declines in economic fortunes from 2005 to 2010 have levelled off. “So there’s some feeling in the newspaper business that newspapers may actually survive at a much lower level of staffing and economic prosperity than existed before. But remember that American newspapers in 1995 were about as profitable a business sector as there was, almost unrealistically profitable, so if they went from having 30 per cent profit margins to 10 per cent profit margins that’s still a pretty good place to be compared to most other business sectors” (Lemann 2012).
Lemann says that ultimately there has to be some business model and the problem for these newspapers is not that their print editions are losing money but that their digital editions are not making money. They are struggling to try and find a way to make money online, even though almost all of the local newspapers are the dominant news supplier in their online markets and often have theoretically enormous audiences. “All these folks, if you talked to them 15 years ago many of them were saying ‘I’d love not to publish a newspaper and be a news organisation that’s just online’ but what’s kept them from doing that is the lack of a business model. So the newspaper companies would be perfectly happy to be an online purveyor of news and information if they could do it and make money at it, because then they wouldn’t have to buy paper and run printing presses. But if they did that they would all lose money because they are losing money online” (Lemann 2012).

Nobody is predicting growth, at least circulation growth, for local newspapers in the U.S., says Lemann. “So the kinds of scenarios that you hear around are that the print editions will survive but they won’t be growing in circulation. Many places are considering going to three or four days a week of publication. Many of them are finding they can charge more to their readers, so circulation which used to be negligible as a revenue source is increasing as a revenue source.” He says the sales pitch would be that this is a smaller but very dedicated audience of more affluent people who want a higher value information product than television (Lemann 2012).

For Lemann, the implications of the decline in U.S. newspapers have two dimensions; the supply side and the demand side. The most prominent proponent of the demand side argument is Paul Starr, who argues it’s important for the health of democracy to have large aggregated audiences for the one information product. So that if you have the same amount and quality of information out there but it’s divided into many different particularised news streams instead of a centralized one that hurts the robustness of democracy because it’s meaningful to have everybody come together to one place (Lemann 2012). Starr says the digital revolution, by undermining the economic basis of professional reporting and by fragmenting the public, has weakened the ability of the press to act as an effective agent of public accountability. “If we take seriously the idea that an independent press serves an essential democratic function, its institutional distress may weaken democracy itself” (Starr 2011, p. 21). Lemann says this line of thinking provokes
huge disagreement between the respective proponents of traditional media and digital media: the latter group just don’t buy it (Lemann 2012).

On the supply side, the argument is less contested, says Lemann. “That is that a subset of journalism is original reporting and the amount of employment devoted to original reporting has demonstrably decreased by a lot and bloggers and citizen journalists just simply do not work as a replacement for vanished reporters because they can’t go cover city hall and so on. So that is a real problem. There are fewer reporters in the United States than there were 10 years ago or 20 years ago and a lot of things don’t get covered” (Lemann 2012).

However, Professor Robert Picard, Director of Research at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, counters that there are still plenty of journalists in the U.S. and U.K. “The question is not how many total there are but what you do with the ones you have,” he says. “We are not seeing any cutback in entertainment coverage, in chasing celebrities and so yes they’ve cut back on investigative [reporting] but it’s the editors who are making these decisions by choosing to still emphasise these other issues. So the capacity and the capability to do good journalism is still there but it’s a question of whether the editors will allocate the resources to do so and give up some of the things that they have added in the years since” (Picard 2012).

Picard argues it isn’t an economic but an editorial decision in which editors decide on how many journalists they are going to place in the features section, how many in the lifestyle section and so on. “Those are internal decisions that are being made and what newspapers are going to have to do now is start saying, ‘well, if we’re losing all of these readers who wanted those kind of things, why are we still staffing at the high levels if we’re not attracting them anyhow.’” He says that maybe newspapers will return to investigative reporting and argues there needs to be a fundamental rethinking of the newspaper and the newspaper product, not just cuts across all sections (Picard 2012).

Nicholas Lemann says that in the West, the general picture is one of decline and the question is have we seen an end to the decline and so will just have a smaller industry or is it an industry that will continue to decline and eventually disappear. “And that’s what can’t be ascertained right now. The biggest single thing that would help would be if someone figured out to how to make money doing journalism online, which nobody has really figured out yet…” (Lemann 2012).
Clearly, newspapers aren’t able to earn as much from online advertisements as they did from traditional classified advertisements and the lack of a viable revenue model for making money from online news is a huge concern. Robert Picard points out that news has never been very commercially valuable and it’s always been something around that news which has created the economic value. There is also a lot of unrealistic expectation that newspapers can just move their news product over to the Internet and everything will be fine. “The fact is it’s a very different relationship, it is a much smaller audience, it doesn’t have the mass appeal and it doesn’t serve large scale retail advertisers very well and those were the ones that were the basis of the newspapers’ advertising” (Picard 2012).

Picard says that the U.S. newspaper industry got used to the unusually rich period of the 1980s and 1990s but the present day competition for providing news and information is stripping away the profits created during that period.” He says that there was no way the U.S. newspaper industry could sustain the growth rates of those two decades. “Between 1950 and 2000 you basically had a tripling of incomes in the newspaper industry in real terms and most of that occurred in the last quarter of the century so it was just far too great growth that could be sustained anywhere” (Picard 2012).

The Internet is just another development on the continuum of new technologies that have eroded newspaper audiences, according to Picard. The development of television and later cable television moved audiences away from newspapers. “The Internet came along and again it moved more audiences. So the effect of the Internet is not an isolated effect but it’s a progressive effect and it alone is not the problem of the newspaper industry” (Picard 2012).

Picard says that hard-core news consumers still spend most of their time on newspapers, although they also spend time online. “The ones that have left [print newspapers] were those that were less committed to news and more interested in other kind of information. The really serious news consumers have stayed with newspapers or at least with the online version or tablets.” He points out that research on media consumption in Europe and North America shows that people have not given up on print but use online for additional kinds of uses or uses between print use. “So hard core news users are still using the basic news providers. That is starting to shift a bit with tablets because of the convenience of tablets but the use patterns are still pretty strong” (Picard 2012).
Many people within the industry and outside worry about newspapers having smaller print runs or even printing on three or four days a week. But this is not an unusual setting for the newspaper, says Picard. “If you look at the legal definition of daily newspaper that’s used internationally and in many countries; it’s published four days a week. And up until the 1970s or so, most newspapers in Europe and North America were five days a week or less and then they added the Sunday edition and the Saturday edition. But that was not traditional for the newspaper industry for its two hundred year history. It was always the smaller frequency. So we are now seeing different frequencies being tried by different publishers. A lot of them are more comfortable with the five day a week. But there are a few that have gone down to four. But that’s another way of dealing with the issue of cost and news but also primarily because the advertisers that used to fund some of the other editions just aren’t there today” (Picard 2012).

So for Picard, developed nations like the U.S. and U.K. have mature markets for goods and services and newspapers are no longer as effective for meeting the needs of advertisers because readers have many options due to technology and are changing their media use patterns. The biggest factor in the West behind the decline in newspaper markets has been the increase in providers and platforms on which news and information is carried. “This has created competition for traditional providers of news and stripped profits from them,” says Picard. “The financial crisis led advertisers to reduce spending and this has put additional pressure on publishers and led some to reconsider their traditional patterns of media advertising use and move some expenditure to digital media and personal marketing. The primary result of this has been less revenue for publishers and a reduction in expenditures, including a reduction in journalistic staff” (Picard 2012).

Dr Rasmus Nielsen, Research Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford and co-editor of *The Changing Business of Journalism*, says that the rise of online news and new multiple sources of news and information have changed the economics of newspaper publishing in the U.S. and U.K. It means that a younger generation has grown up accustomed to the idea that news is free. “And in particular among younger people, there’s been a large substitution of the printed product for newspapers towards the digital part of the newspapers, so it’s not that people don’t read newspapers any more, it’s just that more and more young people read them online and the economics of online publishing are not very good” (Nielsen 2012).
Nielsen gives the staggering statistic that newspapers make about a tenth from their print readers as what they make from digital readers. “That’s the rule of thumb; that a digital reader is worth about a tenth of what a print reader is worth.” (Nielsen 2012) According to the Newspaper Association of America, a print reader is worth an average of about US$539 in advertising alone, while an average online reader is worth a paltry US$26 (Levine 2011, p. 113).

Clearly, the digital revolution is undermining the business model that sees consumers pay for news. As Dr Andrew Currah points out in his investigation into the effect of the digital revolution on the economics of news publishing in the U.K., this threatens to impact the quality of independent journalism and hollow out the craft of journalism. “The digital revolution has this economic impact because, in the age of the search-powered web, the consumer is increasingly unwilling to pay for news, and prefers instead to read selected parts of the news agenda,” he says. “The web therefore leads to the ‘commoditisation’ and ‘atomisation’ of news. Without large audiences, the advertising value of the news is reduced. The Internet is capturing a rapidly growing share of total advertising expenditure, but most of this is going into paid search, controlled by new media companies such as Google, which aggregate the news (and other content) but do not create it.” Currah concludes there is a danger of a sharp decline in spending on original newsgathering such as investigative reporting and a further rise in pre-packaged PR material, a weakening of editorial standards and a news agenda increasingly shaped by the noise of the crowd (Currah 2009, pp. 5-7).

The Global Financial Crisis has also been a very hard hit for the newspaper industry, says Nielsen. “The newspaper industry in the U.K., with some differences from company to company, about half their revenue comes from advertising, and advertising is very sensitive to changes in the economic cycle.” He points out that in the U.S. the situation is even worse in that newspapers historically have made up to 90 per cent of their revenue from advertising. “So when the advertising market is hit by a recession that impacts very sharply and immediately the economics of newspaper publishing. Whether that has impacted circulation is more a question of the consumer side, it’s a question of whether people who lose their jobs or fear they may lose their jobs stop buying newspapers than would have otherwise bought newspapers. I am not sure the impact has been so direct on circulation, I am not sure the crisis itself is so important in explaining the declining circulation though of course in some cases it means the newspapers in the past who could afford to distribute quite widely now can’t generate enough advertising revenue to make that attractive and hence have pulled back from
selling their copies in certain areas where advertisers are not interested in readers” (Nielsen 2012).

In terms of newspaper closures, very few peak daily newspapers have closed in the U.S., says Nielsen. “There’s been a closure in Denver in Colorado and there’s been a closure in Seattle in Washington but apart from that it’s been fairly stable so it’s more a question of newspapers cutting back staff and cutting cost than it’s a question of closures at this point though that may of course change in the future.” In the U.K also there are some titles that have closed but mostly they have been free-circulation weekly or community newspapers and not national or regional titles. “So what we see is more cost-cutting and retrenchment than actual newspaper death” (Nielsen 2012).

Nielsen underlines the rise of the Internet and the Global Financial Crisis as key factors behind the economic difficulties of the newspaper industry in the U.S. and UK. However beyond that some companies, in order to balance the books and avoid operating losses, have cut costs so savagely that it impacts the quality of the product which only further undermines readers’ and advertisers’ interest in newspapers, he says. “So there’s a certain vicious circle that appears to have sucked down some titles in both the U.S. and the U.K., whereas there are other newspapers who have tried to take a slightly more medium or long-term view and invest more in editorial quality but also in technical innovation in building better websites, in building mobile and tablet applications and who have not escaped the challenges that all newspapers face but seem to be doing better in retaining readers and advertisers” (Nielsen 2012).

Newspaper circulation in the U.S. has been declining for more than 50 years and Nielsen does not envisage any changes in the near future that would significantly increase the number of people who are paying newspaper readers. “Newspapers may increase their reach through free online websites, they may also be successful in transitioning from primarily print to a print and digital mix for their paying customers but I would be surprised to see any overall upwards tendency in the number of paying readers for newspapers in the U.S. or for that matter in the U.K. though that doesn’t mean that the industry can’t stabilise at a lower reader base. We have to remember that there was a time before mass circulation and newspapers existed then too, so they would be different and smaller but still be there.” He is confident that much of the industry will be able to reinvent itself but it will be a much smaller industry and it’s hard to envisage that it will grow again to the size it was in the 1980s and 1990s (Nielsen 2012).
The implication of the decline in newspaper markets in the U.S. and U.K. is less professionally produced news content, according to Nielsen. As the number of people who prefer and can get various other forms of content grows, news increasingly becomes an elite phenomenon. “And that’s particularly worrying in the U.S., because in the U.S. you have a situation in which the media system is overwhelmingly based on the private provision of public goods. So in countries like the U.K. you can at least rest assured that the BBC will continue to provide professionally produced news content and keep an eye on people in positions of power and make it widely available to the population” (Nielsen 2012).

Whereas in the U.S., Nielsen says, if the regional newspaper stops covering city hall, it’s not clear that anyone else will. “I think that’s a pretty disturbing trend though of course that doesn’t take anything away from the fact that some of the same trends that are undermining the ability of newspapers to cover politics and public affairs are also immensely empowering for many citizens who can now interact, who can share content, who can remix content, who can produce their own content. So it isn’t all doom and gloom. I like to invoke Dickens and say it’s the best of times and the worst of times in a way for journalism and democracy in Western democracies” (Nielsen 2012).

China And India

While the West is in decline, the East rises. Asia now comprises a third of global newspaper circulation and its circulations have risen by 16 per cent over five years, while those in Western Europe and North America have fallen by 17 per cent in the same period, according to the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers 2012 World Press Trends update (World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers 2012).

Newspaper markets in China and India are fuelled by strong economic growth and demand from an emerging urban and literate middle class that is enjoying higher incomes and rising standards of living. Robert Picard says that people with disposable income buy newspapers, begin thinking about social issues and seek out more entertainment. “They start looking for products that would be of interest and the newspapers are filling that role right now and so there’s great growth going on in them [China and India].” Picard says that the two countries’ economic,
social and demographic changes are coming together in a way that makes newspapers very attractive (Picard 2012).

**China**

China has overtaken India to become the world’s biggest newspaper market, with 114.5 million daily newspapers (The Economist 2013). It has experienced strong growth in newspaper circulation in recent years thanks to 10 per cent average economic growth over the past 30 years, rising living standards, huge urbanisation and higher literacy, which has made newspapers appealing to both consumers and advertisers.

In a general sense the Chinese media, while not challenging the legitimacy of Communist Party rule, has evolved from being the ‘tongue and throat’ of the Party to being commercialised and operating in diversified markets. Dr Yan Wu of the Department of Political and Cultural Studies at Swansea University says that in 1978, the Chinese government piloted with the Party’s organ *People’s Daily* by introducing the business model into newspaper management. In the years following, newspapers in China have gradually commercialised. “To a degree,” says Yan Wu, “the government endorses the financial independence of the press within the country as long as they don’t challenge the Communist Party’s governance directly” (Wu 2012).

However Peter Herford, Professor and Executive Director of the International Media Institute at Shantou University and Guest Professor at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong, doubts the reported increases in China’s newspaper circulation. “When you look at Chinese newspaper readership statistics you will see selective areas of growth, what it does not tell you is anything about readership,” he says. “North America and Europe have some version of what in the U.S. is called the audit bureau of circulation. This is an independent agency that, like an accounting firm, validates circulation figures from newspapers and magazines”. Herford says that there is a certain level of confidence in circulation figures from countries who subscribe to these auditing services and live by their standards (Herford 2012).

No such organization exists in China. “Circulation figures are all self-reporting figures; they deal only with circulation and not readership. That means a publisher might produce an extra 10, 20 or 30,000 copies of a newspaper and even distribute...
the extra copies. But do they sell or are they read? No way of knowing.” Herford says that from his anecdotal and research information in China the younger generations (teens through to 30s) are no longer newspaper readers, certainly not in paper form. “I have students who have never bought a newspaper. What reading of newspapers there may be in the younger generations, occurs online and precious little of that” (Herford 2012). Dr Yan Wu points out that annual reports by the China Internet Network Information Center show more young people relying on the Internet or other web-based media forms for their primary source of news, with advertisers also moving from print media to online-media (Wu 2012).

Even if the reported increases in newspaper circulation in China were true, it still represents an insignificant slice of the population, says Herford. “If you look at newspaper circulation with respect to population in any city, province or nationally, you discover that the percentage of newspaper readers even if you calculated five readers per newspaper circulated, is infinitesimal.” He says that news and information in China does not move in print. “It moves on the Internet. 300 million weibos (Chinese Twitterers) with as many as 2/3 of them active (three times a week or more); that’s where the growth is. Mobile telephony is exploding with smart phones. Those phones are the future of news consumption. Newspapers are the past, even in China” (Herford 2012). Indeed China has the world’s largest online population with over 500 million Internet users.

It may well eventuate that newspapers are a thing of the past, even in China. An alternative view is that the country’s newspapers have massive growth potential, unlike their faltering Western counterparts. Dr Haiqing Yu, Senior Lecturer of Chinese Media and Culture and Associate of the Journalism and Media Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, says that the Chinese newspaper market will enjoy further growth. Dr Yu says that the concentration of the media market in urban areas and the digital divide between urban and rural regions offer further growth opportunities. However such growth is not indefinite, says Dr Yu, citing the impact of digital media on newspaper advertising revenue and the transfer of professionals from traditional to new media. “When the Chinese market matures, we’ll see the decline of the newspaper market as we are witnessing now in the more developed economies” (Yu 2012).

Robert Picard says that growth has been a good development. “Even though newspapers in China will not challenge the Party and the Party structure, they are asking lots of questions, they are serving a role against corruption, they are pushing the boundaries in terms of the way China handles things like disasters
and so they are a force for change in that regard.” Picard says that newspapers are giving avenues for people to become vocal and involved in the kinds of community and even state decision making than they could before as people gain knowledge from newspapers. He says that China is more open than it was 30 years ago as a result (Picard 2012).

**India**

_The Economist_, in a special report on the news industry, says that there is no sign of a news crisis in India, now the world’s fastest-growing newspaper market. It cites some remarkable statistics from the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers: between 2005 and 2009 the number of paid-for daily newspapers in the country jumped by 44 per cent to 2,700 and the total number of newspapers rose by 23 per cent to more than 74,000 (The Economist 2011). Newspaper revenues are driven by advertising, which is buoyant. In the year to March 2010, the amount spent on newspaper advertisements in India surged by 30 per cent, the fastest increase in the Asia-Pacific region, according to market-research firm Nielsen India (The Economist 2010).

India is one of the world’s largest newspaper markets with more than 107 million copies circulated daily and accounts for more than 20 per cent of all dailies across the world, says the _Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2011_ by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a trade body, and KPMG, a consultancy. The report notes that India’s total literate population is estimated at 579 million with over 30 per cent readership penetration. The Indian print market is doing well compared to the global market, which has seen a decline in print revenues. While newspaper circulation falls in developed regions such as the U.S. and U.K., India defies the trend. Given rising literacy levels and no immediate threat from new media platforms, India’s print circulation uptrend is set to continue the next five years, the report says (FICCI-KPMG 2011).

Rasmus Nielsen says that the newspaper for more than a century has been essentially an urban middle class phenomenon. “So when you have a situation like in India and the one you see also in other emerging economies like Brazil where you have sustained economic growth combined with political decisions that mean that millions of people join the middle class and also millions of people learn to read in countries that are democracies in which to be a full citizen there is a social convention, an expectation that you stay at least somewhat informed about public
affairs, beginning to buy newspapers become a more attractive proposition for the individual citizen” (Nielsen 2012).

Nielsen says that newspapers become more attractive for advertisers who see a growing customer base for people lifted out of poverty who suddenly have money to spend. “So those are the main drivers in countries like India. So it’s urbanisation, growing literacy, economic growth within the context of a democracy in which it is a meaningful thing for the average citizen to try to stay informed about public affairs” (Nielsen 2012).

Dr William Crawley at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, says that the liberalisation and growth of the country’s economy, the boost to advertising from competitive consumer oriented industries, the freeing of restrictions on the availability of newsprint and the still low cost of newspaper production, in contrast to Europe and the U.S., are all factors behind the growth of India’s newspapers. “This was taking effect before the great expansion of satellite television and television advertising and it built on the long standing traditions of newspaper readership, especially in urban and metropolitan India.” Growing literacy rates, particularly in regional languages, have broadened the potential readership of newspapers, adds Crawley. He says that the diversification of electronic media and the explosive growth of entertainment TV have also boosted print publications which feed on the publicity about the entertainment industry (Crawley 2012).

Increased literacy has helped to fuel the growth of India’s newspapers. The 2011 national census showed an adult literacy level of 74 per cent, up nine per cent from the last census a decade ago. “As soon as a person becomes literate, what they get is a newspaper – even before they buy a phone, it’s the first luxury a man affords,” said A.S. Raghunath, in a report by The Globe and Mail. Mr Raghunath, a veteran editor who advises new entrants in regional markets, says the newspaper retains an aura of respect in India and the newly literate like to be seen with one. “And with a cover price of one, two or at most four rupees, new-reading households will often subscribe to not just one paper, but two or three,” says the report (Nolen 2011).

The Economist points to the country’s booming economy, which it says is driving the “headlong growth” of Indian newspapers. “As India’s middle class swells, firms are splashing out on newspaper advertisements for property, mobile phones, cars and matchmaking services that promise your daughter a computer-savvy hubby” (The Economist 2010). At less than four rupees a pop, Indian papers are
cheap, so many households buy more than one daily, it says. “English-language papers, which attract richer readers, charge the most for ad space. The Times of India, whose circulation of 4 million makes it the world’s biggest English-language newspaper, charges roughly ten times more than regional dailies do. Regional papers rely instead on a steady but less lucrative flow of government ads” (The Economist 2010).

As wealth and literacy spread, however, regional and local-language papers are likely to gain ground, says The Economist. “People like to read in their mother tongue. The circulation of Hindi papers rose from less than 8 million in the early 1990s to more than 25 million last year.” Even more growth may lie ahead. If 200 million Indians read a paper daily, that still leaves a billion who don’t. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and KPMG forecast that over the next four years the newspaper industry’s revenues will grow by 9 per cent a year, to US$5.9 billion (The Economist 2010).

According to the Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2011, contrary to most other markets where print media continues to lose market share, the trend in India is different. “Print media witnessed a growth of 10 per cent in 2010 and is expected to continue to grow at a similar pace over the next five years. Rising literacy levels and low print media penetration offer significant headroom for growth. The growing regional markets are a testimony to the increase in newspaper consumption and hence the potential for advertising revenues” (FICCI-KPMG 2011).

Dr Usha Rodrigues, co-author of Indian Media in a Globalised World, says that as the Indian economy grows, incomes grow and demand for media and entertainment rises as people read more newspapers, magazines and books. The end of communally shared newspapers is another factor behind the rise of the country’s newspaper market; whereas before perhaps five newspapers would be purchased for a village of 5,000 people and read out, Indians now prefer to buy their own paper (Rodrigues 2010).

Rodrigues says that the Indian newspaper market will not decline for a while yet despite improved Internet access, because of the continuing increase in literacy and disposable incomes. India’s middle class will continue to grow and the bottom half of the population will benefit from the trickle-down effect of economic growth, giving them greater purchasing power. This should translate into higher newspaper sales and advertising revenue for the newspaper industry, although
competition with new media platforms will intensify. “But, overall, Indian newspapers are in a better position because they have time to learn from their Western counterparts and adapt to a multimedia environment in the news business” (Rodrigues 2012). Indeed while many newspaper markets have been hit by the growth of online journalism, the outlook for Indian print media remains buoyant, one of the key reasons being low Internet penetration outside urban centres.

The Indian newspaper market has many of the same growth factors as in China, says Robert Picard. He points out that India, a very vibrant market, has gone towards entertainment, sports, light news and celebrity, more so than China, noting that Indian newspapers are not as much of a check on government as elsewhere (Picard 2012). These comments are echoed by Rasmus Nielsen. He says that the elite press in India such as The Times of India and The Indian Express will face some of the same challenges that confront their Western peers. “But what you also see is the growth of a popular vernacular press that has more in common with the tabloid tradition in some Western European countries, which are partly about entertainment, partly about scandal and gossip and sports but also include coverage of public affairs from the point of view of communities who historically have been underserved by the media in India.” Nielsen says this is not a development that serves all the needs of democracy, but it’s a development that supplements what the Indian media has offered to citizens in the past (Nielsen 2012).

The Future Of The Newspaper

Peter Herford argues that the debate over ‘citizen journalism’ is no longer a debate. He says that the ability of individuals to gather and disseminate information is creating a parallel journalism universe. “Those who need the comfort of gate-keepers will have their newspapers (although at 5-10 dollars a copy eventually), there will be the equivalent online publications organized along traditional lines; but running alongside will be an increasingly sophisticated network of people, millions of people made available to you and me via algorithms that will sift according to our needs and interests” (Herford 2012).

He is pessimistic about the future of the newspaper. “Most newspapers have already reduced print runs. The newsprint industry is in the dumps. Good for saving trees. Many newspapers have already reduced daily printing. In some cases
Sunday newspapers remain successful, in other cases they have been dropped entirely” (Herford 2012).

He acknowledges that India’s middle class will continue to read newspapers so that they have things to discuss, an important sociological phenomenon. Similarly, in the U.S. among the national elite, if one does not read The New York Times you are “out of it” Herford says. “New York Times sets the agenda not only for a lot of [Washington] DC, but also for discussion among the leadership class. Same is true for the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times in business” (Herford 2012).

However, young people care less or not at all about such agendas, according to Herford, as they have their individual interests served by their Internet, smart phones and tablets, with smaller circles of smaller interests. “They do not need newspapers as their guide. They define news differently than the traditional newspaper reader. This is all part of [a] large social and intellectual movement that is bigger than we can deal with here” (Herford 2012).

**Conclusion**

China and India are on the ascent and the United States and United Kingdom are in decline, as far as newspaper markets are concerned. Yet this is no time for fatalism or simplistic predictions of the supposed ‘death of the newspaper’ with the Internet cast as the chief villain. Newspapers will continue to exist, but may have smaller print runs or print on three or four days, stabilising at a lower circulation base.

In some ways these are the best of times and worst of times for the newspaper: buffeted by the digital revolution and the rise of online news yet with a unique opportunity to reinvent itself - this has never been more important considering the vital role that journalism plays in society and democracy. The challenge is not to replace the business of print journalism but to renew it so that it can survive and even prosper in our digital age.
Personal Communication With The Author – Interviews With Journalism Academics

Interview (phone), 24 March 2012, Professor Nicholas Lemann, Dean and Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, New York.

Interview (email) 28 February 2012 and (phone) 6 April 2012, Professor Robert Picard, Director of Research, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

Interview (phone), 6 April 2012, Dr Rasmus Nielsen, Research Fellow, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

Interview (email), 22 April, 4 May and 8 May 2012, Professor Peter Herford, Executive Director, International Media Institute, Shantou University and Guest Professor at Journalism, Media Studies Centre, University of Hong Kong.

Interview (email), 13 April 2012, Dr Yan Wu, Department of Political and Cultural Studies, Swansea University, Wales.

Interview (email), 13 April 2012, Dr Haiqing Yu, Senior Lecturer, Chinese Media and Culture, Associate of Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Interview (email), 16 April 2012, Dr William Crawley, Senior Fellow, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Studies, University of London.

Interview (email), 29 April 2012, Dr Usha Rodrigues, co-author, Indian Media in a Globalised World.
Bibliography


Newspapers rise and fall


Chapter Three:

One World? Globalising the Media

A/Prof. Tony Maniaty

The universe has lost its centre overnight, and woken up to find it has countless centres. So that each one can now be seen as the centre, or none at all. Suddenly there is a lot of room.

Bertolt Brecht, Life of Galileo.

The one who adapts his policy to the times prospers, and likewise the one whose policy clashes with the demands of the times does not.

Abstract

Globalization has many faces, from marketing to warfare, but underlying all of its diverse realisations has been the dramatic growth of the media, and its permeation into every aspect of society. In the interconnected world, information is digitized to the point where the media has become the touchstone of human intercourse, from personal affairs to global commerce, the means by which the world now operates - whether locally, nationally and transnationally. The spreading use of English as the global language has accelerated the trend, while the dramatically reduced cost of telecommunications has created an unprecedented flow of data, information and knowledge to every corner of the globe. Yet this ‘great leap forward’ also has its downside: increasingly, the flow of news - and differing perspectives on the news - is being processed and compressed through monolithic media companies, creating an ‘homogenization effect’ where uniformity is increasingly demanded, and diversity is gradually lost. In a borderless, media-saturated world, traditional notions of ‘good journalism’ and the values it represents have become increasingly tenuous. The rise of social media in the early 21st century has further complicated the global media landscape and clouded the future role of professional journalism. What forms of reporting might emerge in a wholly globalized world, and what must be done for a vibrant, useful media to survive in such a rapidly changing environment?

Introduction

Over a century ago, in 1900 - fifteen years before Alexander Graham Bell made the world’s first telephone call - an American civil engineer John Elfreth Watkins gave an outrageously bold prediction. ‘Wireless telephone and telegraph circuits,’ he wrote, ‘will span the world. A husband in the middle of the Atlantic will be able to converse with his wife sitting in her boudoir in Chicago. We will be able to telephone to China quite as readily as we now talk from New York to Brooklyn.’ Watkins also predicted that photographs would somehow be ‘telegraphed’ across vast distances (‘If there be a battle in China a hundred years hence, snapshots of its most striking events will be published in the newspapers an hour later...’) and that screens would link viewers around the planet (‘Persons and things of all kinds will be brought within focus of cameras connected electrically with screens at opposite ends of circuits, thousands of miles at a span.’) With extraordinary perspicacity, he was effectively describing the media realities of the early 21st century: the mobile phone, the Web, email and the Internet, Skype and social media. In 1960, when
these inventions were still only concepts, the Canadian sociologist Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase ‘the global village’, similarly envisaging a world linked via ‘electronic interdependence’, sharing cultures and ideas across the majority of nations. In the Information and Computer Technology (ICT) era of the late 1990s, these visions became a reality.

Globalization has ceased to be the subject of futurology, and now stands as the dominant catalyst of change and exchange in our time. If its beginnings are lost in the depths of history - one could argue, for instance, that the process began when Magellan’s expedition ships circumnavigated the globe in 1519-22 – its impacts are now being felt in fundamental ways across all nations and human societies, and are seemingly irreversible - nowhere more so than in the media. Globalization is having varied and often profound effects - disruptive, challenging, destructive, in some cases enlightening - on the practice, pace and content of journalism.

**What Do We Mean When We Say Globalization?**

Globalization is far from being a singular concept; it means many things to many people, although journalists have often been the first to lump all international flows, movements, trends and developments under its convenient banner. As Nick Bisley has observed, globalization has ‘a deeply uneven, contradictory and unpredictable character’, and the word is often used as shorthand for a range of ‘quite disparate phenomena’. Many see globalization as a force for evil, mirroring earlier, negative manifestations - imperialism and colonialism - while others champion its power to expand economies, bring people together and generate ideas. Bisley offers as one definition of globalization ‘the aggregate social consequences that derive from the dramatic increase in both the rate and speed with which people, goods and services, capital and knowledge are able to move around the globe’. Dutch sociologist Jan Aart Scholte argues that the most familiar four ways of interpreting globalization - as internationalization, as liberalization, as universalization, and as westernization - are already redundant, and suggests a fifth route: globalization as ‘a shift in the nature of social space’, in

---

3 ibid, p. 25.
4 Bisley, op. cit., p. 30.
which ‘a major change of spatial structure affects society as a whole’. This realization focuses more on the transplanetary and supraterritorial links that connect the majority of the world’s citizens, and, Scholte notes, harks back to German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s notion of ‘distanceless’, and Manuel Castells’ more recent formulation of a ‘network society’ in which a new ‘space of flows that substitutes for the space of places’. The development of this ‘network state’ raises, Castells warns, an ideological problem: coordinating common policy means a common language and a set of shared values. And because we live in a globalized, interdependent world, he notes, the space of political co-decision is necessarily global. Yet, as Castells notes, ‘More often than not, governments do not share the same principles or the same interpretation of common principles.’ Thus governance in the global public sphere becomes a major issue, with no clear answers in a welter of differing national agendas. Central to all these interpretations are radical changes in the global media.

**Issues Around Globalization And The Media**

Is the globalization of the media a force for good or bad? Does it signal a step forward in human development - or regression? The combination of digitisation and corporatisation has accelerated the homogenisation of traditional media around the world, reducing mainstream media diversity while radically altering the old dynamics of trans-border data and information flows - with significant impacts on global trade, regional and national politics, and culture. Concurrently the spread of social media, particular in youth demographics, has created new distribution outlets and new forms of content, radically altering traditional concepts of journalism.

Earlier arguments that the West was creating a globalized, American-led ‘one-way’ media flow have, in the 21st century, been countered to a substantial degree by the emergence of a multi-dimensional model - in which content distribution has become ‘a river without banks’, flowing in many directions, in which the ‘old’ community of nations is threatened by new flexible, borderless communities of interest, creating a network with no clear centre and potentially threatening the established order. For now, the hegemonic model still dominates; as media groups

---

6 Heidegger, Martin, q.v. Scholte, ibid, p. 62.
7 Castells, Manuel, q.v. Scholte, p. 63.
8 Castells, Manuel, ibid, p. 43.
amalgamate and grow larger under economic pressure, ongoing fears of cultural imperialism remain valid, and are not unfounded. Yet borderless social media is gaining power rapidly, from regional revolutions in the Middle East to issues-based campaigns on environment, human rights and other areas. Are these two competing media forces heading for a collision that could undermine the very shape of societies and the role of nation states? What models could emerge that might combine the best of both?

News has become a product much like any other, shipped around the planet in seconds to markets hungry for content, sold to consumers as manipulatively as any new car or toothpaste. Globalization has also given billions of people a camera and communications unit; each of them is ‘on the spot’ and able to feed content into the global media machine. Given the rise in amateur coverage of events, what role will professional reporters play in future, if any? Is the dream of many aspirants of ‘a career in journalism’ itself redundant?

The relentless march of globalization in the early 21st century has produced deep, and seemingly contradictory, effects on journalism - in particular, foreign reporting - and on media ownership itself. On one hand, the convergence of media platforms - print, radio, television, online - and the rise of trans-national corporations (TNCs) such as Australia’s News Corporation, America’s Time Warner and Disney, France’s Vivendi and Germany’s Bertelsmann has produced a concentration of media power hitherto unseen, resulting in a funneling effect that produces greater homogeneity and standardization of news content and reduced diversity of analysis and opinion in the international sphere, and fewer correspondents posted to foreign countries. As transnational actors, such TNCs tend to focus less on national, regional and local concerns than on news content that reflects their increasingly global reach, with considerably less interest in specific communities than the smaller media units they have often purchased or otherwise displaced. While regulations and subsidies may protect localized content up to a point, the political clout of TNCs within any given marketplace typically outweighs local interests. (The influence of News Corporation’s chairman Rupert Murdoch on national politics is pervasive and well documented).

On the other hand, globalization of the new social media - the world as seen through a global maze of personal blogs, and countless millions of individual posts on Twitter, Facebook, and other emerging new media platforms - along with the availability of cheaper, broadcast-quality newsgathering technology, has also seen the emergence of a new breed of journalist who holds no allegiance to any single
news organisation and whose output is readily available to an increasingly cost-conscious market for breaking news stories, as well as features and images. What then is the ultimate fate of these diverging paths of newsgathering? Are they on a collision course, or can they be reconciled and possibly merged?

Where Did Media Globalization Come From?

Broadly, throughout history, societies have sought communication and interaction rather than isolation. The spread of ideas may have been thwarted until the Middle Ages by those in positions of authority, but the appearance of Gutenberg’s printing press in the mid-15th century, with its moveable type and ability to produce endless copies of transformative texts, gave rise to that democratic bias which has been the hallmark of ‘the media’ ever since. By the 19th century, rising wealth and literacy in the middle classes of Europe and North America, and the growth of big department stores with substantial advertising budgets, saw rapid expansion of newspapers on a national scale. These factors in turn accelerated international trade and financial exchange, the development of new technologies and manufacturing processes, and the spread of new ideas between nations: the genesis of what we now refer to as globalization.

This shift towards a unified world grew in the late 19th century, as the industrial revolution and resulting trade linked those leading European nations - Great Britain, Germany, France - that had formerly been at war with each other. Suddenly there was far more to be gained through peace than conflict; the idea of progress took centre-stage. At the 1849 World Peace Congress in Paris, the French author Victor Hugo declared: ‘All our advances are revealing and manifesting themselves together, in rapid succession… […]…everything is moving at once, political economy, science, industry, philosophy, legislation, and is converging upon the same end, the creation of well-being and benevolence…’

Yet globalization as we understand it today was still far off. World War One was a bloody warning that mutual trust would not come easily; the international language Esperanto failed to take hold; the collapse of the League of Nations was a reminder of the difficulties of global co-operation; while the Comintern International, raising hopes for a global Socialist revolution, fizzled into Russian civil war. Words, hopes

and dreams alone were not enough to bind diverse peoples together; it would be another 50 years or more before advances in technology and communications, and the freer flow of trade and services, would achieve what peace conferences could not - the bridging of human differences to a point where shared experience, if not world peace, was possible. As such, globalization - as it took shape in the late 20th and early 21st centuries - was born more of societal, economic and technological forces than of political or ideological ones.

What were the principal causes of this extraordinary shift in human relations? Globalization results from the increasing rate and speed with which people, goods and services, capital and knowledge are able to move around the globe. The forces that shape this process are many and varied. They include (but are not limited to) the wide availability and falling cost of mass communications; the export of goods through containerization, and the movement of goods and people via air travel; the freeing up of international trade agreements and transactions; the rise in offshore manufacturing; cross-cultural marriage, migration, and the flow of refugees; military alliances; the rise of multi-national business and transnational corporations; global commodity chains; the continuing flow of populations from country to cities; the impact of worldwide religions; mass tourism; the spread of English as the global lingua franca; money transfers, including workers’ remittances from aboard; the sharing of technological advances, from agriculture to manufacturing; improving levels of health and education across all continents.

Yet these diverse factors are themselves all dependent on the flow of information, the ultimate force behind globalization, which has been accelerated by the spread of personal and organizational computers and mobile phones, the rapidly falling cost of communications in both national and international markets, and widespread take-up of social media. To this degree, the media has become a central actor – arguably the central actor - in the globalization story, with more influence than any single nation.

To understand that immense changes that media globalization has wrought, it is useful to consider the period 1980-2000, prior to the full adoption of newsroom computerization and digitization of content. While communications satellites had enable the possibility of ‘live’ or ‘near-live’ broadcasting of news events, the three main media platforms - television, radio and newspapers - cohabited on roughly equal terms, dividing the advertising spoils of boom economic times (in the case of Australia’s Fairfax newspapers, the so-called ‘rivers of gold’) and assured in their market niches. The Internet was seen largely as a source of information, and a
vehicle for email communications; newsroom computers, mostly desk-bound PCs, were generally used by journalists as word processors.

The Shrinking Computer And The Shrinking Planet

With the arrival of the 21st century, several factors changed the media landscape with extraordinary speed. The first might be called the Ever-Shrinking Computer: the rapid take-up of portable laptop computers, and subsequently of tablet screens and smart phones. With portability, notions of fixed-time, fixed-place media dissolved; the demand for news immediacy became overwhelming. Comprehensive television networks with nightly news shows surrendered audiences to cable news channels, particularly those such as CNN International and BBC World specifically geared for online, global coverage and 24/7 ‘live’ delivery of major stories. A new generation of consumers, brought up on a diet of video games, and visual and computer literacy, also helped drive a new agenda for journalism. Underpinning all these factors was the technological possibility of convergence on Internet-based platforms: suddenly the newspaper not only had a branded website, but was streaming live video and audio coverage of breaking stories. The viral spread of smart phones in the second decade of the 21st century sealed the fate of so-called ‘traditional’ or ‘legacy’ media: newspapers would no longer break hard news stories as they had for more than a century, and viewers would not wait for a once-nightly news bulletin to find out what was happening in the wider world.

These shifts in media were not merely technological. New social, economic and political orders quickly emerged from the break with long-standing traditions. Much as the Cold War struggle of the 20th century between the great ideological blocks of communism and capitalism kept alternative contenders in line, so too the media in the West had adopted a gatekeeper role under the banner of ‘editorial authority’, backed by claims of fearlessness, righteousness and all-knowingness. The phrase ‘the power of the press’ carried with it a warning to those who would dare to confront its role as the champion of free speech; yet it often concealed, as well, a cozy and lazy relationship with the ruling status quo. Now consumers themselves had the power to communicate and share news, information, ideas and opinions, and to challenge the gatekeeper model of news management, helped by dramatically lower costs for all forms of communication. As Jeffry Frieden notes, by the 21st century, satellites and fiberoptic cables had seen the cost of telephone calls tumble: ‘In the 1920s, the average American worker would have had to work
three weeks to pay for a five-minute telephone call from New York to London; in 1970 the same call would have cost eight hours’ wages; by 2000, about fifteen minutes.’10 By 2005, the number of mobile phones worldwide exceeded the number of fixed line telephones.11

Text messaging was even cheaper than talking on the phone; for just a few cents, families spread around the globe could connect, and buyers and sellers in remote corners of the globe could negotiate deals directly, in minutes, a development with powerful economic and social implications in developing parts of Africa and Asia. The Internet too grew astronomically, as Frieden observes; by 2001 more information could be transmitted in a second over a single cable than in 1997 had been sent over the entire Internet in a month.12 For a dollar a day, consumers can gain access to the content of hundreds of television channels, many if not most broadcasting from outside the viewers’ countries.

In the face of this global revolution, the response of ‘big’ media was, if anything, to grow ‘bigger’: synonymous with globalization in all spheres has been the rise of trans-national corporations (TNCs), and the media is no exception. Indeed, globalization is more ideally suited to media amalgamation and consolidation - given that digitised product can be shifted around the globe in nano-seconds - than to almost any other economic activity. (By 1999, 13 of the top 25 American corporations were in the high technology and telecommunications sectors.13) One impact of this trend - in which the profit motive results in the overt commodification of news content - has been a loss of media diversity, as smaller players are consumed by TNCs searching to grow their market share and eliminate competitors.

---

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
The Impact Of Transnational Corporations

In purely economic terms, TNCs sit at the very heart of globalization. Companies as diverse as Microsoft, BHP-Billiton, Toyota, Citicorp and Nestle straddled the globe in search of new resources, new sources of labour, and new markets. Traditionally, the media world was confined to national borders, limited by the bulk of printing presses and the reach of broadcasting technologies, by distribution networks, and by factors such as language, social and cultural values, and the size of the consumer class able to support viable advertising incomes. By the 1980s, much had changed: the spread of communications satellites, computerisation and digitisation; the rise in education levels worldwide; more efficient infrastructures and distribution networks. National players such as Australia’s News Corporation spread their wings, buying up existing media properties from New York to Fiji and developing new ones (Sky TV in Italy, Star TV in China) in rising markets, especially Asia. New players such as Yahoo! and Google with decidedly global business models quickly evolved through aggressive takeover strategies as fully-fledged TNCs. As Internet usage expanded worldwide, so too did TNC audiences - and advertising incomes. CNN International, for example, pitched to global advertisers the offer of ‘unrivalled access to reach high-income consumers’. What matters is not the size of any TNC’s individual media divisions, but the ability to amalgamate operations, integrate content, and collectivize the audience. On this last point, as media industry veteran Terry Semel noted, ‘Many small audiences are as good for advertisers as few large audiences, and indeed may be better. This has huge implications for content, turning it into one long continuum - from professional to amateur, from blockbuster to subculture niche.’

This has been good news for TNCs, but less so for journalism. Inevitably, the issue boils down to two seemingly irreconcilable points: that the very nature of the news media is changing, and journalism must adapt or die; and that the number of well-cashed players available to employ journalists on a professional basis is shrinking, along with the need for high volumes of content from diverse sources. This conflict beguiles the industry in virtually all developed markets. Increasingly, the business is less about generating unique stories than about the exchange of news product. The resulting ‘long tail’ of media content across the global landscape conceals a harsh reality: that much of it stems from a very narrow base, and increasingly much of it is sourced from either low-paid journalism entrants or from amateurs, and not from experienced, professional journalists. On this basis, the new economics of global media may prove the undoing of the profession of journalism as it has been widely practiced for more than a century, with unforeseen effects on the nature of
social interaction and of democratic society.

The fact that the majority of media TNCs are run by technologists and financial executives rather than journalists (as national newspapers and broadcasters once were) suggests that the influence and values of journalism will count for less in their newsgathering operations and content, as ‘lifestyle’ media aimed at middle-class consumers and advertisers gains dominance. In the first decade of the 21st century, this trend was already apparent. In a 2006 report, the global accountancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers predicted that successful media companies would become ‘marketplaces that let consumers search, research, share and configure their media experiences.’ The new lifestyle media would, it accurately forecast, would ‘bridge the world of unlimited professional and user-created video content with the world of limited consumer time and attention.’

An important sub-current in the development of transnational media has been the expansion of government-owned (and, in some cases, government controlled) global television networks, established in many cases to promote so-called soft diplomacy and soft power. Networks such as France 24, Russia Today, Press TV (Iran) and CCTV (China) have joined established players such as CNN International and BBC World in the global battle for ‘hearts and minds’, featuring entertainment and informational content which showcases national life and values in positive ways: a powerful tool when coupled with trade, aid and other foreign policy initiatives. When such global (and mainly Anglophone) content is added to the pool of available channels in any country, it competes with local channels and to some degree must further narrow the general employment opportunities for journalists.

These and other transitions have resulted in a radically changed world order. From a postwar world in which the media was regarded primarily as a central component of national affairs, reflective of national opinions and values, the focus has shifted.

---

The rise of giant communication TNCs on one hand, and of globalized social media on the other, allied with ever-increasing economic interdependence between states, has reframed the traditional division between domestic and international affairs and turned the media itself into a ‘non-state’ actor in transnational affairs.

**Adjusting To The Digital Tide**

Digitisation on the global scale has become the epicentre of a giant ‘push-pull’ contradiction, between curiosity and anxiety. We turn on the news to ‘see what’s happening’ - and as quickly we click off because it’s ‘too much to take in’. We want to know, and we don't want to know. We want to engage, and we want to escape. Technology has created the media accountant’s dream - plentiful content at low cost – but it confronts media consumers with an increasing dilemma of choice, a digital swamp which appears both endless (and endlessly time-engaging) and fragmented, frequently offering an illusory choice - a ‘bit sampling’ stream of electronic output lacking either depth or relevance to national consumers. Aligned with ‘the need for speed’ implied in 24/7 breaking news, and the resulting homogenisation of content aimed at such a profusion of global markets, what future is there for more complex forms of journalism? Will there be any viable platforms for reportage of the calibre and scope of ‘Hiroshima’, John Hersey’s 31,000-word account of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan, which filled an edition of *The New Yorker* in 1946, and which, in 1999, was voted by a distinguished panel as the best single piece of journalism of the 20th century?

With the constant demands of urgency and brevity, where every second counts, the current mainstream media landscape actively conspires against context - and discourages its natural offspring, serious debate. While the quest for truth remains universally the ethical bedrock of great reporting, miniaturization of consumer platforms such as smart phones and hyperventilated deadlines suggest little room for context. Yet without it, single events in the chain will always appear random, chaotic, messy, and difficult to place in a meaningful, broader canvas. (This, rather than the old journalistic conundrum of ‘objectivity/subjectivity’, would seem to constitute a truer guideline for, and measure of, balance in story coverage). On this basis, then, what hope also for the future of serious foreign reporting?

---

Impacts On Foreign Coverage

‘No one will open a bureau in Utopia,’ observed Associated Press correspondent Mort Rosemblum in 1993. Conflict sits at the heart of most major news stories, especially in the realm of foreign reporting, and the hallmark of great journalism organisations such as the BBC or The New York Times has traditionally been the high importance they placed on comprehensive, well-informed coverage generated by their own correspondents posted overseas on a long-term basis. Recent years have seen substantial cuts by major news organisations in their foreign reporting staff, and the shutting down of many bureaus; the closure of the Australian ABC’s Moscow office in 2013 after 20 years was indicative of the trend, as news organisations trim costs and turn to agency-generated reporting for foreign content. Managers argue that vastly improved communications and transport networks provide flexibility, allowing correspondents to be flown into breaking stories as needed. Yet few would argue that the long-term presence of a correspondent in any country results in more informed, contextualised coverage, supported by a cultivated network of high-level, trusted contacts and sources providing background to the reportage. Fluency in local languages and a working knowledge of social and cultural mores also adds value to foreign reporting.

Such nuances generally escape the ‘fly-in, fly-out’ correspondent, who in turn is increasingly reporting not for a specialized national audience but for an international news marketplace, generating content that must be ‘user friendly’ to a wide array of audiences, from Vancouver to London to Shanghai to Sydney. Cultural subtleties give way to mass global appeal; the specific relevance of stories to individual nations and their foreign and economic policies is, in this scenario, replaced by observations that speak to the world in general (and mostly in English) but to nobody in particular. The counter argument is that such generalized reporting brings the peoples of the world closer together, by shedding national prejudices and sharing common experiences, yet the continuation over decades of many conflicts, especially in Africa and the Middle East, suggests that this rather idealized view is degraded by realities.

Certainly in one field, the reporting of the global climate change, the transnational media model has overcome national differences to bring a common awareness of a global issue to audiences of millions. (Likewise the coverage of the AIDS/HIV crisis has transcended national and continental boundaries as people worldwide search for solutions.) What began in the second half of the 20th century as local and national environmental concerns regarding pollution and soil degradation has grown through global media coverage into a largely common belief that climate change is real and having a fundamental, negative impact on the planet. ‘Climate’ has now become a featured section of many international and national news websites. Broadening and focusing coverage has generated debate and led to global agendas to find answers. In this process, the diminishing quality of the environment has progressed through sustained media coverage from being a community (local) issue to a lifestyle and economic (national) concern to being an anthropological (global) last stand.

Clearly subjects which transcend national borders, such as climate change and deadly viruses, are matters of vital common interest; whether transnational media (under pressure to generate profits, or, in the case of government-funded networks, to cut costs) will continue to cover them with sufficient journalistic resources will in turn influence how governments (facing both economic strain and growing public pressure) will continue to coordinate global efforts to improve the situation. For now, and for many in the world, such problems are still localized - ice caps may melt and sea levels may be rising, but not everywhere. Hence climate change reporting calls above all for what Simon Cottle refers to as ‘cosmopolitan vision’, one that takes full advantage of the wider flows and impacts of global communication.19 Yet most societies respond primarily to parochial concerns, to what Cottle calls ‘the pull of the national’. Local media focuses mostly on local impacts; whether global media continues to place sufficient emphasis on the global impacts of climate change and its threat to the planet will depend heavily on its financial support for sustained and in-depth foreign reporting. (As Cottle observes, visualisations of climate change abound in the global media, while explanations of resulting impacts around the planet are considerably rarer.) Media TNCs will also

---

need, ultimately for their own business survival, to develop a clearer understanding of the troubled relationship between environmentalism and consumerism, in what Jan Aart Scholte refers to as the ‘transplanetary’ space. For their part, as the potential for eco-media-fatigue grows, journalists worldwide will need to produce more relevant, imaginative and thought-provoking coverage of the global ecology in order to generate even wider debate and stronger government action. In a forecast scenario that sees the quality of human life facing grave threats, journalists are as much at risk as anyone else.

In a similar vein, the widening gap between the world’s rich and poor poses considerable challenges for global journalism. The conflict and physical violence which this social and economic divide generates receives extensive coverage; the underlying causes of such conflicts are rarely explored in any depth in the global media, while repetition of images of suffering without meaningful background or context can quickly lead to audience apathy. Swedish media researcher Birgitta Höijer found from interviews with 500 people that while pictures in the media of suffering people might invite the audience to experience moral compassion at a distance, and might mobilize compassion, they could also lead to the syndrome of compassion fatigue. ‘Crimes against humanity such as encroachment and violence against people and populations have a strong appeal for the audience, especially the female audience,’ she found, but ‘the large number of reports on suffering and the repetitive and stereotyped character of the depictions may tire the audience out.’

In 2010, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford published a comprehensive paper on the future of international news coverage. Its author, former BBC News executive Richard Sambrook, argued that in the globalised media world - where professional news organisations were competing increasingly with both social media and information provided directly to audiences via government, NGO and company communications officers - foreign bureaux and correspondents ‘may no longer be central to how we learn about the world’.

---

20 (2005, 58; 69),
Sambrook’s interviews with news executives and correspondents were illuminating. ABC News’ Chuck Lustig noted how ‘the Foreign Correspondent has become a simple fireman who goes from fire to fire just like the neighbourhood fire brigade. Once the fire is out they move on…’23. The days of the multi-million dollar foreign bureau, Sambrook concluded, were gone, along with ‘a shriking of professional foreign newsgathering’ which was replaced by ‘an explosion of other sources of information’. These shifts were being accompanied in the era of globalization by ‘a new set of cultural perspectives, which have challenged and undermined old assumptions about reporting.’24 On this point, media commentator William Powers noted:

Foreign news is out there in great profusion these days, particularly online, but it is a different kind of foreign news. While the old foreign news had an air of urgency that was a product of the cold war and technological constraints, the new foreign news is diffuse, many-layered, sprawling, chaotic and terribly complicated… like the world itself.25

Tom Kent of the Associated Press summed up this shift from the binary Cold War view to the new, uncertain world order: ‘Now it is not as simple as ‘us and them’.26 As Sambrook notes, global differences in cultural values and agendas are being revealed more than ever, posing challenges to transnational news services:

The issues at stake are partly professional - how best to serve news consumers, how best to run newsgathering organisations - but also moral. How should we try to understand and represent other countries and peoples who are physically distant from us?27

One answer, as news content becomes less territory specific, is the possibility of global journalism, or what Peter Berglez describes as ‘foreign journalism’s younger cousin’ - a form which ‘transgresses and transcends the traditional domestic- foreign

---

23 q.v. ibid, p. 18.
24 Sambrook, ibid, pp. 97-98.
25 Power, William, q.v. ibid, p. 53.
26 Kent, Tom, q.v. ibid, p. 54
27 Sambrook, Richard, ibid.
dichotomy.28 As globalization creates evermore complex relations between peoples, places and practices, Berglez asserts, global journalism is the news style which could integrate and cover these relations in everyday news production:

In contrast to journalism with a national outlook, global journalism pays attention to and covers political identities which do not primarily rest on a particular national culture or ethnic belonging, but which emanate from universal ideologies or transnational issues, such as climate change or the fight against social inequalities in the world… As a general principle, the greater the emphasis on the universal dimension of a political identity or struggle, its existence in different countries and continents, the more global the journalism.29

Such journalism may be, as Berglez asserts, ‘the natural consequence of increasing connectedness, boundarylessness and mobility in the world… the form of journalism needed in times of globalization’, but whether news consumers will want (or pay) for such a product is questionable. For as Berglez notes, even in the age of globalization, the consumer’s domestic view of the world is powerful, and dominant.

Establishment Narratives Versus The Informal Masses

If the amalgamation of mainstream media is a hallmark of globalization, its counterweight is the rise of social media. This also has profound implications for the future of journalism, beyond the obvious ability for friends, families, colleagues and communities of interest to communicate news, ideas and opinions in the briefest of timeframes to all corners of the globe. When allied with rising education levels, and the acquisition of basic media technical skills such as recording, editing and posting content, people from all walks of life, in virtually all countries, now have the means to create their own ‘channels’ of audio-visual and textual information flow. As the cost of smart phones tumbles and their

29 Ibid.
technical sophistication increases, and the interactivity of networks builds, this trend is set to amplify, creating a competitive, alternative global media structure. In this scenario, Facebook and Twitter are not merely ‘personal sharing sites’ but also represent radical shifts in a tumultuous media landscape, with still unknowable consequences.

Certainly the spread of social media platforms and their high take-up levels has changed the dynamics of the relationship between the media and audiences: what was formerly ‘from them to us’ (one-way, top down and impersonal, authoritative in tone, a closed system) has rapidly become ‘between us’ (two-way, bottom up and personalized, open to challenge and debate, an open-ended network). Occurring with remarkable speed in historical terms, this shift, as David Sifry noted in 2006, transformed the old media’s ‘lectures’ into new media ‘conversations’ with ‘the people formerly known as the audience’. In the period since, this has led to a fundamental questioning of the modus operandi of mainstream media, particularly television news, with its power to control the timing and substance of content, and its attitude of all-knowingness and claims on accuracy and truth carried by studio-based presenters in creaseless suits and perfect makeup. Skepticism has overtaken acceptance, and the tone of public debate has changed irrevocably. In the eyes of many, the age of participation and peer production is already upon us, and the media and journalism will never be the same again.

Media Regulation, Censorship and Ethics in a Globalized World

The vast global scale and speed of social media makes it difficult to compare its impact on any one story against the output of traditional journalistic media. Yet in the case of one offspring of the new media, Wikileaks, the result is more tangible. Set up by Australian computer hacker Julian Assange, Wikileaks in November 2010 produced the biggest leak of official records ever: more than a quarter-of-a-million cables from American diplomatic stations around the world, dwarfing the previous biggest leak, the Pentagon Papers - confidential documents on the Vietnam War - in 1971. This spectacular event was quickly merged into the media

---

30 Sifry, David, q.v. ‘Among the Audience,’ The Economist, 22 April 2006.
landscape, touted on the one hand as evidence of American wrongdoing and a powerful new form of journalistic exposure, and on the other as blatant and dangerous grandstanding by Assange and his Wikileaks collaborators. (The then-U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton voiced the concerns of many nations, declaring that ‘Disclosures like these tear at the fabric of the proper function of responsible government.’) Assange claimed to be practicing what he called ‘scientific journalism’ although, as Rodney Tiffin observed, the release of primary documents ‘is not a substitute for processing them into a digestible, meaningful narrative’. ABC News Australia reporter Andrew Fowler noted that while Assange had created a system where the sources of any document remained anonymous, ‘the major question about whether the document is a fake remains unanswered.’ Others believed that Assange had produced a major shift in journalism, creating what Jay Rosen called a ‘stateless news organization’.

The Wikileaks case highlighted both the power and vulnerability of 21st century information systems in a globalized world. Intelligence which is digitized and stored on computers can also be stolen and downloaded onto other computers, and spread transnationally within nanoseconds. The technology is relatively straightforward; the ethics involved are considerably less so. The initial recipients of the Wikileaks secret documents - organisations such as *The Guardian*, *Le Monde* and *The New York Times* - eventually criticised the subsequent wholesale release of the files by Wikileaks as potentially endangering the lives of agents and whistleblowers named in the files. In the process, Wikileaks itself increasingly became the story; as Tiffin noted, the actual leaked files had ‘almost no audience appeal’.

---

35 Tiffin, op. cit
The ability to circumvent state censorship features heavily in the Wikileaks story, as does the morality and ethics of doing so with highly classified information. What it also highlights is the increasingly complex issue of how to regulate national media in a digitized, globalized world, where barriers to the flow of information are seen to be both fragile and porous. From a journalistic perspective, this can be good news; for national governments, it challenges the status quo of media policy, regulation and law. It can also impact on journalism practice. In its ethics guidelines, the Canadian Association of Journalists, for example, states, ‘We clearly identify news and opinion so that the audience knows which is which.’ While its Australian counterpart, the Media Alliance, does not make specific reference to such a separation in its Code of Ethics, the principle is widely accepted across Western democracies, if not always adhered to.

Yet in many countries, the notion that news and opinion can or should be separated is openly rejected; in societies across southern Europe and the Middle East, for instance, the majority of media outlets report domestic, and even foreign news, on strongly delineated political lines, with news and opinion woven inside a single report. (This flies in the face of another of the CAJ’s ethical standards: ‘We do not allow our own biases to impede fair and accurate reporting’). Standards around the world traditionally reflected what was acceptable to national audiences. In the world of transnational broadcasting and the World Wide Web, news and information content spills in every direction, and potentially to every corner of the globe. In this environment, who is to monitor, regulate and judge media standards?

One issue with obvious ethical implications is the ability to manipulate images on a global scale. The notion of selective shooting and editing of photographs and film for the purposes of misinformation is not new; the practice dates back to the American Civil War and both sides in World War One were quick to see the potential of film as propaganda. Germany’s Erich von Ludendorff, the army Chief of Staff, noted that it was ‘absolutely imperative, if this war is to have a happy outcome, that cinema be able to act with the efficiency of a weapon of war in every field in which Germany wishes to exercise her influence.’ Months earlier, the official screening of With Our Heroes in the Somme featured recreated images of battle, leading the Berliner Volks-Zeitung newspaper to note: ‘Das objektiv

36 http://www.caj.ca/?p=1776
est objektiv.³⁷ By the early 21st century, the ability of Photoshop and other software to alter both the content and meaning of photos and moving images had rendered all media and all audiences vulnerable to being deliberately misled. Nor was the issue confined to mischievous amateurs. In 2006, the news agency Reuters was forced to issue a ‘PICTURE KILL’ notice when it discovered that images of the Israel-Lebanon conflict taken by one of its Middle East freelancers, Adnan Hajj, had been digitally manipulated by the photographer. Other, similar cases have emerged, highlighting the ease with which images can be altered in laptop computers before transmission, and the speed with which such images can be distributed globally for publication, broadcasting and posting. While software has been developed to detect manipulation, there exists no transnational regulatory framework around which to police these ethical dilemmas.

Journalism: Where To From Here?

The first media revolution launched by Gutenberg in 1448 gave rise to printing, publishing, newspapers, journalists, and, ultimately, to the profession of journalism, which arguably reached its apotheosis in the second half of the 20th century, when investigative print journalism, photojournalism, and television and radio reportage combined to give strong carriage to the spread of democracy and opened windows for millions onto the wider world. In the opening decades of the 21st century, much changed: a radically reshaped world order, heralded by the attacks of 21 September 2001 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, replaced a degree of predictably in global affairs with uncertainty on many fronts - strategic, economic, environmental, social and technological. This volatility was also reflected in the turmoil which confronted global media and the integrated business models which had evolved over decades of rising profitability. Newspapers which had shaped the very societies they operated in were suddenly hit with declining readerships and falling advertising revenues; those which turned to online models in the hope of survival, pouring scarce resources into new technologies and offering free access as audience bait, often found themselves staring at a wall of rising debt, and staff which could not be funded from profits. The practice of professional journalism as a central plank in democratic societies could no longer be taken for granted. Confusion about next moves went hand-in-hand with nostalgia about the media past and professional anxiety about the future.

³⁷ Trans. ‘The camera doesn’t lie.’
We began this chapter with some predictions made in the early 20th century. One hundred years later, futurology remains an inexact science. Many, for example, have touted tablet devices such as the iPad as the medium of the future, including News Corp chairman Rupert Murdoch, who believed that tablets ‘may well be saving the newspaper industry’. In February 2011 News Corp introduced its tablet platform The Daily, which lasted only 21 months before closing down due to lack of subscribers. That a media operator as experienced as Rupert Murdoch can misjudge the market indicates the complexity of the issues confronting the media and journalism. As new technologies merge in the media world, creating both uncertainty and opportunity, media markets themselves are shifting at speeds which defy long-term investment strategies. Competing with existing media TNCs and even threatening their existence may be a plethora of ‘micro-multinationals’, using the Internet and micro-financing to structure small yet global media companies on a previously impossible scale, with both employees and audiences scattered around the globe. Such a development, as proposed by economist Hal Varian, would level the playing field considerably and offer fresh employment opportunities for journalists, while at the same time creating a slew of complex legislative and regulatory problems.

Globalization has produced its discontents, not least the thousands of journalists worldwide whose careers have been curtailed by the rise of new media and the cost savings of digitization. Yet the history of the media, in all its forms, has been one of risk and innovation, and constant change, reflecting the world around it; journalism is, after all, nothing more or less than the society at large, with louder headlines. At its best, the profession of journalism has aimed to explain the world in all its facets, to fearlessly uncover the truth, to spread knowledge and new ideas, and to forge links between diverse and often competing interests. Globalization of the media has offered new and exciting platforms for journalists to achieve these ambitions. It has also seen the demise of what were once considered central elements in the business of news and information. For better or worse, globalization is here to stay. The task in this century will be ensure that, as globalization continues to reshape the media

---

market, journalism as a valued profession - and as a core element of democracy and free speech - survives, and that the resulting flow of information remains accessible to all. However globalization may help or hinder these aims, nothing can replace the power of the independent journalistic witness. In the words of BBC correspondent Allan Little:

> Eye witness journalism is in one sense the purest and most decent work we do. It has the power to settle part of the argument, to close down propaganda, to challenge myth making. It is the first draft in the writing of history and, in itself, a primary source for future historians.\(^{40}\)

\(^{40}\) Little, Allan, q.v. Sambrook, Richard, op. cit., p. 102.
Chapter Four:

Reporting a world in conflict

A/Prof. Tony Maniaty
War is everywhere, and ongoing. You do not have to look far to find armed conflict in the modern world. Not all the twenty or so wars raging at any one time are major wars; many, as BBC correspondent Kate Adie once noted, are “small-scale wars of large-scale awfulness”. Whatever the scale, wherever there is armed conflict, there is also invariably a hardened band of experienced war correspondents observing the fight, gathering information and evidence, placing themselves in danger - often at risk of death - to set the story in a wider context and tell the world what is going on. This is the industry-cherished ideal of the frontline reporter at the acme of his or her profession. Yet there is much in this image that no longer accords with current realities, that is challenged by new technologies and changing media platforms, new channels of distribution, by financial constraints and other forces reshaping the wider media landscape.

In late 2012, Stuart Allan described journalism as being in ‘a state of legitimization crisis’ and observed that institutionalized war reporting was Ground Zero in this crisis:

> We are seeing traditional definitions of journalism increasingly open to challenge. We are seeing its preferred norms, its values and the beliefs underpinning its prescriptive framings of reality threatening to unravel. And this is nowhere more so than where journalism relies on official sources, and their shared investment in the language of objectivity and impartiality, to sustain their respective truth claims.¹

While an experienced cadre of war correspondents still attends major conflicts around the globe, often bringing decades of experience to the complex task of untangling conflicting versions of unspeakable brutality, today’s frontline reporter is as likely to be a 22-year-old graduate with a consumer-level video camera, a laptop computer and a desire for high-risk coming-of-age adventures. Technology sits at the core of this fundamental shift in coverage: no longer are hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of equipment required, along with years of hard-won expertise, to obtain broadcast or magazine quality images of war; just as videotape replaced chemical film, hard drives have replaced videotapes, and digitization has made transmission of images and text almost instantaneous. Air fares to war zones

---

are relatively cheap. Stories are no longer shipped in canvas bags or via expensive satellite links but edited on location and filed in nanoseconds to London, New York, Oslo or Sydney - or many locations concurrently. Media organisations are eager to shave costs. Journalists are no longer out of touch or reach, unable to connect with editors; today the mobile phone and Internet link the war correspondent with head office, and the freelance war reporter with potential clients worldwide. Immediacy of coverage has become the mantra; depth of coverage can either wait, or is unwanted. There is neither the space on mobile devices nor the time in busy lives for thoughtful and reflective journalism. Speed is the driver.

Yet, for all its apparent benefits to both journalist and audience, as in many fields, technology has not reached down into the fundamentals, to the causes of the deep-rooted problems that lead to conflicts between people. Wars are essentially failures of the human imagination, of the inability to conquer darker instincts - or, at very least, to devise more civilized means of resolving differences. Technology has not eradicated or limited war; indeed, it can be argued that it has encouraged war. The world is awash with age-old conflicts - and modern, high-tech weapons. Stepping into this chaotic world is no less difficult now in human terms than it was when William Russell of The Times of London launched the modern career of war reporting in the mid-19th century, with stirring coverage of the Crimean War.

In a sense, war correspondents are no different from soldiers: war reporting cannot be mastered from a textbook or classroom, but is an acquired skill gained over time and in rapidly changing environments. Yet many variables have come into play since the Russell outlined the essential dilemma: “How was I to describe what I had not seen? Where to learn the facts for which they were waiting at home?”2 What was once a straightforward proposition - observation, investigation, explanation - has become a minefield of ethical and professional dilemmas, raising many critical questions.

**The Journalistic Field And War Reporting**

Journalism is, in Bourdieusian terms, a specialised field of cultural production, interacting with a range of social, political, cultural and economic fields, and generating configurations of power fueled by - and equally, producing - what

---

2 See Knightly, op. cit., for an excellent summary of Russell’s work and influence.
Bourdieu\(^3\) calls ‘symbolic capital’. Within the field of journalism exist ‘subfields’, each with their unique parameters, hierarchies, and sets of rules: their *habitus*, to use Bourdieu’s term, which is structured by shifting power relations within the field, and becomes, over time, a self-sustaining and adaptable entity.

Traditional modes of journalism, at once regulated by formats, deadlines and audience expectations yet inhabited largely by irregular personalities with high ambitions, fitted the Bourdieusian model well - the media and its entourage, forever shifting and reforming, and growing stronger over the 20th century, had always been powered by such symbolic capital. Until the second decade of the 21st century, this applied, to an even greater degree, to the journalistic subfield of war reporting, a field described by Markham as ‘highly individualized, irreverent towards power and guileful.’\(^4\) Those who consistently toiled (and risked their lives) in this specialized field regarded it as exclusively their own, and tightly held.

Traditionally its members came from daily news reporting, bringing with them the fundamental building blocks of the *habitus* of that tribalised world, including its gatekeeping mechanisms and hierarchies of power, and further shoring up rigid codes of inclusion and exclusion. As wars came and went, war reporters followed, more often than not oblivious to national and cultural boundaries. Increasingly the same names, same bylines appeared, with the same Hemingwaysque swagger: the field at its inception was exclusively male, remained largely a male domain in World War Two, and continued to be male-dominated into the Balkan and Middle East conflicts of the late 20th century. This pervasive sense of ‘maleness’, in perception and in practice, meant that entry to the field for women was limited; even in the 21st century, when women outnumbered men in many newsrooms, the gender imbalance in war reporting remained pronounced.

\(^3\) Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French sociologist and philosopher. In *The Field of Cultural Production* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1993) and other works, he explored his notion of cultural capital, in which cultural production takes place in ‘fields’ of social, political and economic forces undergoing constant change and influence on each other.

Anthropologist Mark Pedelty, who interviewed war reporters in El Salvador, discovered "a mythological narrative with initiating properties that mark the entrance of the young correspondents into the veteran group." Those who, filled with idealism, made it through the club gates and survived their first encounters under fire, were quickly absorbed into the habitus. Bourdieu himself noted how new entrants to the field internalised the rules of the journalistic game and mimicked the regulating norms of the field in professional practice. For the older war reporting hands, as Markham observes, cynicism and irony were the weapons of choice, and were never 'simple negations', but were rather 'implicit alternate constructions... invariably marked by a distinct knowingness which, crucially, does not lead to further explication':

This simultaneous refraining from forming a value-judgment, the suggestion of requisite knowledge to make such a judgment, and the instantaneous preclusion of further articulation, had the effect of establishing a legitimacy which can only remain implicit - and thus, mystified.

While a degree of courage is required at the frontline, it is this mystification (rather than 'mystery') and knowingness which generates much of the perceived aura around war reporting, and which was most prevalent in the closing decades of the 20th century. This deepening identification with the chosen field, a drug-like (and not infrequently, alcohol and drug-supported) attachment to danger, and, for many, an ever-deepening nostalgia for wars gone by, meant that attachment to the habitus tended to become, in some cases, absolute, and irreversible. As Coole observes, the professional clan of 'war correspondents' became part of a reflexive, self-referential game in which actual wars were the canvas on which their lives were played out, a 'blue screen' onto which any war backdrop could be inserted.

---

6 Bourdieu, Pierre; see Markham, Tim, 'The Political Phenomenology of War Correspondence', Op. cit.
7 Ibid.
8 ‘Blue screen’, or alternatively ‘green screen’, refers to the chroma-key process in television studio production which allows a presenter to stand before changing images projected onto a blue or green screen and seemingly become part of the integrated image; it is commonly used in weather forecast presentations.
Antecedents In Battle

Following standards set by Russell of *The Times*, the profession of war reporting quickly became a delicate balance between independence of spirit and conformity imposed by military censors, particularly in World War One, when the ubiquitous ‘blue pencil’ ensured only positive reports reached home audiences. The Spanish Civil War (1936-39), as the precursor to World War two, saw propaganda flourish. Radio had appeared, newspaper circulations in Britain and Europe were rising, and reportage from the frontline was in vogue, exemplified by the presence of George Orwell. Unlike many covering the civil war, Orwell retained a degree of balance, criticizing Republican forces while supporting their cause in principle. His plain but precise and descriptive prose gave Orwell’s account *Homage to Catalonia* a special place in the eyes not only of those who would soon report World War Two (when military censorship was absolute) but for those who, in the postwar era, sought more expressive models of conflict reporting, in which the story might include (or even be centred on) the journalist’s presence and his or her views.

Spain also saw the growth of photography as a central medium of journalism, with the introduction of the compact German Leica 35mm camera, used by Hungarian photographer Robert Capa to give graphic authenticity to distant audiences. Capa’s most famous image, ‘The Falling Soldier’, published in *Life* magazine on 12 July 1937, purported to show a Republican soldier at the moment of his death by shooting, but has since become, as Alex Kershaw notes, ‘the most debated picture in the history of journalism’. 10 Whether authentic or not, what has never been in doubt, Kershaw notes, is that its publication marked a point of no return, from which journalism and warfare would forever be powerfully entwined, helped by the spreading usage of newsreel cameras and growing demand for magazine essays. In Spain the meshing of the media and the military began; they would merge into a single propaganda entity in World War Two, only to be heavily conflicted in the terrible conflict in Vietnam.

10 Kershaw, Alex, *Ibid*. 
The Importance Of Vietnam

The Vietnam War (1962-1975) exposed not only the limits of American power, but also the growing power of the news media in the conduct of warfare. Television cameras moved from offstage to centre-stage: never again would the media, especially television, not be ‘factored into’ the battle equation, as potent a weapon as any mortar or missile. Voluntary guidelines were introduced for coverage of the U.S. military in South Vietnam. In addition to supervising overall contact with the growing (and restless) press corps in Saigon, the United States embassy provided reporters with prepared news stories, radio tapes and film clips; established a press centre; organised media trips into the field; tipped reporters to favourable stories they might have ‘overlooked”; cultivated more influential correspondents; set up interviews with the U.S. ambassador and other important American and South Vietnamese officials; and flew in editors, businessmen and other American opinion leaders to show them what the Pentagon was accomplishing.11 Washington approved: the State Department’s public affairs policy stipulated “maximum candor and disclosure consistent with the requirements of security”.12

The results were striking, although not as intended. Working for the NBC network, cameraman Vo Suu filmed the arbitrary shooting of a Viet Cong suspect by South Vietnam’s chief of police, General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, during the 1968 Tet offensive. (The moment was also caught by Associated Press stills photographer Eddie Adams, scoring him a Pulitzer Prize.) Four years later, the indelible image of a Vietnamese girl, Kim Phuc, running naked towards the cameras, would haunt all efforts to find a solution in Vietnam. Arguably the war’s most arresting image, it was taken as a still photograph by Nick Ut, a locally-employed UPI photographer, after a napalm attack, and filmed by NBC cameraman Le Phuc Dinh. This Goyaesque moment became a metaphor of the war’s insanity, as George Esper noted:

In her expression was fear and honour, which was how people felt about the war. This picture showed the effects of war, and how wrong and destructive

---

12 Message, State 59 to Saigon, 7 July 1964; cited ibid, p. 24.
it was. People looked at it and said, “This war has got to end”. 13

Undoubtedly, the military in Vietnam lost control of the media. Whether or not America lost the war because of the media would be debated at length, as would be Vietnam’s legacy of mistrust between the military and the media, a result, Porch argued, of America’s defeat:

The difference between World War II and Vietnam was not the presence of censorship but the absence of victory. In other conflicts, victory has erased memories of a troubled relationship; after Vietnam, the media was caught up in the quest for a scapegoat. 14

The impact of television, aided by the absence of censorship, was so strong and loaded with so many unanswerable questions, that the media freedoms it unleashed were lost the moment that the United States lost the war. “It is now clear that in the wars of our time, Vietnam was an aberration,” Knightley wrote in The First Casualty. “The freedom given to correspondents there to go anywhere, see everything, and write what they liked is not going to be given again…”15 For the Pentagon, control was the issue: in future, journalists would work with the military, or not work at all.

POST-VIETNAM: THE SATELLITE AGE

Post-Vietnam, television became the dominant news medium globally. An international industry emerged based on rapid deployment of news journalists to trouble spots, backed by television camera crews and ready diffusion of stories through fixed-position satellites and other digital technologies. Newsgathering technology advanced exponentially; the rapidly take-up of desktop and laptop

15 Knightley, ibid, p. 481-482.
computers, and the spread of the Internet, email, and mobile telephony, would reshape totally the reporting of war. ‘Digitisation’, the underlying concept in this revolution, reduced all raw content - verbal, visual, textual - to a massive set of 0’s and 1’s, able to be compressed, transmitted and turned into nightly news, stored and archived, and retrieved in a second. In addition, massive capital investments, 24/7 formats and syndication of news material to worldwide audiences demanded that news ‘product’ be increasingly regularized, homogenized in content and standardized in format. The chaotic, freewheeling journalism practiced by news journalists in Vietnam had no place in the corporatized world of media organisations like CNN, BBC World, and major American networks such as CBS, NBC and ABC as they headed towards the new century.

In his seminal 1975 history of war reporting, The First Casualty, Phillip Knightley questioned whether journalists in future would even want to cover wars, arguing they would serve either as ‘propagandists or myth-makers’. By the time of the first Gulf War, in 1990-1991 (also known as Operation Desert Storm), Knightly’s fears were largely realized. Compared to Vietnam - where the press corps had access to the frontline with relative freedom from censorship - the Gulf War saw journalists contained like battery hens in hotels in neighboring Middle East nations, formed into ‘pools’ and fed with official communiqués and edited military footage - as planned by the Pentagon, a recipe for conformity and uncontroversial, sanitized coverage. Transmission of news reports was delayed until it had been subjected to ‘security review’, a control “unprecedented in the history of U.S. warfare”. Correspondents had virtually no scope to experience the war at first-hand or without close military supervision; further, the demands of live and global, rolling-format television news kept them tethered to the satellite dish - providing constant updates yet unable to witness the actual conflict they were supposedly covering, a consumer-led corporate demand for immediacy over substance described by BBC correspondent Michael Buerk as ‘the tyranny of now’.

The Gulf War saw the birth of the military-media complex. Increasingly since the Vietnam era, the major U.S. networks had come under the control of conglomerate cultures with far greater commercial interests than news reporting; their allegiance had increasingly shifted away from the values of journalism towards

entertainment, and the dividing line between the two forms - once a granite wall shored up by professionalism - had been replaced by the ethical equivalent of a silk screen. More vulnerable (and amenable) to business and government influence, network chiefs accepted greater control over correspondents to gain closer ties with power.

By 1991, this drift to collusion with power was palpable and disturbing. Sections of the media and the military were in alignment, sharing technologies and objectives; the one complex was feeding off the other, the lines of separation were becoming increasingly blurred. At the same time, innovative battlefield technologies were deployed and tested in real-war environments, providing a glittering showcase of America’s new post-Soviet-era global strength. This provided television news in particular with extraordinary live images of war, and stellar audience ratings; and diverted public attention from the less savoury, more traditional aspects of killing. As a result, coverage of the Gulf War was antiseptic, impersonal and seemingly remote.

During the ‘Balkan Wars’ of the 1990s, fought on ethnic lines in the former Yugoslavia, not only the nature of war coverage began to alter dramatically but also the nature of the media itself: firstly, with the dynamic growth of 24-hour, rolling format cable news services; and secondly, with the emergence of the Internet as a potential platform for news delivery. These developments would break the 50-year hold of the television networks’ nightly ‘set-piece’ bulletins as the gatekeepers of breaking news - and of the limitations of time and place they had long imposed on audiences. Yet again, correspondents in the field were hindered by interventions, controls and censorship imposed by the military.

**9/11 And The Embedding Solution**

By 2001, the media, military and governments had all acquired considerable experience in the coverage of war, yet no element in this ‘intelligence’ triumvirate foresaw where the next global battle would begin: in the heart of Manhattan. On 11 September 2001, three hijacked airliners slammed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in what would be the deadliest assault ever on United States territory. President George Bush proclaimed a millennial battle, turning a hunt for mass murderers into a crusade against world terror.
The resulting conflict in Afghanistan proved more deadly for journalists than for commandos stalking al-Qaeda terrorists, or for pilots making hundreds of bombing runs. In a single 17-day period, eight journalists were killed. Further, the kidnapping in early 2002 of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl and his ritualistic murder, with his severed head held before a video camera, affirmed that the media, which had long regarded itself as a bystander in warfare (if not always neutral observer), was now a prime target. This was potentially the fate awaiting any reporter who probed too deeply into Muslim extremism.

Controlling a free-world media in the 21st century also posed difficulties for the Pentagon and other military establishments. The freedoms of Vietnam were quickly ruled out, but the corralling of journalists into pools, heavily criticized after the Gulf War, was equally untenable. The solution settled on was ‘embedding’, a reversion to the press-controls World War Two, in which journalists would be offered access to the battlefield (if not the actual frontline) by embedding themselves inside military units. With the focus heavily on televised coverage, strict censorship would not be necessary: TV cameras and crews would be reliant on military transport, and be guided wherever the military wanted them to go. In the coming war, the Pentagon’s spokesman Bryan Whitman promised, embedding would enable the “reporting of the good, the bad, and the ugly”, and would change the old hostilities: with reporters wed to a military unit, the relationship would be symbiotic.19

Globally, television networks embraced the proposition; to reject it suggested foolhardiness, since unprotected, independent operators would be easy targets for Iraqi snipers - and, as it happened, for ‘friendly fire’. Network managers were also quick to realise the economic value of access to guaranteed images of battle (however ‘staged’) rather than the hit-and-miss possibilities of having TV crews seeking their own images of war. The insurance bills for embedded crews would be lower. As well, embedding might bring that most unpredictable breed of reporters - war correspondents - under some control, albeit military control, resulting hopefully in fewer ethical dilemmas and arguments with the White House about images of dead bodies. The military would do its utmost to ensure none were filmed.

The BBC’s chief correspondent John Simpson, while noting that embedding often provided first-class coverage, felt there was “a price to be paid for this kind of closeness. That, after all, is why it was offered to us.” Simpson’s crew chose to remain independent of the military – adopting the status of ‘unilaterals’ – and was attacked by a U.S. fighter plane. Fifteen people were killed, including the BBC’s translator. Simpson, injured and bloodied, delivered a harrowing report:

This is just a scene from hell here. All the vehicles on fire. There are bodies burning around me, there are bodies lying around, there are bits of bodies on the ground. […] I am bleeding through the ear and everything, but that is absolutely the case. I saw this American convoy, and they bombed it. […] I am just looking at the bodies now and it is not a very pretty sight.

Awash With Technology

The potential international viewership for war coverage had grown immensely. Along with the expanding CNN and Sky News services, BBC World News, a 24-hour news channel launched in 1995, became available in over 270 million homes in more than 200 countries. The Arab world, too, had seen a major media development with the formation of the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera network in 1996, which quickly gained a reputation for professionalism. Unfetted by the state-controlled censorship that had long dominated the Arab media, it had become “an equal opportunity offender”, observed Quinn and Walters, irritating almost every government in the region.

Technology had also produced a contraction of foreign news coverage by established news organisations, which relied increasingly on material from news agencies, particularly video news services: AP had created APTN, competing across the globe with the established Reuters news operation. For their coverage of the Iraq War, most major news networks were equipped with lightweight gear that could operate independently of (potentially damaged) urban infrastructures. Typical field equipment included a satellite phone, DV (digital video) cameras,

---

20 Simpson, *The Wars Against Saddam*, op. cit., p. 357
‘store and forward’ units on which stories could be edited and compressed, and an SNG (satellite news gathering) ‘flyaway’ dish for transmission.

The Iraq war officially lasted 800 hours, noted writer-filmmaker Mark Daniels, but generated 20,000 hours of video: “That’s three-and-a-half years of images to record one month of war.” War and media overkill had merged in a perfect zenith, but the level of comprehension had, if anything, been reduced by sheer volume of material. The technologies available to cover warfare had changed dramatically, yet the role of the war correspondent remained: to cover the stand-alone events, but equally to lock them into a context ‘chain’, assessing both their immediate impact and deeper meaning. In failing so often to meet this objective during the Iraq War, and aiming instead for moments of spectacle drawn from ‘embeds’, television news in particular often conspired against a more focused context; discouraged its natural offspring, serious debate; and in contradiction of the media’s stated aims, made democracy that much poorer. Typically, ABC Australia’s Eric Campbell found himself having to “fudge it by writing something to accompany pictures you haven’t seen of events you didn’t witness”. The overall news output of the Iraq conflict was, many believed, indicative of the ongoing corruption of the independent and investigative role of the war correspondent. The conduct of war and the reporting of it was becoming an indivisible process, leaving audiences that much less informed.

Post-Iraq Coverage

As we head deeper into the 21st century, much is changing both in the field of journalism and in the way wars are being reported. Across the media, fragmentation has become the norm, fuelled by a potent and often chaotic blend of globalization, digitization and ever-cheaper news production and information technologies. In this landscape, the relatively stable and organized professional fields of the Bourdieuian world are permeated at all levels not by other, definable identifiable fields but by amorphous and fluid forms, defined less by codes of membership or modes of behavior than by an absence of structures and shared rules.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in conflict reporting, where the stance of rugged individualism, already heavily diluted in an era of media pooling, military embedding, shared resources and economic cutbacks, is further under threat, and the field’s traditional claims to journalistic authority based on professional values and hard-won experience become ever harder to sustain. The exposure of audiences to the conflict environment through non-traditional media such as blogs and video diaries and Facebook and Twitter entries posted by freelancers, military personnel, citizen journalists and others, raises, Markham suggests, ‘the very real possibility that the experience of war (and war reporting) is no longer systematically mystified, mystification traditionally underpinning the valorized symbolic form of ‘war reporter’ in contemporary media culture.’

Even the physical remoteness of war reporting, part of its ‘capital’, becomes irrelevant with the spread of technologies that place the correspondent in near-constant contact with head office, while the question of how to enter the ‘club’ is largely redundant, since anyone with a few thousand dollars - neophyte, freelancer, tourist, student journalist, clerk, plumber - can purchase a laptop computer, a high-definition camera, an air ticket to Baghdad or Kabul, and in two days be shooting frontline war stories and dispatching them electronically (and cheaply) to global networks. Women are no longer barred, while social status, nationality and race play no significant part. The door is wide open. This does not mean, of itself, termination of the Bordieuian field of war reporting; while one version - the world synonymous with safari jackets, hard drinking and a charade of all-knowingness - rapidly loses its symbolic capital, another version driven by new portable technologies and the shared values of social media and a younger dynamic reshapes the \textit{habitus}.

This rapid change, along with the rising involvement of relatively inexperienced players, confronts those who have devoted their working lives to war reporting as a professional career. Photojournalist Tim Hetherington, a veteran of wars in Africa and the Middle East, referred negatively in 2011 to ‘the unbelievable number of young kids running around Libya with cameras’, shortly before his own death there under fire.\textsuperscript{24} Michael Kamber, a war photographer with \textit{The New York}

\textsuperscript{23} Markham, Tim, ‘War Reporting in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century: A Political Phenomenological Perspective on Pooling, Embedding, ICTs and Citizen Journalism’, \textit{Op cit.}

Times, was equally disturbed: ‘To me and some of the older crowd, there was a nagging suspicion that these packs of “green” photographers were not taking war seriously - that they were joyriding, with all the casual privilege the term implies. […] The idea of a 20-year-old running around Libya with a cellphone and no flak jacket is, frankly, quite disturbing. It conveys a disrespect for the profession and for the civilians involved and it incorporates a certain callousness, at least in my opinion, toward the gods of war.’ There is considerable irony here: experienced photographers such as Hetherington and Kamber also had to start somewhere. Indeed, the golden age of war photojournalism, in the maelstrom of Vietnam, included many beginners who, armed with little more than enthusiasm and blind courage, became journalistic legends, and models for those who followed. The common thread between the generations remains a determination and passion to get the story; the typical persona remains largely unchanged.

Who Are These Mad People?

For a professional group engaged in exploring the lives of others, journalists are notoriously reticent about revealing their deep emotions, an act regarded by many as unprofessional and unworthy of those who witness on a daily basis the emotional and physical trauma suffered by victims of conflict. Motivations are often couched in broad, non-personal terms. The American journalist and essayist David Rieff, who covered the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, declared ‘I am interested in war because it is war. War is the norm in human history.’ German reporter Carolin Emcke asks herself, ‘Why do you do this job? Why do you go to these places where you get shot at, arrested, deported, threatened, or beaten up on a relatively regular basis?’ Her response - ‘to give a voice to the people who have become silent’ - taps into only part of the broader motivations of war reporters. Harold Evans, celebrated for his editorship of The Sunday Times, asserts two types inhabit the field, ‘the undeniable “cowboys” and those who could be categorized as “believers”: the latter, he says, tend to be less reckless than the adventurers; they are not in it for the exhilarating scent of danger or the adrenaline rush. They

calibrate the risks, trying to recognize the moment when the story becomes secondary to survival.\textsuperscript{28}

The lethality of the job is undeniable. The International News Safety Institute - a London-based coalition of news organisations, journalist support groups and individuals working to improve news safety in dangerous zones - produces, in collaboration with Cardiff University’s School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, an annual report, \textit{Killing the Messenger}, detailing the extent of media deaths, including those in war zones. Its first report, in 2007, noted that ‘1,000 journalists and support staff have died trying to report the news around the world in the past 10 years: an average of two a week.’\textsuperscript{29} The news industry, confronted with these dark figures, talks of courage, and the desire of Evans’ ‘believers’ to report ‘the truth’ at any price, include the loss of their own lives. In his introduction to INSI’s 2007 report, Evans observed of those who died:

They believed in the purpose of journalism. […] Nothing in the record diminishes the conviction that they believed theirs was an honorable craft - profession if you like - rooted in reason, dedicated to truth, sustained by a sense of common good, given inspiration by the achievements of others around the world in a universal brotherhood.\textsuperscript{30}

Aside from these lofty beliefs, many journalists arguably seek in war adventure, career advancement, and the visceral excitement of smelling and reporting a good story. Some lose their lives in the single-minded pursuit of truth, but others die chasing personal glory, and, others still, simply while seeking a good time. The singular element that links them is risking their lives to get the story.

Chris Hedges, who covered fighting in former Yugoslavia and Central America for \textit{The New York Times}, wrote of these complex motivations in his seminal 2003 text, \textit{War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning}\textsuperscript{31}, noting how the struggle between long-cherished myths and illusions of a better world often underline the humanity of conflicts as well as their terrifying lethality. The frontline reporter is trapped in the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 5.
middle of this irrational, dangerous equation. In Nicaragua, Hedges joined a convoy of reporters in cars marked with “TV” in masking tape on their windshields, moving with rebel forces who came under heavy fire. Trapped, he could not move but began to pray. He felt ‘powerless, humiliated, weak’. One rebel died ‘yelling out in a sad cadence for his mother’. The firefight seemed to go on for eternity:

I cannot say how long I lay there. It could have been a few minutes. It could have been an hour. Here was war, real war, sensory war, not the war of the movies and books I had consumed in my youth. It was disconcerting, frightening, and disorganized, and nothing like the myth I had been peddled. There was nothing gallant or heroic, nothing redeeming. It controlled me. I would never control it. 32

Hedges’ confession masks a harsh reality: that for all the coverage that war generates in the media, the worst always occurs well beyond the audience view, seen only by combatants and professional observers. Neither of these groups finds it easy to admit publicly or with total honesty the absolute depths to which war takes them, for to do so may be to admit weakness or defeat, or - arguably worse - to risk withdrawal by their editorial masters from a drug and a myth they cannot not live without. This too forms the habitus of their chosen field.

**Of Demons And Bad Dreams**

While a cowboy mentality continues to exist in some quarters, the industry has in recent years witnessed a growing awareness of, and openness about, mental health issues that accompany war reporting. The study of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), previously confined to its impact on military and emergency workers, had by the early 21st century entered the field of war journalism. PTSD is a condition in which sufferers involuntarily recall a traumatic event in the form of vivid memories, nightmares, and flashbacks. Fixation on the event becomes so intense that it starts to dominate the lives of sufferers, who not only experience the anxiety of being on guard against the trauma’s effect, but often also emotional numbness to other events. The work of Professor Anthony Feinstein of the Department of

Psychiatry at the University of Toronto\textsuperscript{33} and others showed that PTSD gave war reporters bouts of restlessness and depression, and often made them feel that ‘normal’ life was uninspiring. As psychotherapist and former BBC correspondent Mark Brayne has observed, war correspondents in this regard are like anyone else:

\begin{quote}
Just because they have the professional mask, or the professional function of being a journalist, it doesn't mean to say that we as journalists are armoured against the emotional experience of observing and then witnessing and reporting on trauma.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

The upsurge of interest in the nature of PTSD has had an important side-effect, by allowing war correspondents ‘permission’ to discuss their dark experiences rather than to avoid them or externalize them. The case of news cameraman Jon Steele is telling. Steele, who worked for Britain’s ITN network, was addicted to capturing on film the worst that humanity could produce, in whatever war zone he could find. By 2001, as he recalled, he had been ‘working the Intifada’ for eight months straight: ‘I'd already seen hundreds of people shot dead or blown apart. I’d already been hit once and nearly killed twice. I’d been targeted by both Israeli and Palestinian snipers. One shot nearly tore off my leg; another shot almost took off my head. A centimetre either way, I’d be dead.’ The horrors piled up.\textsuperscript{35} Filming

\textsuperscript{33} Feinstein’s work in the 1990s and beyond opened up what had been a closed world; the focus had always been on those correspondents killed, not on the survivors. But as Feinstein noted, battlefield mortality rates told only part of the story. Many war reporters had been wounded and maltreated, with beatings, intimidation, mock executions and robbery. Feinstein and a colleague sent questionnaires to 170 war reporters, photographers, producers and cameramen, and also conducted face-to-face interviews with many. The results showed this ‘war’ group had far more symptoms of PTSD, major depression and psychological distress than a similar ‘non-war’ control group. Average weekly alcohol intake was high; their lifetime prevalence of PTSD approached that of combat veterans, while rates for major depression were two to three times higher than in the general population. The figures were well above those reported in police exposed to violence. (See Feinstein, Anthony, ‘War, Journalists and Psychological Health,’ \textit{South African Psychiatry Review}, August 2004.)


such traumatic episodes had a profound effect on Steele’s life:

It screwed up my life incredibly. I’ve gone through a few marriages, bouts of drinking, drug abuse, madness. I mean it just screwed up my life. And what happened to me is not unusual in the business. There are journalists out there who are on their third and fourth marriages, there are journalists out there who are alcoholics, drug addicts, there are journalists out there who have taken their own lives, because they just couldn’t take it any more.36

Steele’s path, through wars across the 1980s and 1990s, matched his decline, as he notes vividly in his memoir War Junkie. Recalling the time he filmed the aftermath of machete massacres in Rwanda, he observes with shocking frankness: ‘Maybe I didn’t give a shit about these people. Maybe they were just pictures and nothing more.’37 The careless yet highly confessional tone suggests a man at the end of his tether. A more steady perspective, though no less traumatic, is offered by Janine di Giovanni, a correspondent for The Times of London. In her memoir Madness Visible she accounts the places and events that troubled her:

Chechnya, where packs of wild dogs were eating the flesh of the dead and where a houseful of blind old people sat waiting during a bombardment for someone to rescue them; Sierra Leone, where nine-year-olds high on drugs carried AK-47s that were nearly bigger than they were and learned how to amputate hands and feet; East Timor, where the dead were stuffed down wells...38

Guilt is a prevalent emotional by-product of war reporting, the result of mental strains in a career built on the blood of others. The BBC’s Michael Buerk, who had reported from inside a camp with 40,000 refugees - showing the world how Haile Selassie’s Ethiopian regime, for all its riches, was incapable of feeding its own people - described the serious moral qualms he felt about his reporting role. ‘It is difficult for a decent person to be a journalist in the middle of a human disaster,’ he stated. ‘You are not there to help. Often you hinder.’ While acknowledging a

37 Ibid., p. 371.
reporter could bring the world’s attention to the plight of victims, that offered little comfort. ‘...you feel hopelessly soiled at the time; the man who can exploit ultimate distress.’ The BBC’s Jeremy Bowen, another experienced war correspondent, noted a fundamental truth about reporting wars: ‘For us to have a good day, someone else has to have their worst day or their last day.’

Less Bravado, More Empathy

The ‘macho’ image of war correspondents, reinforced in popular culture by Hollywood role models, has also been tempered by a rising number of women journalists on the frontline. As they began to penetrate this male stronghold in World War Two, women faced restrictions not placed on their male colleagues. Life photographer Margaret Bourke-White was denied access to the Allied invasion of North Africa, on the basis that the flight there was considered too dangerous - for a woman. (She took a boat instead, which was torpedoed, and managed to board a lifeboat with her cameras; she subsequently became the first woman to fly on an American combat mission.) Martha Gellhorn gained a reputation for bravery, as did Dickey Chapelle, who later became the first American female war correspondent killed in action, in Vietnam. French photographer Catherine Leroy, who became the first accredited journalist to make a combat parachute jump, was captured by North Vietnamese forces but managed to talk her way out; she admitted being scared, but also to being addicted to combat:

You are alive like you've never felt alive before. […] It's pleasurable in the sense of sheer animal survival. It's your primary brain, your reptilian brain; you are alive as an animal is alive. It’s very low and very primal.

---

40 Ibid.
In the conflicts of the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the ratio of female to male war reporters began to rise, but not dramatically. The most prominent of female practitioners was Kate Adie, who as the BBC’s Chief News Correspondent covered the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere from 1989 to 2003. Adie gained a reputation for her abrupt, ‘no-nonsense’ style of reporting, in which her emotional responses were rarely displayed. CNN correspondent Siobhan Darrow, who covered conflicts in post-Soviet Georgia and Chechnya, wrote in her memoir of the difficulty of giving global audiences a sense of the horrors she was witnessing: ‘I hoped, mostly in vain, that reporting on this desperate situation would somehow help improve it.’\textsuperscript{43}

The notion of being not only a observer of war, a witness to truth, but equally a sympathetic and engaged participant in the total experience of war places Darrow at a considerable distance from the stance of detached non-involvement that has, until recently, been widely regarded as the professional norm for war reporters, as typified by Australian ABC war correspondent Peter George, reflecting on his experience in the Middle East:

\begin{quote}
...we sit there at the bar at the end of a hot, harassing day and share a joke and a precious cold beer while outside, in 40 C degree heat, women struggling with cracked plastic buckets draw putrid water from shell craters to quench the thirst of their loved ones. We do not allow ourselves to suffer constantly with the victims of such horrors. We want to remain sane witnesses.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

In contrast, to understand her involvement in the conflicts she covered for the German magazine \textit{Der Spiegel} from 1999 onwards, Carolin Emcke sent long emails to her friends around the world, as a testament not only to what she had seen but also about the impact of disturbing events on her psyche:

\textsuperscript{44} George, Peter, \textit{Behind the Lines: The Personal Story of an ABC Foreign Correspondent}, ABC Books, Sydney, 1996, p. 133.
That is the burden of the witness: to remain with a feeling of failure, of emptiness because even the most accurate account does not grasp the bleakness of war.45

Such confessional views will become increasingly common and acceptable, as war correspondents, male and female, choose to speak more openly and frankly about the darker side of their work. The growing range of counseling services available to journalists, particularly in major news organisations such as the BBC and CNN, and those offered through the work of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma and similar support groups, is also creating a more mature approach to what was, for decades, a tightly closed compartment of the war correspondent’s psyche.

A Younger Demographic

In the new century, the delusionary macho-celebrity image of war reporting has been punctured not only by the rise of women in war reporting, but also by the growth of a youth demographic centred on mobile technologies and social media. Kevin Sites’ work reflects the values of a younger war reporter with skills as a video journalist. After spending a decade covering conflict for major American networks, Sites set out in 2005 with backing from Yahoo! News to visit every major war zone in the world, and to post his reports and reflections on a website, Kevin Sites in the Hot Zone.46 Sites reported from 22 war zones in 368 days, posting 1,320 still photos and 153 text stories, and 131 video stories. This frenetic schedule and output resulted in a depressing finding: ‘War poses as combat but is really collateral damage.’47 Equally aimed at a younger audience was Chris Ayres’ reporting of the Iraq conflict. 48 Ayres was, in 2003, the Los Angeles-based correspondent for London Times - reporting on, among other topics, Hollywood - when he embedded with U.S. Marines on the road to Baghdad. Rather than portray himself as the bearer of a British stiff upper lip or of bravado beyond his years, Ayres questioned both his courage and his ability to cover war surrounded by

46 The site no longer exists per se, although Sites’ reports can be seen at http://www.kevinsitesreports.com/
47 Sites, Kevin, In the Hot Zone: One Man, One Year, Twenty Wars, Harper Perennial, New York, 2007, p. 293.
experts. (‘What kind of a nutjob would do this for a living?’ he asked.49) Yet beyond the humour of his writing, Ayres displayed a canny perception about how modern wars are covered, and the fradulence of so much alleged ‘war’ reporting. He also identified some fundamental truths about the job:

War makes you feel special. It makes you feel better than your office-bound colleagues, gossiping over the water cooler, or wiping Pret-a-Manger mayonnaise from their mouths as they lunch in their veal-fattening pens. War gives your life narrative structure. The banal becomes the dramatic. […] Here’s another thing about war: as much as you hate the fear and the MREs and the mutilated corpses and the incoming mortars and the freezing nights in Humvees, you know you’ll be a more popular and interesting person when, or if, you return. Because war is all about death, and everyone wants to know what death is like.50

Ayres suggests that contemporary war coverage is, in large part, an exercise controlled to an exceptionally large degree by military forces, in which concepts of independent journalism, freedom of movement, and empathy with the war’s victims are mostly hollow claims. While irreverent on the page, Ayres’ principal objective is not to risk his life for the story, but simply - and wisely - to stay alive.

Objectivity Versus Attachment

Attitudes within journalism and the news industry continue to shift: as Tim Markham asserts, ‘Creativity in journalism has moved from being a matter of guile and ingenuity to being about expressiveness,’ a move that reflects ‘a broader cultural shift from professional expertise to the authenticity of personal expression as dominant modes of valorization.’51 In particular, a shift from the concept of ‘objectivity’ as the basis of factual reporting to a more personalized dimension of reportage that emphasizes the journalist - as Merrill’s case for the ‘existential journalist’ argues - as ‘an autonomous moral agent who can choose to promote the

49 Ibid., p. 220.
50 Ibid., p. 234.
overall welfare and freedom of others, has produced a wider creative space in which not only varying fields of opinion can be expressed, but also where new journalistic forms can be shaped.

Increasingly, the debate over ‘objectivity’ in reporting has swung not towards its necessity but towards its near-impossibility. The psychotherapist Mark Brayne notes that all reporting is coloured by the emotions and experiences that we have as humans. Objectivity, he believes, is ‘one of the rather endearing and no longer quite appropriate fantasies that many journalists and many journalistic institutions have… that somehow as journalists all we do is observe events, take them into ourselves and pass them on objectively, that we simply tell the truth’. Life, according to Brayne, is much more complex than that, and reporting war carries its own paradox:

I need to be both open to the emotional experience of the story that I’m telling and also distanced from the story so that I can tell it with an appropriate distance and context and understanding, because if I’m simply swept up in the emotion of the moment, it’s very difficult then to tell the story and to put in all of the aspects. […] We’re not neutral, we’re not purely dispassionate observers of external facts, we really get engaged and then we have to struggle with this issue of how do we then distance ourselves from the stories that we cover so that we don’t contaminate our reporting with our own unprocessed emotion.

This does not necessarily suggest a greater move towards the ‘journalism of attachment’. The degree to which war reporters seek to be engaged at the personal and political level with the stories they cover remains independent of their greater freedom to do so; a commitment to ‘the story’ remains as valid as any commitment to ‘the fight’, though in a number of rare cases - such as George Orwell’s reportage from the Spanish civil war - a combination of the two, ‘the story’ and ‘the fight’, can result in journalism that generates a sense of striking immediacy and authenticity. In this regard, what has changed - and fundamentally - since the

Vietnam era is, as Simon Cottle notes, ‘that journalists today working both inside and outside mainstream news outlets increasingly demonstrate journalistic self-reflexivity and this often assumes humanistic and emotional forms.’ As Cottle observes:

This may yet prove to be a source of support for those journalists in mainstream news outlets who both recognize and want to move beyond journalism’s long-established ‘calculus of death’ and develop new forms of reporting including those inscribed with an ‘injunction to care’.

Training To Stay Alive

Increasingly, war reporting is a high-risk occupation, with high death and injury rates. Moral dilemmas and grim choices haunt the coverage of warfare. The industry mantra says no story is worth dying for, yet correspondents continue to suppress rational considerations about survival in exchange for capturing graphic moments of war. Partly the rise in mortality rates results from modern weaponry - high-velocity ballistics and ubiquitous land-mines - but also from the increasingly urbanized and random nature of modern conflict: fought not in the countryside but in crowded urban environments, where shrapnel from high-impact explosives results in more casualties, and kidnapping and execution are constant possibilities.

Formerly cavalier attitudes to news safety by media organisations have been replaced in most major TV networks, news agencies and newspapers by a more responsible, ‘duty-of-care’ approach which includes compulsory safety training for current and potential war correspondents, usually conducted by former military personnel with skills in anti-terrorist warfare. These courses are highly expensive, and it is difficult to ascertain whether such training has in fact reduced the death toll among war reporters; nor does such specialized and expensive training address the needs of what Chris Cramer, currently Head of Global Media for Reuters, has called the new ‘urban war correspondent’ - in effect every reporter working wherever a terrorist attack might occur, a situation illustrated by the Manhattan

9/11 attacks, where the ‘first responders’ were financial journalists on Wall Street. Traditionally, war has involved the clash of great armies on battlefields, with clear winners and losers, and beginnings and ends. Today warfare can erupt anywhere; as likely in the London underground as in a remote ditch in rural Iraq. For the media, this has major implications. No longer is the coverage of warfare the sole province of the dedicated war correspondent; a sports reporter at the Olympics might find herself covering a full-scale terrorist attack, a court reporter in Seattle could be caught up in an urban bombing. In a sense we no longer go to war; increasingly, wars come to us. These scenarios raise a critical question: if terrorist attacks can occur anywhere, do news organisations have a duty of care to train their entire editorial staff in war reporting and its dangers? How can such training be provided within existing reasonable frameworks of time and money?

One solution could be the inclusion of mandatory news safety teaching in all journalism and media tertiary courses. Such modules would, at the beginning of journalism careers, have two key benefits: they would offer all journalism students an introduction to the risks they face, and what preparations and precautions they should take before heading into war zones; and they would begin to demystify and ‘normalise’ the subject of trauma, which many professionals in the news industry are still reluctant to see as an occupational problem. Rigorous classroom debate on topics such as ‘courage versus cowardice’ under fire or stress and ‘fight versus flight’ could temper the growing death toll amongst war reporters. At present, negative attitudes to such issues reduce the complexities of war reporting to the level of a John Wayne movie: those who can take it and those who can’t.

A further innovation may be the use of battlefield video games as training tools, a technique widely used in military, policing and medical training. A prototype of an Australian game, Warco, allows players to adopt the persona of a video journalist arriving in a war-torn African nation under fire; the game allows the journalist to film action, and rewards innovative thinking and courage, but also penalizes those who take risks unnecessarily. In this virtual environment, players learn of the multiple dangers that exist in war zones, and of the tactical awareness required in rapidly-changing situations, balancing the need to ‘get the story’ with the need to ‘stay alive’. Ironically, the U.S. Army is using virtual reality technology to help
soldiers overcome post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), using “Virtual Iraq” simulations of experiences they are having difficulties coming to terms with.  

Likewise, journalism students need to be made more aware of the importance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the globally recognized set of laws governing armed conflict and its effects. Drawn up as part of the postwar Geneva Conventions, IHL is based on several key premises: that although war can be horrifically violent, it should never become a game of open slather; that not everything is permitted even within the dark parameters of that thing called war; that journalists in war zones should be subject to rules of behaviour, and that likewise combatants need to follow rules and practices to ensure journalists’ safety and survival. IHL does not grant any rights to enter a war zone per se; the journalist must negotiate on the ground with whoever the consenting authorities might be. But it does support the journalist’s right to get close enough to the frontline to report the action fairly and accurately without being labelled a combatant or supporter of the military, or indeed a spy. By insisting that war reporters have the status of civilians, IHL encourages warring parties to treat correspondents less harshly if captured, and can sometimes help to secure their release. In essence, IHL is about ‘the rules of the game’ of war; behaviour beyond which could result in prosecution for war crimes.

The Rise Of Social Media And Citizen Journalism

New technologies have seen a dramatic rise in the use of social media within journalism, a trend which has quickly invaded the traditional field of war reporting. The ability to capture both still and moving images on mobile phones, and distribute them globally via emerging media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media, has created a vibrant new source of content, and a raft of ethical and professional dilemmas. Chief and most pressing
among these has been the issue of sourcing and verification; the ability of specific interest groups engaged in conflict to manipulate images and information on social media evokes caution among many journalism professionals, even as such content floods the media marketplace. Even when propaganda and manipulation are not engaged, the ability of ‘citizen journalists’ to carefully source, analyse and edit story material into a meaningful context chain is called into question. Undoubtedly, in dynamic and fast-moving stories such as the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011-12, citizen journalism has provided a wealth of material that would otherwise have not been obtained; the political and social outcomes which resulted might not have occurred without the use of such media. Yet increasingly, the global news industry is faced with a double-standard: promoting the values of professionalism, experience and authenticity while accepting content that is sourced from amateurs and largely unchecked. In the sphere of war reporting, where fact and counter-fact are heavily contested on a regular basis, this contradiction is even more pronounced.

**Outsourcing Danger**

As battlefields become more lethal, and the costs of covering war escalate, the temptation for media networks to outsource the production of content grows. The appearance of citizen journalism, welcomed by many as a further democratization of media and a blow to the gatekeeper mentality of traditional journalism, has offered the news industry a fresh means to access frontline material cheaply (indeed, often at no cost) while reducing exposure of staff journalists to death and injury. Armed with a relatively cheap video camera and the promise of a few hundred dollars for spectacular footage, there are plenty of volunteers desperate to break into global news. If they happen to be killed or seriously injured, questions of responsibility or duty of care disappear - no insurance, no family payments, no boards of inquiry. Those who take such frontline risks are both local citizens and foreign freelancers willing to risk their lives for a career break or the chance to earn a few dollars.

The legal implications of this are debatable, but the morality of it is painfully obvious. It illustrates how blurred the lines have become around the traditional concept of war reporting as a skilled craft, the domain of professionals who, by dint of hard-won experience under fire, gained levels of trust and authority among their employers and their readers and viewers. Increasingly, too, it suggests a further erosion of the reporter’s role as the eyewitness to war, and less reliable
evidence on which the public can make intelligent decisions about whether or not to even go to war. Looking to the future, certain trends indicate an even further erosion of this traditional role.

Look, Up In The Sky

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or ‘drones’ in popular terminology, have in a short time become central to the conduct of modern warfare. Controversially, they have become a principal weapon in America’s so-called ‘war on terror’, drifting over skies from Afghanistan to Somalia, searching for targets to ‘take out’. Rapid advances in drone technology have resulted in cheaper prices and smaller machines, able to serve civilian roles based on video camera surveillance and image-capture from the air. ‘Drone journalism’ has appeared, providing aerial access to sporting events and large-scale public demonstrations, and raising many issues of privacy, public safety, ethics and legal considerations. The appeal of ‘drone journalism’ to news producers covering warfare is obvious, yet the likelihood of global networks being permitted to independently fly camera-equipped drones over zones where military drones are also operating seems highly remote. Far more likely will be the rapid emergence of ‘citizen drones’, consumer-level drones with cameras attached that will replicate in the air the combined role of citizen journalism and social media on the ground.

In this scenario, news networks will again be faced with the dilemma of graphic content obtained at low cost versus questions of authenticity and verification. At the other end of this core debate will be a certain rise in officially-provided ‘favourable’ footage from military drones, a process that harks back to the spectacular Pentagon-provided video footage taken from the nose cones of missiles in the Gulf War as they honed in on targets. As with the process of ‘embedding’, the provision of such imagery to networks will reduce the risk to reporters’ lives from extremely high to zero, and see financial advantages through elimination of insurance, travel costs, protective equipment, hotel bills and other expenses. The temptation for media managers to plug in to military ‘coverage’ will be strong, for many irresistibile: choosing which drone-camera to cross to, which shots are the most graphic (or conversely, the least offensive to viewers), which represent editorially (for or against the war) where the network wants to be; where audience ratings will rise or fall, second by second.
The Looking-Glass War

In such a televisual warzone, where technology triumphs and ground troops are involved less and less, what place for the traditional battlefront war correspondent? The profession of war reporting continues to evolve, reflecting shifts within society and in the journalism profession. Coverage of the wars in Vietnam and Iraq sits apart both chronologically and in substance. Vietnam was ‘the first television war’; half a century on, coverage of global conflicts is now more homogenized, and less unique, network by network. Sanitization has replaced censorship; we hear more of military failures, but see less of the result of military actions. If war is hell and modern war more so, why do battlefield deaths in Vietnam still appear more violent than battlefield deaths in current times?

The answer is simple. In a single generation, the unvarnished truth had been extracted from war coverage. Despite a glut of global electronic sources, war reportage now shows far less of the real substance of war - soldiers engaged in battle. For the embeds in Iraq, the battle was usually elsewhere. Reporters who report from hotel balconies will never see war as it is - bloody and unendingly brutal - and can never describe it thus, with a witness’s sense of raw authenticity. Instead, war as blatant horror is replaced by war as an abstraction; war as inconvertible truth is becoming an endless war of opinions; war as a grimy, smelly, noisy, shocking and lugubrious totality is converted to a coolly edited experience, a shuffling of images and sounds as vapid and detached as a video clip, often beyond any measure of trust. Against that, as lethal and ill-disciplined urban warfare becomes hellishly dangerous, the temptation of major news organisations to withdraw from any involvement grows stronger, and the field is left increasingly to inexperienced amateurs and those with personal and political agendas.

If diverse and unflinching coverage of warfare is under threat, from new technologies and from military, government and organizational pressure, is the war correspondent also under threat? Will rising costs and a growing risk of death force networks and reporters alike to ‘pull back’ from the enterprise begun so valiantly by Russell of The Times, who launched the genre in the 19th century? Russell modestly saw himself as “the miserable parent of a luckless tribe”56, yet he managed in a lifetime to change not only the view of field reportage but also of warfare. As his colleague Edwin Godkin of the Daily News observed, having a special correspondent in the Crimea “…brought home to the War Office the fact

56 Knightley, op. cit., pp. 2-3.
that the public had something to say about the conduct of wars and that they are not the concern exclusively of sovereigns and statesmen.”57 Indeed, the need to obtain up-close, accurate, timely and well-informed news of military involvements in foreign wars remains as vital to the democratic process as ever. For without well-trained and committed professional journalists, the battlefield will be an even uglier place, without restraint, without mercy, without even the basics of human dignity.

57 Odgen, R., ed., *The Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin*, Macmillan, New York, 1907, pp. 102-103; cited in Knightley, ibid. Godkin himself was a remarkable observer not only of warfare but of the media: he chided his lazier American colleagues in the Civil War for their “wild ravings about the roaring of guns and the whizzing of the shells and the superhuman valour of the men…”: see Odgen, ibid, p. 205.
Chapter Five:

Networked Journalism in the Arab Spring

Prof. Alan Knight
The Arab Spring saw unprecedented use of social media to undermine what was thought to have been secure authoritarian governments in North Africa.

In Egypt, the world saw the application of networked journalism where mainstream foreign correspondents worked with citizen journalists to produce fine-grained coverage of complex, multifaceted, rapidly unfolding events. This interactive coverage contrasted with earlier reportage of international events where international journalists often operated as isolated news actors in globalised live television spectacles.

**Internet**

In less than two decades, international journalism has been transformed by:

- The near universality of internet services
- The technical convergence of accessible digital devices, notably smartphones
- The resulting explosion of citizen journalism
- The growth of non-western but English language television news networks sources
- The recognition by savvy journalists that they can work together with amateurs to create superior coverage.

All of these issues combined to inform the Arab Spring of 2011.

**Internet Users in the World**

*Distribution by World Regions - 2011*

Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
Basis: 2,267,233,742 Internet users on December 31, 2011
Copyright © 2012, Miniwatts Marketing Group
Since the invention of the printing press, global communications including news, were dominated by western countries command of communications technologies. International conversations including news, took place between western metropolises. The “other” was intellectually colonised, stereotyped or ignored.

Most internet users now reside in Asia; Almost 45% compared to 22% for Europe and 12% in North America. In the decade to last year, Asian access was estimated to have increased by 789.6% compared to 376% in Europe and 152.6% in North America. While Africa represents a very small share of world usage, internet penetration in Egypt and Tunisia were among the highest in the continent (Miniwatts Marketing Group 2012). As non-western economies continue to expand, broadband penetration increases and literacy rates improve, this gap can be expected to widen.

Internet growth was accompanied by an unprecedented access to interrelated delivery platforms including:

- Internet Protocol Television (IPTV)
- Wifi
- Mobile Phones
- iPads
- Terrestrial broadcast
- Satellite Cable
- Broadband
- Newspapers

In Egypt, fast scalable internet base information and communication tools became relatively accessible over the last decade. The profile of the most active users, young, urban and relatively educated, was similar to that of many of the activists in the major Arab Spring demonstrations (Stepanova 2011). In 2011, there were estimated to be more than 21 million Egyptian internet users, representing 26.4% penetration of the population. There were more than ten million Facebook users (Internet World Stats 2012).
New International Mainstreams

Newer technologies were also impacting on mainstream media, resulting in a diversification and re-distribution of international news services. This had a direct impact on not just how international events were covered by journalists, but what was covered and what issues were foregrounded.

In the nineteenth century, international news was text transmitted by telegraph, on lines which ran from the capitals of the European global empires. Indeed the wire service, Reuters was so closely identified with British Imperial interests that it became a target of German propaganda during World War One. It’s no coincidence that the BBC World radio service was initially known as the British Empire Service.

Even at the end of the twentieth century, the introduction of satellite delivered television news allowed the live broadcast of staged events, such as the re-union of a remnant of the British Empire, Hong Kong with China.

Al Jazeera, a Doha based, satellite platformed, international 24/7 television news service, launched its Arabic service in 1996, to provide a “voice to the voiceless” who may have been ignored by the more established Anglocentric broadcasters, BBC and CNN. Ironically deploying many ex BBC staffers, al Jazeera began its English language service in 2006. In 2011, Al Jazeera English news drew on sixty international bureaux, broadcasting to over 250 million households across 130 countries. (al Jazeera 2010) During the Arab Spring, it secured a vantage point over Cairo’s Tahrir Square, so that it could offer live coverage as required during the demonstrations.

Al Jazeera’s head of online English language, Mohamed Nanabhay wrote that the internet provided activists “with a place to network and formulate messaging, which was then broadcast to the entire community.” At the height of the demonstrations, al Jazeera, the New York Times, the Guardian and the citizen journalism site, Global Voices Online curated media coverage from across the internet, providing timely, comprehensive and detail coverage of the complex events unfolding. “It was within this amplified public sphere that activists on the street fed information onto social networks and to the mainstream media, which was then diffused national and internationally” (Nanabhay and Farmanfarmaian 2011).
Citizen Journalism

Writing in Revolution 2.0, Wael Ghonim said that social media armed pro-democracy activists against the State’s “weapons of mass oppression”. Activist organisers used the internet to stay at arm’s length from security forces (Ghonim 2012). Ghonim, an Egyptian born, Google executive, operated out of the relative safety of Dubai, while he ran his virtual campaign against the Egyptian government. When he did come home to Egypt, prior to the major demonstrations on January 25, 2011, he was promptly detained by security forces who isolated him and subjected him to psychological tortures. Google campaigned for his release.

Ghonim deployed an array of new media including:

- Email lists to maintain contact with a growing number of activists
- Twitter for quick alerts
- Youtube for videos.
- Online polls to shape priorities
- Skype for organisers’ conferences
- iPhones for mobile postings and video and audio recordings

The internet is not a virtual world populated by avatars. It is a means of communications that offers people in the physical world a method to organise, act and promote ideas and awareness (Ghonim 2012).

Facebook became a key medium for activists, through sites including one dedicated to Khaled Said, a 28 year old Alexandrian man who had been beaten to death by the police. The easily updated site which carried graphic images and videos, rapidly attracted a huge following, including many Egyptian expatriates. A posting titled “I wish” attracted 1,689 Likes, 1388 Comments and 440,064 views:

I wish the government would stop treating people as though they were children who could be lied to…As a result the people have lost all trust in government…to the extent that sometimes even good news is met with disbelief and conspiracy accusations…(Ghonim 2012)

A recent visit to a Khaled Said Facebook page showed more than two million Likes. Social media allowed images and videos uploaded from smart phones, showing arrests, violence and even abandoned army vehicles. The veracity of the
Citizen journalism generated by the Facebook site was enhanced by the lack of credibility of the heavily censored mainstream press.

State owned media news coverage, along with the many privately owned Egyptian TV Channels, was incredibly biased against the protesters. A media campaign had clearly been devised by state security officials to mobilise public opinion against January 25. One very famous TV anchor claimed that protesters in Tahrir were attacking unarmed police [and] soldiers…while the innocent soldiers were voluntarily carrying fainting protesters to ambulances (Ghonim 2012).

Across the region the process of “building up” to political change, involved “building down“ the credibility of authoritarian regimes by “building down” by investigating their corrupt practices (Howard and Hussain 2011). Howard and Hussain described a series of stages of action involving a series of stages:

- Preparation to build solidarity
- Ignition using an event largely ignored by the mainstream
- Activism made possible by networks
- The involvement of international media (Howard and Hussain 2011)

**Reaction And Censorship**

According to Reporters without Borders, censorship had been increased during the December 2010 parliamentary elections in a bid to conceal the fraud involved. Some websites were blocked for hours at a time, including that of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan Online) and its online forum Al-Moltaqa. Seven other sites were intermittently disrupted over 24 hours: shahid2010.com, shababelikhwan.net, sharkiaonline.com, amlalommah.net, nowabikhwan.com, egyptwindow.net and ikhwanweb.com. The authorities, mainly the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC), which reports to the cabinet, was in charge of this censorship, working with Internet service providers TEDATA, ETISALAT and LINK DSL (Reporters without Borders 2011).

Social Media researcher, Alexandra Dunn, described the Egyptian government’s “aggressive assault” on the media. “It first attacked content (information travelling through media and grounded, non aggregated social networks), followed by general platforms (Facebook and Twitter) and then communication infrastructure (mobile telephone and Internet services)” (Dunn 2012).
Foreign journalists were systematically attacked during the “incredibly violent” first week of February, when an all-out hate campaign was waged against the international media from 2 to 5 February. More than 200 violations were reported to Reporters without Borders. Local journalists were also targeted. The scenario was similar six months later – from 19 to 28 November, in the run-up to parliamentary elections, and during the weekend of 17-18 December – during the crackdown on new demonstrations to demand the departure of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Reporters without Borders 2011).

Mark Corcoran was an Australian foreign correspondent who covered the Middle East for more than a decade. He was beaten and injured by pro-Mubarek supporters while covering the mass demonstrations in Tahrir Square in Cairo last year.

In Egypt, the regime was “not on top of the technology”, Corcoran said. Expatriate dissidents had used international networks to help organise demonstrations in Cairo itself. Within Egypt, much of the information was literally a result of crowd sourcing; with reports, images and videos filed from smart phones.

I was on Tahrir square with a Foreign Correspondent team for close to a fortnight. I was with one of the young activist leaders. It was a spontaneous uprising which the regime had difficulty countermanding. If there had been a formal or rigid structure, it would have been that much more easy to decapitate it (Corcoran 2012)

Citizen journalists’ credibility was helped by misleading or false reports by a heavily censored Egyptian media. “No-one believed anything the read or saw or heard from the state media”, Corcoran said. “They appeared to be obsessed with blaming the international media, inciting people come out and target us for allegedly creating this crisis in Egypt” Corcoran said. By the time the government learned how to effectively intervene, it was too late to stop the momentum for change.

Towards the end, the regime started using smarter tactics. The group we were with, started getting text messages from the regime. They attempted to divide and rule. The young woman we profiled, she started getting messages and we filmed this, getting messages saying “We know you are a reasonable person. We know you don’t really believe what these radicals are saying. Come and have a coffee and talk about this. We are reasonable people”. She laughed at this (Corcoran 2012).
When Egyptians took to the streets on 25 and 26 January 2011, inspired by the Tunisian revolution, the authorities did their best to keep the media away to prevent them taking and distributing pictures. They disrupted mobile phone networks at demonstration sites in Cairo on the first day (Reporters without Borders 2011).

Twitter was blocked at the same day, along with the video-streaming site bambuser.com. The hashtag #jan25 (named after the protests) was very active. Facebook has for several years been widely used by Egyptian dissidents and civil society to put out news and mobilise people, especially around the 6 April protest movement. Access to Facebook was blocked intermittently on 26 January, according to ISPs.

Slower connections were also reported, especially to online newspaper sites Al-Badil, Al-Dustour, Al-Masry Al-Youm, Al-Badil and Al-Dustour, which were later blocked. The Al-Masry Al-Youm site was seriously disrupted and was down all of the afternoon of 25 January. These online media outlets played a key part in reporting the events in Tahrir Square (Reporters without Borders 2011).

Egyptian government interventions in the network were slow and un-coordinated, and in some instances by passed by tech savvy activists who had instituted dial up links to the outside world. Further, these interventions disrupted government and business operations, as well as blocking services to previously inactive middle class internet users (Howard and Hussain 2011).

In Iran, they were much quicker to respond. They were able to co-opt young people who understood the technology…Over a period, the hardliners prevailed. By 2004, the reformers had been driven underground, calling themselves cyber-dissidents. The above ground opposition had been effectively crushed (Corcoran 2012).

Social media made it easier for the authorities to identify its critics, Corcoran said. The technology is much more advanced now. Social media is a terrific tool when you need to move fast to get information out there and rally people. The problem is that it’s an indelible link. You can’t erase those links in most cases. If you don’t
move swiftly and you don’t achieve that political objective of overthrowing the regime and it prevails, they can then slowly and methodically track the links back. A lot of the first wave of cyber-dissidents in Iran were effectively rounded up and imprisoned (Corcoran 2012).

**Uncensored Reporting**

Citizen journalism, mostly unmediated amateur reporting, enables speed, locations and diversity which mainstream journalism finds difficult to match. During the Arab Spring in Egypt it was expressed through microblogging on Twitter and Facebook, short videos on YouTube and a proliferation of established blogs and websites.

The anonymous or apparently hidden identities of citizen journalists were perceived to offer free speech alternatives to mainstream media personalities authorised by authoritarian governments.

The founder of the citizen journalists’ site, Global Voices, Ethan Zuckerman, “Internet Freedom Beyond Circumvention” optimistically advocated a series of theories of how he thought internet enabled citizen journalism which might counter censorship.

- The suppressed information theory: if we can provide certain suppressed information to people in closed societies, they’ll rise up and challenge their leaders and usher in a different government.

- The Twitter revolution theory: if citizens in closed societies can use the powerful communications tools made possible by the Internet, they can unite and overthrow their oppressors.

- The public sphere theory: Communication tools may not lead to revolution immediately, but they provide a new rhetorical space where a new generation of leaders can think and speak freely (Zuckerman 2010).

Global Voices, a community of bloggers and translators, aimed “to redress some of the inequities in media attention by leveraging the power of citizens’ media” (Global Voices, 2011).
It sought to:

- Call attention to the most interesting conversations and perspectives emerging from citizens’ media around the world by linking to text, photos, podcasts, video and other forms of grassroots citizens’ media.

- Facilitate the emergence of new citizens’ voices through training, online tutorials, and publicizing the ways in which open-source and free tools can be used safely by people around the world to express themselves.

- Advocate for freedom of expression around the world and protect the rights of citizen journalists to report on events and opinions without fear of censorship or persecution (Global Voices, 2011).

Hermida et al (2012) described the emergence in Egypt of “a new style, near-real time reporting, where journalists cited a potentially broader set of sources through social media.”

Twitter is one of a range of social media that privileges contribution, conversation, community and connectivity, compared to the hierarchical structures within established news organizations that set the parameters for most news work (Hermida, Lewis & Zamith 2012).

This pointed to “new forms of journalism, representing one of the ways in which the Internet is practiced and furthermore how journalism is defined” (Hermida, Lewis & Zamith 2012).

**Networked Journalism**

Journalists were once defined by their employment by mainstream news organizations. This approach marginalized even free-lance journalists; reporters employed on a story by story basis.

But increasingly, journalists were seen by what they produced; nonfiction buttressed by professional practice which prioritised accuracy and ethical codes which encouraged fairness, if not balance.

This process was foreshadowed by London School of Economics journalism researcher, Charlie Beckett in his book, Supermedia. Beckett argued that
Networked Journalism in the Arab Spring

Alan Knight

Journalists could find new roles, not just as collectors and editors of news, but also as convenors, fact checkers and ultimately authorisers.

Networked journalism takes into account the collaborative nature of journalism now: professionals and amateurs working together to get the real story, linking to each other across brands and old boundaries to share facts, questions, answers, ideas and perspectives (Beckett 2008).

In Supermedia, Becket outlined how journalists might cover a fire by co-operating with citizen journalists. But in Australia, a journalist producer at the ABC, Jess Hill, was using the technique to cover the Middle East from Sydney. Hill sought, evaluated and joined relevant Twitter hashtags. She began conversations with selected activists and developed them as sources through a process of triangulation.

Hill’s Twitter site showed she was following more than three thousand other chatters; a distinct contrast to celebrity journalists who talk more than they might appear to listen. She began using Twitter for reporting on the first day of the Libyan protests. Instead of trying to find people on conventional contact lists, she began putting messages out on Twitter asking, “Does anyone in #…. know about… and then have a conversation back and forth”. But how did she know the people she was chatting with were who they said they were?

Today, I am doing a story on a dissident newspaper that’s being printed and delivered around Damascus. I have been put in touch with a woman in the United States who says she’s a member of the Syrian national council. So I interviewed her and then got in touch with two people the Guardian and the New York Times interviewed and said were members of the Syrian national council. I triangulated (Hill 2011).

This approach significantly extended correspondents reach; beyond reliance on local, English language mainstream publications. Hill said social media gave reporters the chance to check their sources in ways which were not available to journalists in the field.

If you are in the field and you are reporting a flood and you come across somebody who is knee deep in water and they tell you that they were also in Cyclone Tracy, you have no way of verifying that you have to take them at their word... In a way, the conversation about verification and social media is upside down. Social media is perhaps the best verification tool journalists
have ever had. The number of sources that you can access in any given area that may not be directly connected, enables you to triangulate in ways you can’t do on the ground. On Twitter you can do it. This blows the source field wide open (Hill 2011).

**Cyber Utopians**

The internet and in particular social media, were seen as advancing free speech and in doing so, threatening authoritarian regimes. But Evgeny Morozov argued that authoritarian governments quickly adapted to dash what he called naive democratic hopes.

Morozov, a Belarus journalist, gained international prominence with a TED address which claimed that New Media made it easier for secret police to identify dissidents. In his book, The Net Delusion, he said that western politicians overestimated the role of “free” media in the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

Morozov claimed “cyber-utopians” saw the internet as like “Radio Free Europe on steroids”.

Much of the present excitement about the Internet, particularly the high hopes that are pinned on it in terms of opening up closed societies, stems from … selective, and at times, incorrect readings of history, rewritten to glorify the genius of Ronald Reagan and minimize the role of structural conditions and the inherent contradictions of the Soviet system (Morozov 2011 pxii).

In Iran, the government formed a twelve member cyber-crime team to identify “insults and lies” on Iranian websites. Iranian police then combed the net for images of protestors, “ubiquitous thanks to social media”, so that they could be arrested. Expatriate dissidents, identified with Facebook accounts, received messages threatening their relatives back in Iran.

The more connections between activists it can identify, the better for the government, while the more trust users have in blogs and social networks, the easier it is to use those networks to promote carefully disguised government messages and boost the propaganda apparatus.

Modern censorship went beyond just blocking access and often aimed at eroding
and destroying online communities instead. Community groups were also becoming involved in suppressing other opinions. Morozov cited the Jewish Internet Defense Force (JID), which he claimed identified and infiltrated anti-Israel Facebook sites, ultimately disabling them. The JIDF which described itself as a “grassroots effort for change”, promulgated “direct action both to eradicate the problems we face online and to create the publicity that will cause those with the power to take action (companies like Facebook and Google) to do the right thing” (Jewish Internet Defense Foundation, 2008).

Throughout history, Morozov said new technologies have almost always empowered and dis-empowered particular political and social groups, sometimes simultaneously.

Above all, cyber realists would believe that a world made of bytes may defy the law of gravity, but absolutely nothing dictates that it should also defy the law of reason (Morozov 2011).

**Egypt Today**

Free elections held in Egypt held in Egypt in 2012 did not result in free speech. According to Reporters Without Borders 2013 World Press Index, which charts press freedoms, Egypt rose eight places after Hosni Mubarak’s removal from power to the 158th place. (In comparison Finland Netherlands and Norway are first second and third respectively, New Zealand is eight and Australia is 26th).

Journalists and netizens continue to be the targets of physical attacks, arrests and trials, and one was fatally injured in December. Shortly after winning elections, the Muslim Brotherhood appointed new executives and editors to run the state newspapers, which had a major impact on their editorial policies. The constitution adopted at the end of 2012 contains vaguely-worded provisions that clearly threaten freedoms. News media can still be closed or seized on the orders of a judge (Reporters Without Borders 2013).

**Conclusions**

Advancing his theory of media propaganda, Noam Chomsky argued that mainstream media had symbiotic, self-interested relationships with the powerful,
which contributed in the filtering of news to benefit the authorities (Herman and Chomsky 1988). The Mubarek government might have been seen to have such a relationship with favoured television stations and newspapers. However, this co-existence was less evident with international news organisations, particularly those located in states with national interests which did not necessarily co-incide with that of Cairo.

Citizen Journalists, who had not been incorporated into a cycle of self-serving propaganda, were able to offer information regarded as more credible by an interconnected audience. In the case of Egypt during the Arab spring, Zuckerman’s theory of suppressed information contributed to the uprising, resulting at least in Mubarek’s deposal and trial.

Zuckerberg’s second theory, The Twitter revolution theory, might also be seen to have allowed activists to communicate and unite. Ghonim outlined how Egyptian activists deployed an array of new media, not just Twitter, to build contacts, distribute information and organise demonstrations. However, activists’ success may have been enhanced by the relative incompetence of the Egyptian government which as Corcoran pointed out, appeared to lack commensurate technical skills and was slow to respond.

Zuckerberg’s public sphere theory also could be seen to apply, with disparate expatriate activists able to discuss and develop policy, largely unhindered by the intervention of Egyptian political police. However, as Morozov observed, social media allowed authorities to more easily monitor discussions for later action. Further as Corcoran noted, alert authorities could penetrate social networks, injecting their own propaganda whilst posing as citizen journalists.

However, for mainstream journalists the Arab Spring can offer models for improved future practices. Foreign correspondents represent the costly, elite of journalists. They are required to assess and quickly and accurately report on fast developing and complex events. However skilled, experienced and locally literate, they increasingly operate across entire regions, and are driven by the multiplatform demands of their own organisations.

Networked journalism provides, as Nanabhay, & Farmanfarmaian observed, correspondents with an unprecedented variety of sources and citizen collaborators to inform their stories. Instead of being identified as highly visible outsiders, foreign and even local journalists have increased opportunities to engage with
what is still mostly an audience. As part of a network, as Hill has demonstrated, they can transcend national boundaries and make maximum use of minimum resources. In these ways, journalism can be significantly democratised and defined outside symbiotic relationships with the powerful.

Citizen journalists frequently lacked the training and ethical codes which might be required to construct accurate and enduring analyses. Rumours which circulate on the web were not necessarily true, however attractive they appeared to be in comparison to the authorities confections.

While Chomsky might have seen mainstream editors as part of a system which encouraged conformity, they could also act as fact checkers, points of reference and contextualisers.

Citizen journalists could prove to be even more vulnerable than their mainstream counterparts to infiltration, intimidation, imprisonment and attack. They usually lacked the medical support, minders, safe houses and risk management becoming increasingly familiar to mainstream foreign correspondents. ¹ Their relative anonymity could mean they lacked the sort of organised, corporate backing which Google provided Ghonim when he was arrested.

As Beckett observed, “We can do more together than we can apart” (Beckett 2008).

The future might be networked but reporting can be expected to be as dangerous and demanding as generations of foreign correspondents, freelance reporters and now citizen journalists have already found it to be.

¹ Dynamiq Pty Ltd, a Sydney-based company “helps organisations to reduce operational risk and protect their people and assets at home and abroad”. Dynamiq provided “outsourced resources” to organisations operating in remote, complex and high risk environments. Its global operations included:

- International legal advisors
- Trauma counsellors
- 310 safety and security experts
- In-house emergency doctors, nurses and paramedics
- PR advisors
- A presence in 208 countries.

See: http://alanknight.wordpress.com/2011/04/12/reporting-disasters-libya/
Good journalism will continue to demand intelligence, integrity and courage, irrespective of who practices it. The risks are real. As Mark Cororan put it:

It’s all well and good to run around texting each other. At the end of the day you had to get out on the street and you had to stare down the tanks and stare down the secret police and the vigilantes. You can take virtual activism so far, but you reach a point where it has to become real. You have to put yourself out there. You had to put your life on the line (Corcoran 2012).
Bibliography


Anderson, L. (2011) Demystifying the Arab Spring. Foreign Affairs


‘Don’t Write Crap’: journalism ethics and moral imperatives

Sue Joseph
In the wake of the *News of the World* hacking scandal, there was a metaphorical and self-righteous global sigh that here, finally, was concrete and over-arching 'proof' to substantiate the ubiquitous discourse that indeed journalists, and their profession, behave unethically to get their stories; often criminally.

The collective rationale made sense at the time, and as its more than 300 witnesses streamed to give evidence at *The Leveson Inquiry: Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press* in London throughout nine months of investigation, this rationale was not simply proven; substantive elements were extended. The Leveson Inquiry testimony and findings are not only as shocking as was suspected; they are worse. And as a treatise of how a hierarchy of power manages to exert an insidious downwardly vertical pressure, manifesting at the feet of sometimes the most vulnerable in a newsroom, it makes compelling reading.

Concurrently but not as lengthy, and certainly not as broad, the Finkelstein Report in Australia has led to some of the most hotly debated notions of press freedom in this country for many decades. Politicians, academics, analysts, social commentators and members of the public weighed into a media legislation debate, still to be resolved.

But where does that leave journalism practitioners now? Still tenaciously wedged between the people and government agencies; the people and the 'big' business end of town; the people and bureaucracy; the guardians, and attendant to that, the gatekeepers of the free flow of information between the people and the institutions, and policy makers who make the decisions. Is there a universal public interest test that can be rendered and applied, across the board, to shore up the existing journalism code of ethics, ironically so easily side-stepped with the existing public interest 'out clause'? To date, evidence suggests that media self-regulation is a notion regarded with an almost contemptuous arrogance, leaving risk of legislation with a potential to eat away at the edges of what many view as the bedrock of press freedom, and its more than notional fundamental function within healthy democratic process.

It begs the question so elegantly pronounced by Justice Leveson on his inquiry's opening day in London: "Who guards the guardians?"
If the main purpose of the mass media is to water the roots of democracy by helping to create a knowledgeable and sensitive electorate, then the overabundance of sleaze, rumor, gossip, sensation, superficiality, and arrogance does not bode well for responsible journalism.

John C. Merrill

Trying to decide in the abstract how far a reporter should go is about as futile as parents trying to decide how far their daughter should go...when the passions are up and the story is tempting, any reporter...is likely to do whatever the moment seems to call for. No good reporter is honest all the time and it's silly to pretend otherwise.

Robert Sherrill

Introduction

“...it clicked through onto her voicemail so I heard her voice, and it was just like – I jumped – ‘she’s picked up her voicemails, Bob, she’s alive’.”

This is the moment a mother relives for the British Parliamentary Leveson Inquiry the ‘false hope’ that her missing teenage daughter was still alive. It was Day 4 of the Leveson Inquiry in November 2011 and Sally Dowler, the mother of teenage murder victim Milly (Amanda) Dowler, was giving evidence. After she went missing in 2002, the Dowlers could not conceive that Milly’s mobile phone had been hacked into by the News of the World staff. Nearly ten years later, they knew it to be true and their dead daughter became analogous with the worst of journalism ethics, conduct, and editorial leadership and proprietorship. The Dowlers believe that their own phones were later hacked and their movements in the wake of Milly’s disappearance monitored and often photographed and published. And although new evidence eventually deemed messages were not deleted on Milly Dowler’s voicemail by journalists, it does not detract from the fact that staff who hacked into her phone from the News of the World, the biggest selling newspaper in the world, had gravely and illegally overstepped their remit. And so had their bosses.
Prior to the 2011 *News of the World* scandal, in 2006, *News of the World* Royal Reporter Clive Goodman was arrested and charged with phone hacking, along with his private investigator Glenn Mulcaire. Goodman was jailed in January 2007 for four months after pleading guilty to illegally intercepting mobile phones belonging to members of the Royal Family and breaching the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act; Mulcaire received six months. The police investigation was closed after deeming the hacking was contained to celebrities, politicians and the Royal Family. But when it came to light in 2011 that these practices were far more widespread – including the dead Milly Dowler and her family; relatives of dead soldiers; and survivors of the 2005 London bombings – the British citizenry called for immediate action: a Parliamentary inquiry was set up; and proprietor Rupert Murdoch was forced to do something unheard of – shut a profitable publication, the *News of the World*.

Sally Dowler explained to the Leveson Inquiry how she believed the hacking into their missing teenage daughter’s phone impacted her and her family: ‘At first, we were able to leave messages, and then her voicemail became full’. That meant they could no longer leave messages, so when suddenly there was space to leave further messages, the Dowlers believed Milly had cleared her voice bank – and was still alive. Sally Dowler explained further:

> I had dialled a number of times to hear the usual message. I then phoned again and was shocked to hear Milly’s voice – I had got through to her personal voicemail message! I jumped out of my seat and screamed. In that moment I was just so elated to think that there was a possibility that Milly had accessed her voicemail and was therefore still alive...it certainly was an enormously important moment – or seemed to be – from a personal point of view since it gave us all hope that Milly was alive and well. It is impossible to put what that felt like in words.

At a private meeting in a hotel in the heart of London in July, 2011, Sally Dowler, her husband Bob and their other daughter Gemma met with media magnate, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of News Corporation Rupert Murdoch. The Dowlers’ lawyer Mark Lewis later told *The Guardian* newspaper that the owner of the *News of the World* “held his head in his hands” and told the family he was “very, very sorry” (Taylor 2011). That week the Dowlers also met with British Prime Minister David Cameron, Labour leader, Ed Miliband, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg. News Group Newspapers Limited made a substantial settlement in compensation to the Dowler family. By March 31, 2012, nearly £15
million had been paid in damages and legal costs to claimants of phone hacking by News group Newspapers Ltd (NGN).  

The Dowlers’ story is harrowing in its own right, made all the more unbearable by the intense media scrutiny when Milly went missing in March 2002, up until her murdered body was found six months later in September. Ten years later their psychic injury and trauma were compounded when the Dowlers discovered that their daughter’s phone had been hacked; her privacy and theirs blatantly disregarded and violated. And they were once again cruelly thrust into the public’s glare, having to relive the worst moments of any family’s life.

It is not surprising therefore, that as a legacy of such behaviours, here in Australia, year after year newspaper journalism maintains its place in the bottom four of the thirty most distrusted professions in the country, beaten to the bottom spot only by car salesmen, advertisers and estate agents. As one of the most mistrusted professional practices in the country, journalism is constantly scrutinised by a critical public. This scrutiny was given a new lease of life through the phone hacking and police bribing crimes of the News of the World, its demise, and the subsequent appearances of its bosses at the Leveson Inquiry. As Australian journalist Matthew Ricketson writes: ‘The more that journalism…does not play fair with the audience (or its subjects), the more debased is the currency of trust by which journalism seeks to act on the public’s behalf’ (Ricketson 1997, p.94).

No one would dare argue any probative value or public interest in hacking the phone of a missing, later to be found dead, teenager. If ‘the purpose of journalism is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing’ (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, p.5) and ‘the systematic establishing of the truth of what matters to society’ (Brock 2012, p.521) what was the purpose of the hacking of Milly Dowler’s phone? Or Sienna Miller’s or Hugh Grant’s? Or London Bombing survivor Media Studies Professor John Tulloch? And how can it ever be justified? Rupert Murdoch himself demonstrated moral outrage at the behaviour, claiming he did not know and had been let down by his staff. He said:

> All of us regret that some of our colleagues fell far short of what is expected of them. I feel great personal regret that we did not respond more quickly or more effectively. This company has been my life’s work, and I feel a strong sense of responsibility for everything we do and fail to do.  

130
But he really had to act like and claim that. His response is tainted and not credible beside an anecdote former News Ltd editor Bruce Guthrie wrote about in an Opinion piece just after the *News of the World* scandal broke:

In 1988, while attending a conference of News Corporation editors in Aspen, Colorado, I made the mistake of raising the thorny issue of journalistic ethics. The proprietor, Rupert Murdoch, was not amused. In short order, Murdoch, who was hosting the session, turned red, then purple, as I repeatedly asked a senior executive from his London paper *The Sun* whether the publication had any ethical framework. It didn't, the paper's news editor finally admitted. In most media companies that admission might have earned the executive a rebuke. But instead, I copped it, with Murdoch later dismissing me as a "Fairfax wanker". (For the record, I wasn't at that point; I became one 12 months later.)...I left that conference in Colorado more than 20 years ago concerned that Murdoch saw ethics or, at least, the discussion of them, as an inconvenience that got in the way of the newspaper business (Guthrie 2011).

It is interesting to compare the man Guthrie writes about above in the company of industry to the man who met with the Dowlers in 2011, in the brutal glare of a hostile public. Their surviving daughter Gemma actually asked Rupert Murdoch in their meeting ‘how he would feel if it had happened to someone in his family’. Again, he held his head in his hands. Guthrie calls the *News of the World* malpractice ‘systemic and endemic’, and believes the shutting of the newspaper is a cynical move to save future media business transactions. Guthrie writes: ‘Rupert Murdoch has cut off an arm of his British operation in order to save what remains. There is mounting evidence the problem isn't confined to a limb; it infects the entire body of his company’ (Guthrie 2011).

In May 2012, it was announced that Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson, both former editors of the *News of the World* during the phone hacking years, are two of eight people charged with 19 counts of conspiracy pertaining to the scandal. The trial began at the end of October 2013 and was expected to last six months. Coulson, who was director of communications for the Conservative party appointed by Prime Minister David Cameron after he left the *News of the World*, faces five counts of conspiring to intercept communications; Brooks, who was Chief Executive of News International before she resigned when the scandal broke, will face three charges. Each count carries a maximum two year sentence
(Dodd & Sabbagh, 2012). As Lidberg writes: ‘It is time for media owners to understand that their businesses exist on a mandate issued by the public. Misuse this mandate enough and your business model crumbles’ (2011). As did the News of the World. On July 10, 2011, after 168 years in print, the paper published its last edition. It cost its publisher NGN owned by Murdoch’s News International, almost £240 million (approximately $AUD357 million). Legal fees and litigation damages incurred due to the phone hacking scandal cost £23.7 million (approximately $AUD35 million) (Stiff 2012).

The ensuing furore whipped around the world, with accusations of ‘illegal tactics’ and calls for the dismantling of First Amendment protection for tabloid newspapers in the USA (Shapiro, 2011, p. A-13). Here in Australia Prime Minister Julia Gillard answered a question posed by Channel 7’s Mark Riley about journalism responsibility and her Press Club audience laughed at her choice of words. She said:

I think we will have a long debate about media ethics in this country but if I could put it as clearly as I can, I’d say to you: don’t write crap. Can’t be that hard. And when you have written complete crap, then I think you should correct it.11

But thinking about what Gillard said actually goes to the heart of the ethical dilemma facing journalism. Her statement, as pronounced in the vernacular as it is, demonstrates implicit individual choice – she tells Riley to choose not to write ‘crap’. This demonstrates that journalism ethics – any code of ethics or practice – is only as effective as the journalist practicing within it. But it is not simply what is written – it is the behaviours and decisions made in gathering information and leading up to what is written which needs deep scrutiny and guidance. As Merrill argues, the major antecedent to ethical behaviour is a will or desire to behave ethically (1997, p.27). Journalists must consciously want to do the right thing, and this is inherently governed by their own set of values, both culture laden and personally developed. The craft of journalism comprises a moral imperative that can never be codified in a charter or code of ethics.

The Public Right To Know And In The Public Interest

Walter Lippman thought long and hard to define public interest, as have many minds since. He wrote: ‘…the public interest may be presumed to be what men
would choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently’ (Lippman 1955, p.17). But just as Lippman pondered, media ethicist Louis Day forewarns the complexity of defining what actually is the public interest. He writes:

In the real world society is not some monolithic entity but consists of many groups, among which choices sometimes have to be made: news sources, public figures, minorities, senior citizens, children, people with disabilities. It is in the balancing of these interests that presents a real challenge to media practitioners (Day 2003, p.32).


Public interest and the public’s right to know are the embodiment of journalism practice regarded as the Fourth Estate of society. British politician Edmund Burke (1729-1797) is identified as the orator of the phrase Fourth Estate during comments he made in the British Parliament. He identified an original three estates – the Royalty, the House of Lords and the House of Commons – then referred to the fourth. According to Thomas Carlyle: ‘Burke said that there were three Estates in Parliament, but in the Reporters Gallery yonder, there sat a fourth Estate more important far than they all’.12

If an Eighteenth century analysis of the day imparted equal importance to the press as it did to Royalty, the Lords and the Commons, what has gone wrong? Why are journalists so mistrusted? Could this mistrust be based on a minority of unscrupulous practitioners, working more ardently for the ‘business model’ than for the good of the people? Or is it something else, too nebulous for the public to define, at play? How can public interest and the public’s right to know, the heart of quality, usable journalism, also be a tool for potential disgrace, as in the News of the World crimes?

The two terms are often interchanged inaccurately but together constitute the starting point of an accountable journalism, enabling informed public debate, thought and knowledge. In the public’s interest and the public right to know are democratic imperatives where the media is the conduit for balanced and accurate information, allowing for the people to form their own opinions and make decisions based on this.
Tanner et al claim the two phrases are the ‘most invoked defences of editors and journalists under fire for going too far’. Theorists claim that due to the misuse of terms, both have been ‘devalued’. They argue: ‘To some extent these worthy principles that form the bedrock of responsible journalism have been devalued by being used as feeble defences of intrusive and damaging reporting’ (Tanner et al 2005, pp.75-77).

But what is the alternative? What other means can be employed to inform? Is there a better way of communicating government and agency decision making processes and policy? How does corruption, illegal dealings, disaster and community warnings get disseminated? In many ways this is the greatest criticism of journalism practice. In claiming to critique and analyse government decision-making processes, journalists find themselves positioned between ‘the people’ and the often smooth speaking, spin-doctoring of highly organised and invested institutions (for example, governments, churches, businesses etc). Maintaining wary journalistic scepticism is meant to help arm the public with facts and information to make its own decisions. Notwithstanding the irony that the media (in most developed and democratic countries) is made up of highly organised and market-driven corporations itself. As Schultz writes:

…the operation of the news media is based on a fundamental paradox. Of the institutions which emerged to provide checks and balances, to ensure that the political system was subject neither to the arbitrary authority of a capricious monarch, nor the tyranny of the majority, the press was the only one whose survival depended on, and was measured by, commercial success (1998, p.95).

There is a difference in meaning: public interest differentiates itself by its precise links to codes of ethics, and fields involving concepts of morality; the public right to know is aligned more to freedom of speech and therefore, of the press. But it is a definitional grey area, with most agreeing to a formula relating to disclosure, qualified by ethical consideration and other values (Tanner et al 2005, p.79). The ‘other values’ are the individual practitioner’s personal moral convictions – simplistically, no more and no less. But this provides for a huge spectrum of context, which leads to the range of behaviours and range of attitudes to these behaviours practised by journalists, and perceived as varying levels of unethical behaviour by the public.
The Fourth And Fifth Estates

Richards argues that every decision a journalist makes in his or her professional capacity has the potential for a lack of ethics. He writes: ‘What many journalists seem not to understand is that all of their professional decisions have an ethical dimension’. He argues:

…there is an ethical dimension at all stages in the journalistic process, from initial decisions regarding what to report, through decisions about gathering and processing of whatever information is acquired, to decisions as to how the information will be presented and to whom (Richards 2002, p.10).

Brock writes that there are four activities forming the core of journalism: verification, sense-making, eye-witness recording and investigation (Brock 2012, p.521). Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel claim there are ten elements of journalism which provide for them the core of ethical practice. They are:

1. Journalism’s first obligation is to truth
2. its first loyalty is to citizens
3. its essence is a discipline of verification
4. its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover
5. it must serve as an independent monitor of power
6. it must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise
7. it must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant
8. it must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion
9. its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience
10. citizens too have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news

(Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, pp.5-6)

While Brock deals with actions, Kovach and Rosensteil deal with notions as well as behaviours. Both approaches are a solid place to begin discussions about ethical conduct. Kovach and Rosenstiel claim that journalism is simply an ‘act of individual character’. They write: ‘Every journalist – from the newsroom to the boardroom – must have a personal sense of ethics and responsibility – a moral compass’ (Kovach et al 2007, p. 231):

Since there are no laws of journalism, no regulations, no licensing, and no formal self-policing, and since journalism by its nature can be exploitative, a heavy burden rests on the ethics and judgement of the individual journalist…this would be a difficult challenge for any profession. But for journalism there is the added
tension between the public service role of the journalist – the aspect of the work that justifies its intrusiveness – and the business function that finances the work (Kovach et al 2007, p.230).

What they are talking about here in journalism terms is when its Fourth Estate notion rubs up against the tension of the business model of journalism, and a business model which has found itself in a rapidly changing technological environment. Many foresee its demise. McKnight and O’Donnell write: ‘The “business model” that has sustained mass-circulation newspapers for more than 100 years is in swift decline’ (Mcknight & O’Donnell, 2011). They are writing about the advent of multimedia journalism throughout the past two decades – the internet has effectively created an even greater tension as it has systematically redefined the public/private nexus or Fifth Estate. Dutton first called ‘a new form of social accountability’ the Fifth Estate

It is enabled by the growing use of the Internet and related information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as the personal computer and World Wide Web. Essentially, the Internet is enabling people to network with other individuals and with a vast range of information, services and technical resources (Dutton 2007, p.2).

As Ward and Wasserman explain: ‘The media ecology is a chaotic landscape evolving at a furious pace. Professional journalists share the journalistic sphere with tweeters, bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media users’. This is creating an environment where some scholars are calling for an ‘open ethic’ because citizen involvement in the media is transforming the nature of journalism and therefore, its ethics (Ward & Wasserman 2010, pp.275-6).

A deep concern at this point is that there is a perception that within the ‘closed ethic model’ – the model of ethical codes and gate-keeping within a news industry before technology changes and citizen journalism – behaviours were perceived as clearly far from ethical, engendering decades of mistrust between the audience and industry. So how to handle this new environment, of monitoring and maintaining a Fifth Estate notion of ethical behaviours? Singer warns of a dismantling of the ‘public’ as we know it. She writes:

The free flow of information is fundamental to a functioning democracy, and in a traditional media environment, the primary concern of journalists has been to make information available. But today, information – along with misinformation and
disinformation – is in overwhelmingly abundant supply. The public needs some means of differentiating between what is valuable to society as a whole and what is less so; otherwise, the notion of a coherent ‘public’ falls apart as each individual seeks out whatever seems most personally appealing at the moment (Singer 2006, pp.14-5).

Brock calls for reform and attributes the key as a balancing act of four main notions. He says:

The question of whether journalists are accountable and to whom and how is delicate in any open democracy since it requires the reconciliation in both principle and practical machinery of two conflicting ideas: journalistic freedom to report and publish on the one hand and the accountability of those who report and publish news on the other. The key to effective reform lies in rebalancing the relationship between values, culture, law and regulation (Brock 2012, p.519).

Upholding both actions and notions through practice covers everything – except the pressure of the business model of journalism – the competition to beat other publications. And this is where the *News of the World* came undone – that pressure to sell more papers than any other paper on the day, sanctioned from the top.

### Quasi Professionals and Codes

Several decades ago, Goldstein claimed that by any of the usual definitions, journalists are not ‘professionals’ (Goldstein 1985, p.18). Without an evidentiary test of proof that can be repeated, journalism can never be regarded as a profession similar to medicine, law or the sciences. More recently Myers et al categorically claim that journalism is not a profession, that it does not meet traditional criteria and that its ethos actually conflicts with a professional frame (2012 p.189). They write: ‘Its core ethos is as a critical, independent, fundamentally rebellious activity. Professionals, by definition, are rule-bound and tightly structured. They are society’s powerful elite that journalism is supposed to critique, not join’ (Myers et al, 2012, p.193).

Their aim is to demonstrate that in today’s environment, the important question is not whether the person is a journalist but whether the work is journalism. There is of course a strong differentiation and with the proliferation of citizen engagement
with media, it is a differentiation due serious thought. But harking back to their claim that journalism is not a profession, it does not mean a journalist cannot act professionally. So claiming it is not a profession does not preclude abiding by an ethical code of practice and conduct. Indeed, within the newly shaped information gathering/information receiving technological world, the ethical imperative could not, and is not higher.

Some media theorists conveniently ignore this grey area around the professional status of journalism in developing their arguments. Researcher Michael Singletary found that most journalists not only see themselves as professional, they think of themselves, their organisations and their practices as being professionally oriented (Johnson-Cartee 2005, p.72). By identifying journalism as a profession, they then substantiate the claim by the mere existence of ethical codes, implying its professional status:

> Journalism’s claim to the professionalism resides in meriting public trust. The basis for public trust is located in journalists’ position of ethical managers of truth. Hence trust is based on journalists’ privileged access to truth and expert power to disseminate their version of it (Crowley-Cyr et al 2004, p.54).

But it is clear from statistics cited above that there has always been a lack of public trust in the practice of journalism. Codes of ethics and codes of conduct or practice have evolved throughout the years, to encourage high ethical standards and accountability, and to attempt to professionalise journalism practice sociologically. Of course, the mere existence of a code does not guarantee that journalists will behave ethically, as the News of the World scandal demonstrates. In fact, ‘out-clauses’ allow journalists scope to deviate from the code (and in effect, excuses ethically dubious behaviour) where it is necessary to do so – in the public interest.

Most ethical codes of practice for journalism around the world contain an ‘out-clause’ in the name of the public interest, directly linked to freedom of speech and freedom of the press in its role as guardians of democracy. For example the American Society of Professional Journalists’ code of ethics provides:

> Journalists should avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public.

Similarly, the United Kingdom Code of Conduct for Journalists (authored by the
National Union of Journalists) says:\textsuperscript{18}

A journalist shall obtain information, photographs and illustrations only by straight-forward means. The use of other means can be justified only by overriding considerations of the public interest. \textsuperscript{19}

And the German Press Code provides:\textsuperscript{20}

Dishonest methods must not be employed to acquire news, information or picture. BUT covert research can be justified in individual cases if it brings to light information of special public interest which could not be obtained by other means. \textsuperscript{21}

‘Public interest’ is also mentioned in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Journalists’ Code of Ethics: The ASEAN journalist shall refrain from writing reports which have the effect of destroying the honour or reputation of a private person, unless public interest justifies it. \textsuperscript{22}

Interestingly, the Code of Conduct for Zimbabwean media practitioners actually spells out public interest moments:

Reporting on a person’s private life can only be justified when it is in the public interest to do so. This would include: detecting or exposing criminal conduct; detecting or exposing seriously anti-social conduct; protecting public health and safety; and preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of that individual such as where a person is doing something in private which he or she is publicly condemning…Media practitioners may probe and publish details about the private moral behaviour of a public official where this conduct has a bearing upon his or her suitability as a public official. \textsuperscript{23}

Australia also has an out-clause qualification. The Australian Journalist Code of Ethics states:\textsuperscript{24}

Basic values often need interpretation, and sometimes come into conflict. Ethical journalism requires conscientious decision-making in context. Only substantial advancement of the public interest or risk of substantial harm to people allows any standard to be overridden. \textsuperscript{25}

Bob Steel argues the Poynter Institute for Media Studies criteria for ascertaining when it is appropriate for a journalist to ‘deceive’ in order to procure a story. The criteria permit such behaviour where:

- When the information obtained is of profound importance.
  It must be of vital public interest, such as revealing great “system failure”
at the top levels, or it must prevent profound harm to individuals.

- When all other alternatives for obtaining the same information have been exhausted.
- When the journalists involved are willing to disclose the nature of the deception and the reason for it.
- When the individuals involved and their news organization apply excellence, through outstanding craftsmanship as well as the commitment of time and funding needed to pursue the story fully.
- When the harm prevented by the information revealed through deception outweighs any harm caused by the act of deception.
- When the journalists involved have conducted a meaningful, collaborative, and deliberative decision making process on the ethical and legal issues.

He writes of behaviours not acceptable when it is appropriate for a journalist to ‘deceive’ in order to procure a story:

- Winning a prize.
- Beating the competition.
- Getting the story with less expense of time and resources.
- Doing it because “others already did it.”
- The subjects of the story are themselves unethical (Steele, 2002).

Ethical decision-making is complex and varied. In most cases, it is fully dependent on the individual, and the particular circumstances. However, this reliance on individual behaviour and decision making is problematic. Because of the quasi nature of the profession, the individual’s behaviour is unaccountable to no person or authority, and effectively, ethically fraught. Louis Day argues that an ethics system lacking any form of liability allows for a certain sense of autonomy, ‘encouraging freedom without responsibility’, and so lacks ‘moral authority’ (Day 2003, p.29).

Similarly, Crowley-Cyr et al see ethical obligations as the responsibility of the individual. They write: ‘The important point of departure between the classic professions and journalism is that journalists’ ethics are voluntary whereas in the classic professions ethics is mandatory’ (Crowley-Cyr et al 2004, p.55). Journalists must volunteer or make a conscious decision to be ethical, despite business model pressures exerted on them for speed and scoops. Goldstein also argues that journalists engage in deception on a daily basis and in many cases do not even
realise they are being deceptive. He writes: ‘Many of the most questioning techniques used by journalists in their quest to be eyewitnesses rely on stealth, secrecy and deceit’. He identifies a number of journalism techniques that can be considered dubious. However many of these are regarded as common practice in the industry. For example: the ambush interview; faking taking notes or avoiding taking notes so that the subject ‘forgets’ they are being interviewed; nodding heads, or smiling to indicate agreement or to encourage the subject to provide more information; telling subjects they are interested in something when their interests lies in something altogether different; allowing subjects to believe erroneously that the journalist knows nothing about what they are talking about, when in fact they do; using material obtained via overheard conversations; reading documents not intended for them (Goldstein in Joseph 2009, pp. 39-40).

If journalists were to reflect on each and every decision in depth, it could potentially render those with conscience unemployable (Joseph 2009, p. 34). Richards cites the well-known adage within the industry: ‘doctors bury their mistakes, lawyers jail them and journalists publish their mistakes for all the world to see’ (Richards 2002, p.10). Yet ethical decisions are at the core of what journalism is and what journalists do on a daily basis. In an ideal world, the remedy is clear – the individual’s ‘moral compass’ – which ironically places one of the most mistrusted of practices in the unique situation of being individually morally differentiated.

**Media Inquiries**

As the Milly Dowler phone hacking story broke, there were immediate calls for an inquiry into the behaviour of the media in Britain. This had a domino effect around the world, including Australia – the Greens leader at the time, Bob Brown, called for an immediate senate investigation into Australian media. On July 6, 2011, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced to Parliament there would be an inquiry into the media. A week later on July 13 he announced that Lord Justice of Appeal, Brian Leveson would chair the inquiry, called the *Leveson Inquiry: Culture, practice and ethics of the Press*. Two months later on September 14, 2011 the Federal Government of Australia established an independent inquiry into its own media. Former Justice of the Federal Court of Australia Ray Finkelstein QC was to chair the inquiry. One of the most important tenets under investigation in both inquiries was media accountability.
Leveson Inquiry: Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press

On the opening day of the Leveson Inquiry, Monday November 14, 2011, Justice Leveson said:

The press provides an essential check on all aspects of public life. That is why any failure within the media affects all of us. At the heart of this Inquiry, therefore, may be one simple question: who guards the guardians?26

Appropriating an ancient Latin idiom – an eloquent and multiply layered phrase – in four words he managed to invoke the great responsibility of the media, together with the inherent dangers of such responsibility: who guards the guardians? It captured the public and industry’s attention equally. The Inquiry has been both praised and criticised. There were four phases or modules to the Inquiry:27

- Module 2: The relationships between the press and police and the extent to which that has operated in the public interest.
- Module 4: Recommendations for a more effective policy and regulation that supports the integrity and freedom of the press while encouraging the highest ethical standards.

Justice Leveson delivered his findings on November 29, 2012. The report is almost 2,000 pages long, not including an Executive Summary of 48 pages. Three hundred and thirty seven witnesses gave evidence in person and the statements of 300 other witnesses were read into the record throughout nine months of inquiry. Leveson’s findings were expected to include comment and direction of the future of ‘self-regulation, invasion of privacy, the issue of prior notification of publication, accuracy and public interest’ (O’Carroll 20122). Indeed, amongst his key recommendations is for an independent media regulator, with legal clout. It took Prime Minister David Cameron very little time to reject the key notion of a statutory body overseeing a new media regulator, citing potential incursions into freedom of speech and a free press as non-negotiable. By rejecting this central plank of Leveson's findings, Cameron divided his coalition government, with Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg supporting a move to legislation, as did Labour
Opposition leader Ed Miliband.

Cameron said:

It would mean for the first time we have crossed the Rubicon of writing elements of press regulation into law of the land....we should think very very carefully before crossing this line. We should be wary of any legislation that has the potential to infringe free speech and the free press (Wintour & Sabbagh, 2012).

According to Leveson, any statutes overseeing a media regulator must include further legislation, providing that the government of the day must uphold and protect press freedoms at all times. He recommended varying powers, remedies and sanctions of a new media regulator, including substantive fines of up to one million pounds for media infringements; and a specific team focusing on libel claims.

Justice Leveson claimed he believed that the actual use of phone hacking as journalistic technique or device was not just confined to one or two people. He said: ‘The evidence drives me to conclude that this was far more than a covert, secret activity, known to nobody save one or two practitioners of the “dark arts”.’

He made scathing comment of media treatment of the Dowlers and the McCanns (whose daughter Madeleine has been missing since May 2007); press lobbying; covert surveillance; press sensationalism; the privacy of not just ordinary people but sportspeople and celebrities and their families; and police relationships with the media.

Justice Leveson has spent more than 40 years as a barrister and now, a judge. He said on the day he delivered his findings:

I know how vital the press is – all of it – as guardian of the interest of the public, as a critical witness to events, as the standard bearer for those who have no one else to speak up for them. Nothing in the evidence I have heard or read has changed that view.

The press, operating freely and in the public interest, is one of the true safeguards of our democracy. As a result, it holds a privileged and powerful place in our society. But this power and influence carries with it responsibilities to the public interest in whose name it exercises these privileges. Unfortunately, as the evidence has shown beyond doubt, on too many occasions those responsibilities along with
the editors code of conduct which the press wrote and promoted, have simply been ignored. This has damaged the public interest, caused real hardship and on occasion wreaked havoc on the lives of innocent people.\textsuperscript{28}

**Finkelstein Report**

Former Justice of the Federal Court of Australia Ray Finkelstein QC led the Australian inquiry. He reported to government on February 28, 2012, and *The Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulation* was released publicly on March 2, 2012. Dr Matthew Ricketson, Professor of Journalism at the University of Canberra, assisted Justice Finkelstein throughout the Inquiry and preparation of the report. A little more than 10,000 submissions were sent to the Inquiry. Forty-one people gave evidence throughout the public hearings.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were:

a. The effectiveness of the current media codes of practice in Australia, particularly in light of technological change that is leading to the migration of print media to digital and online platforms.

b. The impact of this technological change on the business model that has supported the investment by traditional media organisations in quality journalism and the production of news, and how such activities can be supported, and diversity enhanced, in the changed media environment.

c. Ways of substantially strengthening the independence and effectiveness of the Australian Press Council, including in relation to online publications, and with particular reference to the handling of complaints.

d. Any related issues pertaining to the ability of the media to operate according to regulations and codes of practice, and in the public interest.\textsuperscript{29}

Finkelstein found common ground throughout the inquiry pertaining to the way journalism professional practitioners view their ethics and accountability in Australia. He summed it up: \textsuperscript{30}

- a free press plays an essential role in a democratic society, and no regulation should endanger that role
• a free press has a responsibility to be fair and accurate in its reporting of the news
• a free press is a powerful institution which can, and does, affect the political process, sometimes in quite dramatic ways
• a free press can cause harm—sometimes unwarranted—to individuals and organisations
• a free press should be publicly accountable for its performance
• codes of ethics regarding accuracy, fairness, impartiality, integrity and independence should guide journalists and news organisations

Although Finkelstein made it clear he understands that a free press is essential in a democracy, he found that the Australian media should be made more accountable for upholding accuracy, fairness, impartiality, integrity and independence. He claims that the problems identified within the inquiry are not derived from the fact that the media in Australia is unregulated. He acknowledges that it is— but says: ‘…the current regulatory arrangements need strengthening to improve their effectiveness… Doing nothing, therefore, is not a road to success’.  

He writes:

What is lacking, at least in Australia, is a robust discussion on what institutional mechanisms are necessary to ensure the press adheres to its responsibilities … This is the situation this Inquiry must address: how to accommodate the increasing and legitimate demand for press accountability, but to do so in a way that does not increase state power or inhibit the vigorous democratic role the press should play or undermine the key rationales for free speech and a free press.

His recommendation is for the formation of a News Media Council, to supersede the current Australian Press Council, which he writes:

Ordinarily, the preferred option would be self-regulation. But in the case of newspapers, self-regulation by code of ethics and through the APC has not been effective. To do nothing in these circumstances is merely to turn a blind eye to what many see as a significant decline in media standards. Australian society has a vital interest in ensuring that media standards are maintained and that there is public trust in the media.

The Report sets out the expectations of a new model for statutory regulation:
The creation of an independent and transparent body for hearing complaints will right wrongs perpetrated by the media.

The improvement of journalistic standards.

Making the media, which exercises enormous power, accountable to their audiences and to those covered by the news.

Enabling the public to have confidence that journalistic standards will be upheld and that complaints will be resolved without fear or favour.

Enabling complaints that might otherwise have been resolved through lengthy and expensive litigation to be dealt in a timely and efficient manner.

Enhancing the public flow of information and the exchange of views.

Basically, the new statutory regulation is similar to the current Australian Press Council but will be fully funded by the government – supervised by the Auditor General for political bias monitoring – with the implicit threat of specific contempt of court action with a failure to comply with its rulings and in order to enforce its rulings. There will be 20 members and a full time chair position, held by a judge or a lawyer. Media managers, directors and shareholders will not sit on the Council, although half its members will be constituted from the press; the other half, members of the public. The News Media Council will have the power:

- to require publication of a correction.
- to require withdrawal of a particular article from continued publication (via the internet or otherwise).
- to require a media outlet to publish a reply by a complainant or other relevant person.
- to require publication of the News Media Council’s decision or determination;
- to direct when and where publications should appear.

But perhaps the most extraordinary suggestion – one which academic and journalist Margaret Simons calls “eye-popping” – is that the News Media Council, monitoring print and broadcast, will also have jurisdictional powers over websites and blogs that have more than 15,000 ‘hits’ per year.

Simons writes:

Quite apart from the desirability of capturing just about every organisation in Australia’s web page (just about all organisations these days are, after all, media organisations in some sense) the sheer amount of work involved would swamp any council. Not to mention that monitoring the number of “hits” unique
browsers or page views would be next to impossible, leading to endless debates about jurisdiction and measurement techniques (Simons 2012).

Recommendations include incorporating Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) powers to the News Media Council. In recommending, Finkelstein wrote:

In an era of media convergence, the mandate of regulatory agencies should be defined by function rather than by medium. Where many publishers transmit the same story on different platforms it is logical that there be one regulatory regime covering them all. 35

The Australian Federal Government made an aborted attempt in March 2013 to fast track new media laws through Parliament. The package contained sweeping regulation to shore up self-regulation and included the announcement of a new public interest test, overseen by a new watchdog, or Public Interest Media Advocate. Ten days after the suite of new media legislation was unveiled by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy – ten days which saw an onslaught of furious media debate about freedom of speech, censorship and an outpouring in Canberra of loud and volatile criticism from media leaders – parliament failed to pass four out of six of the new bills in spectacular fashion. This led to the second challenge to Labour Prime Minister Julia Gillard's leadership in the past 12 months, the day before Parliament retired for the winter break. She survived, this time unchallenged from within Caucus, only to lose a later spill to Kevin Rudd on June 26, 2013.

Within the next two years, the Finkelstein Inquiry has recommended that a Productivity Commission is convened into the health of the news industry to make further recommendations.

**Bullying in the Newsroom**

Perhaps one of the most revealing issues to flow from the UK Leveson Inquiry was testimony given by the National Union of Journalists of an endemic bullying culture within newsrooms, inherently pertaining to young journalists in particular as victims and directly impacting individual ability to behave ethically. Representing 12 NUJ members ironically too intimidated to put their faces or names to their testimony, Michelle Stanistreet addressed the Inquiry and said:
Understanding the reality of life in many newsrooms and the daily pressures journalists can face is critical in considering the problems as well as the solutions. It has been clearly demonstrated that a culture of bullying exists in some workplaces, resulting in unacceptable pressure on journalists to deliver the goods, even if that means producing misleading or inaccurate material. This makes the practicalities of defending the principles of ethical journalism in the workplace a difficult if not impossible task for many journalists.\(^{36}\)

Stanistreet cited a journalist of 30 years standing, describing the pressures of a newsroom:

> You do what you’re told when you’re told. People really need to understand what it was like. It takes a pretty brave person to take a stand. Your life would be made miserable and you’d quickly find yourself out of work. You’re terrified if you do anything you’ll not get any work in the rest of the industry. You grit your teeth and put up with it. You know it’s wrong, but you don’t want to be a Judas. If you want a career in the future you shut up and you keep quiet.\(^{37}\)

Stanistreet cited Journalist 4 said:

> Those who objected were routinely abused verbally publicly. Humiliation was the most minor punishment for failure. Dismissal or relegation to the least favourable shifts, was much more common. A deliberate climate of fear and tension was created by management to improve performance.

> The only unwritten rule for those subjected to it were never complain publicly and never refuse an order. This included when being ordered to do something illegal, such as steal documents from a car, which I witnessed on one occasion. Another reporter was encouraged to steal a report from a civil servant’s brief case after getting him drunk in a bar. This latter event I did not witness, but I watched as the order was given over the telephone and later read the said report in the office.\(^{38}\)

Michelle Stanistreet told the Leveson Inquiry of the pressures on young journalists, entering the industry. She said the shortage of permanent staff jobs coupled with casual shifts only made the competition high within many newsrooms. Challenging pressure to behave unethically in order to produce stories became harder and harder. She cites one young journalist, Journalist 12, working on a national paper in Britain:
The bullying that goes on has to be seen to be believed. A lot of the time it’s shouting and swearing, being humiliated and made to feel really stupid. I’ve been so tempted to just walk out so many times, but I just bite my tongue and put up with it. I can barely make ends meet as it is. I can’t afford to lose my job. The other problem is the huge number of new journalists working for free on internships – it’s incredibly competitive to get a foot in the door, so once you’re there you’re desperate not to blow it. I think that makes it even easier for editors to treat you like dirt. But I’ve seen other people being treated much worse than me – literally reduced to tears – and in a way that makes me feel worse because I’ve not intervened to stop it. I used to work in the corporate sector before retraining and to be honest never expected newspapers to be like this, not in this day and age.  

Stanistreet said this culture of fear and intimidation, and anxiety about speaking up within newsrooms was backed up as reality by academics giving evidence to the Inquiry. As Holt writes:

> In the large apparatus of journalistic institutions, the individual journalist is a small player whose personal taste and sense of what is right and good are often sacrificed on behalf of the need to reach goals that transcend the “journalistic self”. The description of how conformity spreads as a result of young aspiring journalists’ willingness to sacrifice their authenticity in exchange for an employment is indicative of … a situation in which the pursuance of higher ideals appears irrational. What Merrill proposes as a key in existential journalism is simply to have the courage to make a decision about becoming a different sort of journalist and accompanied by a willingness to act (Holt, 2012 p.12).

The Finkelstein Report in Australia did not address any notions or experiences of bullying Stanistreet, on behalf of the NUJ members, did, and perhaps that is one of its major flaws. But the evidence presented by Michelle Stanistreet goes to the heart of what can go wrong in a newsroom, where the hierarchy of power inserts an insidious downwardly vertical pressure, manifested at the feet of the most vulnerable in a newsroom, to compete and beat not just the opposition producers of news but their colleagues in the newsroom itself, for the best and most sellable stories. Stories that will sell the product, above and beyond everyone else’s product in the marketplace. Sparks writes: ‘The lurid, sensational and sometimes offensive material that dominates the mass market press is the logical and inevitable consequence of its economic position. None of these elements can be traced to the shortcomings of individuals’ (Sparks 1999, p.59).
But Sparks’ position is in direct opposition to other media theorists, claiming the onus of ethical behaviours is on the shoulders of the individual practitioner to not agree to behave unethically. The fact that some journalists giving evidence to the Leveson Inquiry in the UK, after more than 30 years as practising journalists, would only do so anonymously for fear of retribution, should send alarm bells throughout the industry. Perhaps here in Australia the remedy may be found within the newly designed News Media Council – a forum where journalists, young and old, anonymously or not, can focus on and bring certain institutional pressures on them to behave unethically to the fore, if they exist. Singer writes: ‘Journalists as individuals must renew their attention to a moral center in which personal integrity informs professional decisions, difficult though those decisions may be’ (Singer 2006, p.14). Granting a protection to journalists who speak up would enable this and should be a notion further investigated within the two year frame suggested by Finkelstein when the Productivity Commission inquiry is convened.

**Conclusion**

While some journalism practice is ethically dubious, it is not illegal. And this is where arbitrary and individual decision making comes into play. A sub-set of journalists assume a moral high ground and will go to any lengths to obtain a story. Some will even break the law and defend their actions with either a public’s right to know or public interest justification. However, very few journalists are ever prosecuted. Thomas Goldstein says that this places journalists above the law. He argues that the standard justification used by journalists (namely that the ends justify the means) generally does not withstand close scrutiny (Goldstein in Joseph 2009, p.39).

Ultimately, it is still the actions of individual journalists in any given situation which determines what the public eventually sees, hears, or reads. The individual journalist is invested with his or her own moral codes of practice and decision making processes. So if the journalist believes it is in the public’s interest to bend the rules, break them or even break the law, ethical code out-clauses justify and effectively, protect. But as Brock points out:

> Not everything calling itself journalism is entitled to a ‘public interest’ defence or protection. News publishers on any platform may distribute many kinds of material but cannot, simply by virtue of being established, claim that all they do enjoys the protections available to journalism in the public interest. The only viable way of separating what is worth protecting from what does not deserve such
protection (but which may well be very popular) is a public interest test (Brock 2012, p.522).

He goes on to state: ‘Regulation can only be made to work better if both the regulator and the law make better use of the idea of public interest and apply it to journalism with greater consistency than happens at present’ (ibid).

Clearly, the imperative for impartial, accurate and balanced reporting of facts is high – and historically, with the advent of the internet, could not be higher – when dubious behaviour is accorded the legitimacy of being somehow sanctioned by codes of ethics. In a tertiary setting, the teaching of ethical codes is of little value without the weight of a concurrent moral discussion. As the attempted professionalisation of journalism, in a sociological sense, sees the craft of journalism now taught throughout the world within tertiary institutions, it is the prime time to enable consideration of ethical practice, but it is of little use without a simultaneous debate around individual moral standards and personal values. There is a time to ponder within a university setting that is lost in a newsroom. It is impossible to garner a universal morality but enabling students to consider their own value based perspective on decision making while at university and challenging them to maintain this perspective once practising in the field could lead to more thoughtful considerations in these industrial settings, and possibly begin to create a more trusting public.

Milly Dowler’s parents Bob and Sally Dowler, and her sister Gemma, should have the final words. From their Witness Statement to the Leveson Inquiry:

**Bob Dowler:** I think, given the gravity of what became public, the main knowledge about what had happened about our phone-hacking situation and the circumstances under which it took place, one would sincerely hope that News International and other media organisations would sincerely look very carefully at how they procure, how they obtain information about stories, because obviously the ramifications are far greater than just an obvious

**Sally Dowler:** And I think as our daughter Gemma said to Mr Murdoch when we met him: ‘Use this as an opportunity to put things right in future and to have some decent standards and adhere to them’.  

---

151
References

Brock, G. 2012, The Leveson Inquiry: There’s a bargain to be struck over media freedom and regulation, Journalism, Volume 13, (4) pp.519-528, Sage


O’Carroll, L. 2012, Leveson Rulings expected to include ‘excoriating’ criticism of the press, The Guardian, August 29

Richards, I. 2002, Adjusting the focus: Levels of influence and ethical decision making in journalism, Australian Journalism Review, Volume 24(2), December, p.9-20

Richards, I. 2005, Quagmires and Quandaries, Exploring Journalism Ethics, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney

Ricketson, M. 2004, Writing Feature Stories: how to research and write Newspaper and magazine articles, Allen and Unwin, Australia

Sabbagh, D. & Wintour, P. 2012, Leveson Report: David Cameron refuses to 'cross Rubicon' and write
http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2012/nov/29/david-cameron-refuses-to-write-press-law


http://www.crikey.com.au/2012/03/05/simons-i-dont-like-media-inquirys-call-on-enforced-selfregulation/?wpmp_switcher=mobile&wpmp_tp=1

Singer, J. 2006, The Socially Responsible Existentialist, Journalism Studies, Volume 7, number 1, pp. 2-18, Routledge

Sparks, C. 1999, ’The press’, in Jane Stokes and Anna Reading (eds), The Media in Britain: Current Debates and Developments, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd

http://www.poynter.org/uncategorized/744/deceptionhidden-cameras-checklist/


Notes

1 in *Journalism Ethics*, 1997; John C. Merrill is Professor Emeritus at University of Missouri School of Journalism
2 long time White House correspondent, in Goldstein, 1985, p.116
3 transcript of Sally Dowler, Leveson Inquiry, Day 4, November 21, 2011, page 18
4 13 year old Milly (Amanda) Dowler abducted on March 21, 2002 and subsequently murdered; body discovered on September 2002; Levi Bellfield found guilty of her murder and sentenced to life in prison
5 transcript of Sally Dowler, Leveson Inquiry, Day 4, November 21, 2011, page 18
7 Leveson Inquiry: Witness Statement of Keith Rupert Murdoch, p.46
8 Morgan Poll, Finding No.4518 - These are the main findings of a Roy Morgan telephone survey conducted on the nights of June 16/17, 2010, with 672 Australian men and women aged 14 and over: June 28, 2010
9 Leveson Inquiry: Witness Statement of Keith Rupert Murdoch, p.52
11 Canberra, National Press Club Speech, July 14, 2011
12 in his book *Heroes and Hero Worship*, published 1841, pp.222
13 chairman of the Committee of Concerned Journalists
14 director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism
15 Prepared for an Inaugural Lecture, Examination Schools, University of Oxford, 15 October 2007
16 adopted in 1996
17 www.spj.org
18 adopted on June 29, 1994
19 www.uta.fi/ethicnet/uk
20 adopted on December 12, 1973
21 www.uta.fi/ethicnet/germany
22 www.ijnet.org
24 revised February 1999
25 www.alliance.org.au
26 http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/
27 http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/about/
28 http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/video/2012/nov/29/leveson-statement-video
34 Finkelstein Report, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulation p. 300
36 Closing Statement of Michelle Stanistreet on behalf of the National Union of Journalists, July 16, 2012, Leveson Inquiry, p.2
37 ibid
38 Closing Statement of Michelle Stanistreet on behalf of the National Union of Journalists, July 16, 2012, Leveson Inquiry, p.4
39 Closing Statement of Michelle Stanistreet on behalf of the National Union of Journalists, July 16, 2012, Leveson Inquiry, p.6
Chapter Seven:

Data-driven journalism

Maureen Henninger
Introduction

Simply put, data journalism is the use of data in journalistic analysis and reportage. This is not a new concept as journalists have used data such as statistics and incorporated graphs to support reportage for many years. The use of data for support and clarification is still an important part of data journalism therefore data visualisation design and its appropriate use is covered in this chapter. However the analysis of data (and text) using data mining techniques to create new knowledge, while not new concept, is relatively new in journalism and enables journalists to find or discover a story. And finally, data journalism is digital storytelling that is very rich in content and, when delivered in the online environment enables readers to explore the story interactively.

The momentum for data journalism is being driven by two major factors:

1. the exponential growth of online access to datasets, particularly through open government data initiatives, and
2. the development of powerful tools and technologies that enable the mining of data and information, and its subsequent visualisation.

Data journalism requires large amounts of time and many skills; in fact it is often the product of an investigative team, including journalists, researchers, statisticians, information designers, data and text analysts, information visualisation specialists, and web developers. This chapter addresses the principles of many of these skills but does not aim to make journalists experts in any; it is assumed that they will follow up any area that is of particular interest—the Web is awash with such expertise.

By way example I would point to a project done by an investigative team is the data journalism project done by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Coal Seam Gas by the Numbers (Figure 1). As Wendy Carlisle stated (2012) “it wasn’t exclusively data journalism — but a hybrid of journalism that was born of the mix of people on the team”.1

---

1 The author of this chapter was the “academic consultant with expertise in data mining, graphic visualization, and advanced research skills” (Carlise, 2012, p. 27).
So let’s look at the various resources, processes, skills and tools that are required for a data journalism project.

**Public data sets**

In chapter 5 we looked a range of tools for discovering information, including finding statistics and datasets. To briefly reprise, statistics are generated by national and international government and non-government organisations and many of these raw datasets are made available online for re-use under license. They can be found at government and non-government websites or by using general and specialised subject directories such as Infomine and OFFSTATS (see Tables 3, 4 and 5 in Chapter 5). In general open government data (OGD) is available under a Creative Commons or similar licensing agreement; however you must always check on the organisations reuse policy, for example the United Nations COMTRADE (Commodities Trade Statistics) datasets reuse agreement states “UN COMTRADE data are provided for internal use only and may not be
Many of these datasets are time series, a sequence of well-defined data items collected over a period of time at uniform intervals (daily, weekly, quarterly, etcetera). For example, the World Bank on worldwide mobile/cellular subscriptions as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>105.7</td>
<td>115.2</td>
<td>120.9</td>
<td>128.3</td>
<td>132.8</td>
<td>136.6</td>
<td>121.7</td>
<td>121.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>107.1</td>
<td>115.3</td>
<td>119.3</td>
<td>123.7</td>
<td>125.8</td>
<td>126.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>104.1</td>
<td>130.1</td>
<td>133.5</td>
<td>145.0</td>
<td>155.8</td>
<td>164.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>104.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt, Arab Rep.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>101.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>100.6</td>
<td>113.4</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td>124.3</td>
<td>125.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The World Bank

This dataset is well-defined and is a complete time series for twelve years. However sometimes you may need to combine several statistical sources to obtain a complete time series with no null data points (empty cells). As we shall see in the section on cleaning data there are several tools and techniques for doing this. Before beginning any data journalism project you need to search for and retrieve a copy of the data; if you have not been able to download a public dataset, sometimes it can be ‘scraped’ from other online sources, for example an HTML web page, or a pdf file and put into a spreadsheet format such as Excel.

**Screen scraping Web data**

Datasets are often embedded in published documents on the Web, either in an HTML page or in a pdf (portable document format) format. If it is in an HTML

---

*2 For further details see [http://comtrade.un.org](http://comtrade.un.org)*

*3 The World Bank terms of use: “You may extract, download, and make copies of the information contained in the Datasets, and you may share that information with third parties”.*
Web page it is relatively easy to copy and paste from your browser into a spreadsheet. A pdf file however can be more problematic, since this is a display format which is created in two ways—either it is text-based, that is converted from a text file and therefore has the text embedded in it, or is a scanned image file. The data in a scanned image file cannot be copied and pasted and techniques for this doing are complicated and not covered in this overview.4

The following is a simple example of extracting the data in a text-based pdf file (Figure 3); it demonstrates how to screen scrape and import into Excel to create a well-defined, usable dataset (if you have Adobe Professional the table should copy instantly into Excel).

The process has several steps shown in Figures 3–5:

1. copying and pasting into a Word file;
2. converting the data into a table;
3. copying the table into Excel;
4. cleaning it if required.

If the table can be copied and pasted it generally appears in ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) text format, that is, all display formatting is removed, and instead will have a space between each data point (Figure 4). This can easily be converted into a Word table by specifying that the separator is a space—this is similar to the CSV (comma-separated variable) format.

Once the data is in a table it can be pasted into Excel. Alternatively the data pasted into Word can be saved as a text (.txt) file and imported into Excel (Figure 5).

Figure 3 Table embedded in a pdf file\textsuperscript{5}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>1Q2009</th>
<th>3Q2009</th>
<th>1Q2010</th>
<th>3Q2010</th>
<th>1Q2011</th>
<th>3Q2011</th>
<th>1Q2012</th>
<th>3Q2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>11.87</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>10.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>10.92</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>10.01</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>11.63</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>11.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>14.07</td>
<td>13.53</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>10.98</td>
<td>12.64</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td>10.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10.03</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>7.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>18.24</td>
<td>19.06</td>
<td>17.34</td>
<td>16.16</td>
<td>17.54</td>
<td>16.84</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>16.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>10.27</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>10.32</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>8.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 PDF table screen scrape, pasted into Word (Source: Costs of Migrant Remittances Services)

Note that in Figure 4 the right column (3Q2012) appears to have no data, and once imported into Excel the headings are not aligned; this can be corrected by simply inserting another cell at A1 and adding the variable label Country.

In the above example the data required very little tidying up but often this is not the case, and needs extensive cleaning.

**Cleaning data**

Cleaning data can be very tedious in order to create a well-defined dataset with consistently named variables, data points in constant values with no null instances, and uniform intervals. In many cases the data may have missing data, misspellings, typos and spelling and naming variations, and other inconsistencies, and its cleaning is time-consuming and painful. While data may originate in a messy state, more often this occurs when a number of different datasets are merged in order to manipulate them (often called data wrangling) using semi-automated tools, or to work with them in pivot tables (see further down).

There are a number of tools and programs available for data cleaning, many of which require sophisticated scripting and programing which is beyond this introductory chapter. Instead I will concentrate on examining Excel, an invaluable tool and one which all data journalists should be very familiar. Two other excellent tools are Data Wranger and Google Refine.
• **Data Wrangler**: This is an online utility developed by the Stanford University Visualization Group in February 2011. At the time of writing it can ‘wrangle’ datasets of only 40 columns and 1000 lines. One of its features is the ability to convert a dataset from a cross-tab format to a normalised format where there is only one column for the FY (Financial Year).

If you are using pivot tables in Excel you will have trouble if the data is not normalized (Figure 6). It is available at [http://vis.stanford.edu/wrangler/](http://vis.stanford.edu/wrangler/).

**Figure 6 Cross-tabs vs. normalised formats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FY2006</th>
<th>FY2007</th>
<th>FY2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$37,974,000</td>
<td>$69,444,000</td>
<td>$27,813,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$825,000</td>
<td>$1,712,179</td>
<td>$1,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$14,334,000</td>
<td>$22,517,000</td>
<td>$3,015,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$22,830,578</td>
<td>$27,580,247</td>
<td>$534,841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FY2006</th>
<th>FY2007</th>
<th>FY2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$37,974,000</td>
<td>$69,444,000</td>
<td>$27,813,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$825,000</td>
<td>$1,712,179</td>
<td>$1,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$14,334,000</td>
<td>$22,517,000</td>
<td>$3,015,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>$22,830,578</td>
<td>$27,580,247</td>
<td>$534,841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip**: Excel has a pivot table wizard that normalizes cross-tabs data; using the multiple consolidation ranges. See Debra Dalgleish, 2011 *Normalize Data for Excel Pivot Table* (video), [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmqTN0X-AgY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmqTN0X-AgY).

• **Google/Open Refine**: This is an open source data cleaning and wrangling tool, originally Freebase Gridworks that developed from an MIT pilot project into Metaweb, it purchased by Google in 2010. In early February 2013 Google GitHub under the new name Open Refine. It is an excellent tool and is easy to use; there are many tutorials online and the best to get started with are those developed by Google at [http://code.google.com/p/google-refine/](http://code.google.com/p/google-refine/).

---

6 At the time of writing you can download the software from [http://openrefine.org/](http://openrefine.org/).
Excel
The following examples demonstrates how to merge two quite different datasets about earthquakes in Japan downloaded from the NOAA Significant Earthquake Database which has 26 variables and ANSS (Advanced National Seismic System), with 12 variables. Table 1 shows a selection of fields (variables) from both datasets will be cleaned and fused into one complete dataset using Excel.

Table 1 Selected fields from two earthquakes datasets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOAA sample variables</th>
<th>ANSS sample variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>DateTime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11/03/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5:46:24 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dy</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.297</td>
<td>38.297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142.373</td>
<td>142.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal depth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num (deaths)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Nst [No. of seismic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stations reporting]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage $Mill</td>
<td>210000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: NOAA Significant Earthquake Database and ANSS Worldwide Earthquake Catalog

As you can see the data is messy; the problems are:
- variables with different names;
- in the NOAA dataset the date and time is more granular, that is each component is separate;
- in the ANSS dataset the format of date and time is dd/mm/yyyy and a 12 hour clock, which cannot easily be sorted chronologically;
- there are empty cells in both datasets implying there is no data available (no of deaths, no. of seismic stations reporting, and damage in $m).

These problems can easily be corrected using Excel and while this chapter is not an extensive guide to all Excel’s features, the following steps are indicative of its powerful functionality. However a caveat: some of the choices I have made might not match data requirements in some contexts, rather they have been made to illustrate the use of Excel for data cleaning.
1. To harmonise the variable names use Excel’s search and replace facility to change the names to the full names (Mag to Magnitude; Depth to Focal depth, No. of deaths, etcetera).

2. To clean the date and time is more problematic; the simplest solution is to have only one variable, DateTime. Use the Excel function CONCATENATE in the dataset with the more granular data. Insert a new column, DateTime and input the function—many of the functions in Excel have wizards which are a set of dialog boxes to lead you through the steps. Copy the function through the entire column; insert another new column and copy into it the created values only. Finally delete the column with the concatenation function (see Figure 7 for the concatenation function).

3. Convert the date and time in both datasets to the international standard format(ISO 8601), 2011/11/3 5:46:24. Select the entire DateTime column and using the number formatting, select the custom Date facility, type in the format you want—yyyy/mm/dd h:mm:ss.

4. In both datasets add extra columns where required and in the same order to match the total number of variables, naming them correctly.

5. When both datasets are complete and matching, using copy and paste, append one dataset to the bottom of the other.

6. Replace the missing data points (empty cells) with the value n/a (not available), using Excel’s special search and replace facility as follows:

---

The International Standards Organisation enables harmonisation of many types of standards to facilitate globalisation and inter-changeability.
Home > Find & select > Go to specials > Blanks > OK > type in the character(s) you want > Ctrl + Enter.

7. Finally to remove the duplicates, select the Latitude column (here I have assumed that earthquakes rarely hit at the exact latitude) and from the Home menu use the Conditional Formatting > Highlight Cells Rules > Duplicate Values. Once these cells are highlighted you can easily scan the entire dataset to see which are describing the same event. Select one of the duplicate rows and add the correct data, then delete the other. See Figure 8 for the final cleaned dataset.

Figure 8 Partial section of the final dataset cleaned with Excel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DateTime</td>
<td>Latitude</td>
<td>Longitude</td>
<td>Focal depth</td>
<td>Magnitude</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>Damage SM</td>
<td>No of stations reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2012/12/07 08:31:15</td>
<td>37.914</td>
<td>143.764</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2012/12/7 8:18:24</td>
<td>37.800</td>
<td>144.09</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2012/12/07 08:18:23</td>
<td>37.86</td>
<td>143.949</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2012/10/01 22:21:46</td>
<td>39.808</td>
<td>143.059</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2012/06/17 20:32:21</td>
<td>38.949</td>
<td>141.831</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2012/03/31 05:46:24</td>
<td>38.297</td>
<td>142.373</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>210000</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2012/3/14 9:3:51</td>
<td>40.887</td>
<td>144.944</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2011/11/24 10:25:34</td>
<td>41.898</td>
<td>142.639</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2011/11/23 19:24:31</td>
<td>37.365</td>
<td>141.368</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2011/10/21 08:02:38</td>
<td>43.892</td>
<td>142.479</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2011/09/16 21:08:05</td>
<td>40.239</td>
<td>143.008</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have a clean dataset you can begin the process of analysing it.

**Data Analysis**

The notion of finding evidence or new knowledge in a body of information or data has been an essential part of research for centuries. By the mid-18\textsuperscript{th} century the development of probability and statistical theories by the mathematicians Bayes and LaPlace enabled analytical problem-solving based on research data. The concept of visualising data provided a way to

Figure 9 John Snow's map showing the clusters of cholera cases in the London
discover patterns, connections and relationships in the data. For example in 1854
the epidemiologist John Snow meticulously collected data on deaths from a cholera
outbreak in London. By mapping the data on his now famous map (Figure 9) he
made the connection between cholera deaths and a water pump; this connection
ultimately led to the knowledge that cholera is a water-borne disease. More recently
the increased power of computing has enabled large-scale reuse of data by data
mining, and, along with new software tools has made data analysis much easier.
However, before looking at methods for analysing datasets, we should remember
that information is also in contained in text, and that often this has to be analysed,
either manually (what investigative journalists all do by reading appropriate
reports and documents), or by using text mining software.

Text Analysis
Text or content analysis relies on natural language processing (NLP), a science
combining computer science, linguistics and artificial intelligence. Simply put, a
computer program parses a sentence (separates into its component parts) and
describes their syntactic roles—verb, noun, adjective, etcetera, and then by
applying complex rules ascertains its meaning (semantics). More complex
applications of NLP facilitate the mining of a large corpus of text which may then
be visualised, for example IBM’s Many Bills visualisation of US Congressional
legislation (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Text mining and visualisation (IBM's ManyBills)
Unfortunately most text mining programs are proprietary and expensive, however the National Centre for Text Mining (NaCTeM) at the University of Manchester has developed TerMine a Web demonstration utility that identifies key phrases in a text and weights (ranks) them according to the number of occurrences in the text—see Figure 11, (Frantzi et al., 2000). TerMine is now available to industry under licence.

However, very basic visualisations of words in texts can be done using Web-based programs such as Wordle. For example supposing you wanted to visualise, or simply know, what were the major themes of a speech; you paste the text into the template and based on the frequency of the words (unfortunately it cannot construct phrases) Wordle produces a word cloud—Figure 12 shows President Obama’s 2013 State of the Union speech; I edited the cloud to remove high frequency non-thematic words applause and America. This simple tool could be used to compare texts.

**Large Data Sets**
Managing large data sets with a large number of variables can be difficult. For example the Japanese earthquakes dataset (Figure 8) has over 2000 rows. Obviously it is impossible to see the entire dataset at once and therefore would be
very difficult to do any data analysis without an enormous amount of mind-numbing fiddling. Pivot tables\(^8\) are very handy solutions that enable you to select, drag and drop different variables into a template in order to summarise or filter values. In the case of the Japanese earthquakes dataset creating a pivot table makes it very easy to select three variables—DateTime, Magnitude and No of deaths, and to then filter or summarise in a new table the number of deaths caused by earthquakes with magnitudes equal to and greater than 8 (Figure 13).

There are many books and online tutorials for creating pivot tables in Excel but the main steps are:

1. make sure you have a clean dataset with no empty cells;
2. format the dataset as a table;
3. insert the table as a pivot table;
4. using the pivot table template drag and drop the required variables in one of three positions—rows, columns and values;
5. select the calculation to be performed on the value;
6. apply appropriate filters to further summarise the data.

---

\(^8\) Excel has a patent on the term Pivot Table, however it is a function of many software vendors.
Pivot tables are brilliant for working with large datasets; one or several variables can be selected, moved around and grouped, and values can be calculated in different ways in order to analyse the data. And they can produce one dimensional or two-dimensional comparisons. The trick is having a firm idea of what you want to analyse in order to select and place the variables in the appropriate rows, columns and values. Once data is analysed visualisations can be created to support the story, or to let the data tell you there is a story to be written.

As can be seen in Figure 15 the row labels (variables) are Magnitude with DateTime in the secondary position. There is no column variable but the No of Deaths is the value required; the calculation is to Sum, that is, to give the total number of earthquakes, rather than Count, the number of earthquakes in any year (other calculations include Average, Minimum, Maximum, etcetera are available). Filters have been applied to the variables Deaths and Magnitude—to show only those earthquakes with a magnitude of 8.0 or greater that caused at least one death. Finally the table can be formatted in many ways; in this case the subtotals and grand totals have been included and labels have been changed. Lastly you can create a variety of graphs such as that shown in Figure 14.
Data Visualisation

Modern data graphics can do much more than simply substitute for small statistical tables. At their best, graphics are instruments for reasoning about quantitative information. Often the most effective way to describe, explore, and summarize a set of numbers—even a very large set—is to look at pictures of those numbers. Furthermore, of all methods for analyzing and communicating statistical information, well-designed data graphics are usually the simplest and at the same time the most powerful.

Edward Tufte, 2010, Introduction to The Visual Display of Quantitative Information

Creating a visualization requires a number of nuanced judgments. One must determine which questions to ask, identify the appropriate data, and select effective visual encodings to map data values to graphical features such as position, size, shape, and color

Heer, Bostock, & Ogievetsky, 2010, p. 59

Visualisations are symbolic displays that “reveal the data at several levels of detail from a broad overview to the fine structure” (Tufte, 2001), and there is a wide variety—graphs, charts, maps and diagrams, each of which has properties that make it appropriate to a particular type of data. In this section we examine each of these data visualisations and their usefulness.9

The terms graphs and charts are often used synonymously—indeed Excel does—they are in fact different. Graphs such as scatter plots and bar ‘charts’, require at least two scales, whereas as charts have an internal structure, for example a flowchart. However in the following discussion I also will use the terms synonymously. Maps, on the other hand, generally are determined by spatial relations, and diagrams (often called infoVizs)

9 NOTE: all the illustrations in the following sections are either my own or are licensed under Creative Commons.
are schematic pictures of objects and often include some or all of the other types of visual displays.\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{exampleDisplays.png}
\caption{Examples of the four types of visual displays (examples are available under Creative Commons licence)}
\end{figure}

Ben Shneiderman (1996) divided data into taxonomy of seven data types; each data type required a different type of visualisation. Three of these data types are relevant to this chapter:

1. 2-dimensional—planar or map data;
2. temporal—time series;
3. multi-dimensional—relational and statistical databases in which the data can be manipulated (for example in pivot tables).

Data-driven journalism may have occasion to use any of these types of data and therefore need to understand their basic properties in order to select the most appropriate type of visualisation.

\textsuperscript{10} For further discussion on graphs and charts, see Kosslyn, S.M. 1989, ‘Understanding charts and graphs’, \textit{Applied cognitive psychology}, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 185-225
Graphs and Charts

There are many types of graphs and when to use which depends on the type of data. Here are some of the main ones and when they are used (Figure 17):

- line and index charts,
- bar charts,
- histograms, and
- bubble charts.

Line charts and index charts are used for time series data and plot data points at regular interval over time. Index charts are helpful when it is important to display value changes rather than individual data points. They are interactive, in that in the Web environment you are able to drag a slider over the time frequencies.

Figure 17 Data types and appropriate graphs & charts
Bar charts are on the most frequently used graphs and are typically used for variables that are categories, that is, they have no numerical meaning such as months or countries.

Histograms are special bar charts show qualitative categories such as statistical frequencies and distributions, for example the per capital income distribution of selected countries, in which the income data is ‘classed’ or put into categories. Bubble charts are used to display 3 dimensional data, that is, three data series, two of which are located on the X and Y axis and the third appears as filled-in circles in proportional sizes.

Often when you have several series in the one dataset, or if you have very dense data, placing them in a single visualization may result in an unreadable graph. One way of solving this problem is to use a series of graphics, what Tufte (2001) calls small multiples which he describes as “resemble[ing] the frames of a movie: a series of graphics, showing the combination of variables, indexed by changes in another variable . . . the design remains constant through all the frames, so that attention is devoted entirely to shifts in the data.” This type of visualisation is also call a trellis or panel chart and the series can consist of any type of visualisation (Figure 18).

Excel is an excellent tool to create many different charts and graphs and you should be familiar with its charting features; to create a histogram you need to make sure that the Analysis ToolPak add-in is available and creating small multiples or trellis charts in Excel is complicated. But no matter what type of graph you use you must make sure that it doesn’t lie.
Graphical Integrity

Edward Tufte in his discussion of graphical integrity notes that “graphical excellence begins with telling the truth about data” (2001); that the “representation of numbers, as physically measured on the surface of the graphic itself, should be directly proportional to the quantities represented” (2001) He suggested that such violations can be measured by the “lie factor”, that is, the as the ratio of the size of an effect shown in the graphic to the size of the effect in the data and should always be less than one. He devised the following formula

\[
\text{lie factor} = \frac{\text{size of effect shown in graphic}}{\text{size of effect in data}}
\]

Thus in Figure 19 the data shows the changes fuel economy standards for automobiles in miles per gallon went from 18 in 1978 to 27.5 in 1985, an increase of 53%, whereas the length graph lines representing this data (0.6 inches and 5.3 inches) is an increase of 783%. Tufte calculated that the lie factor of the graphic is 783%/53% = 14.8!

Figure 19 Extreme example of graphic misrepresentation

We have now examined data visualisations in the form of graphs and charts, and by implication how these can be done using Excel. We will now examine another of the more valuable types of methods of visualising information and data—maps.

**Maps**

For most of human history maps have been used to communicate complex ideas and knowledge. Much of this is spatial and/or temporal information; one of the earliest is the 5th century BC Babylonian map of the world, now in the British Museum. Early methods for finding one’s position or location (latitude and longitude) were generally based on altitude of the sun, on star position and dead reckoning, but it was not until the invention of an accurate method of calculating longitude—Harrison’s marine chronometer—that accurate positions could be calculated.

In the early 1970s, with the availability of satellites the US Department of Defense\(^{11}\) developed a 24 satellite system, the Global Positioning System (GPS) that broadcasts two radio signals that give the satellite’s precise position and time. The second signal is the data that has been made available for civilian use and is accessible to anyone with a GPS receiver; it is the basis of applications which require geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) for location on Earth. The representation of geographic coordinates has been standardised\(^{12}\), for example the location from where I am writing this is \(33°51′35.9″S\) \(151°12′40″E\) (Sydney, Australia—southern latitude, eastern longitude).

For the journalist (or any other information professional) the ability to create maps on which information can be superimposed automatically at a precise spatial point is an enormous development. A variety of software tools have been developed that can process other geographic data such as postcodes or street addresses to their equivalent GPS coordinates, a process called geocoding. For example the addresses of several journalism schools (Table 2) can be automatically geocoded by the ‘multiple address locators’ function at GPSVisualizer (see Table 3 for results).

---

\(^{11}\) Other countries such as Russia, China and India are also developing GPS systems and the European Union’s Galileo system is being built by the European Space Agency to be independent from these and that of the US.

\(^{12}\) ISO 6709 *Standard Representation of Geographic Point Location by Coordinates*
Table 2 Addresses of selected schools of journalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>1 Broadway</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>2950 Broadway</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>10027</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School of Journalism</td>
<td>6388 Crescent Road</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>V6T 1Z2</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow State University</td>
<td>9 Mokhovaya Str.</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>125009</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Kent</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Medway</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>ME4 4AG</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td>50 Nanyang Ave</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>639798</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Addresses of selected journalism schools automatically geocoded by GPSVisualizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-33.884331</td>
<td>151.19725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.807648</td>
<td>-73.964027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.264763</td>
<td>-123.244623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.753956</td>
<td>37.612015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.39731</td>
<td>0.54133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.331355</td>
<td>103.663651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally speaking Web tools such as GPSVisualizer and Batchgeo, once they have processed the addresses into geographic coordinates, include all the other information in the dataset in a Google or Yahoo map (see Figure 20). Maps created by these tools are saved online, on their servers and you embed the links in your Web pages; you can also save the map as an image file using a snipping or screen shot tool for paper publication.
Figure 20 A very basic map of selected journalism schools created by Batchgeo

The map above is a dot map, in which the geographic coordinates are represented by a shape, in this case the standard Google ‘paddle’ shape; there are many other shapes and logically any icon can be used as a map shape—dots, pins, flags—as long as the map generator is customisable. Dot maps are very useful for representing quantity and density, for example dots of graduated sizes can represent large and small quantities. As in all information design, when designing maps and graphics with shapes, you need to be sure the symbology being conveyed is appropriate (see the section Colour and Information Design below). More complex types of maps are cartograms, choropleths and heat maps (see Figure 21). Let’s look briefly at these maps and when they are used.

Cartograms and choropleth maps are thematic maps, that is, they indicate a theme concerning a particular geographic area. The theme can be any data such as energy consumption, world education levels, or language distribution.

A cartogram is a map on which the data, represented by symbols, is superimposed on geographic areas that are scaled to show the relative sizes of the data.

The choropleth map, using colour coding, aggregates data by geographic areas that have been previously defined, for example countries or postcode areas. In order to create the filled geographic area you need a polygon file defining the boundaries of the area.
A heat map is data visualisation where the individual data values are contained in a matrix (2 dimensional data) and are represented as colour gradients. Although not necessarily as effective as a map, a chart with graduated colour coding can be done in Excel using conditional formatting.

To create these complex maps specialised software is required, the most sophisticated are referred to as Geographic Information Systems (GIS). However in recent years other software programs have been developed and two such programs widely used for data journalism are Google’s Fusion Tables and Tableau Public.

Google Fusion Tables

This Google product, which is still experimental, is used in conjunction with your Google Docs (now Google Drive) account. At its most simple it is a spread sheet application that can create charts and graphs. However it additional functionality to enable you to fuse (merge) different datasets from disparate sources, including polygon files—in KML (Keynote Markup Language) format— which are needed to create a choropleth map. The map below, showing world coffee production, is the one that I created by doing the Google tutorials.13

Tableau Public

Tableau Software is a data visualisation program that is widely used by data journalists from newspapers like The Guardian and the New York Times. It combines all the tools that this chapter has discussed, and more—spread sheets, pivot tables, automated geocoding, relational databases, the ability to merge tables, and of course, to create very good visualisations. In 2010 Tableau released a free product, Tableau Public that has most of the functionality of the professional package, but your visualisations cannot be saved on your computer. They must be saved on the Tableau servers (you can of course save any
visualisation as an image file as I have done for this chapter). Unfortunately there is not yet a MAC version, although apparently one is being developed.

Tableau Public’s basic functions are very easy to use and its ‘getting started’ online training modules are very helpful. One of the great features of Tableau Public is the ability to create an interactive dashboard for online stories. Figure 23 above is a visualisation I created to show data on charitable donations based on electorates in the state of New South Wales, Australia.\(^\text{14}\) The dashboard includes a map and two bar charts, which the reader can interactively explore using the sliders and scroll bars to filter the data and change the displays.

While Tableau includes a polygon files of geographic areas of the United States down to the zip code level for creating choropleth maps of United States, currently these are not built-in for other geographic regions. There is however a great Tableau community which are very active and generous in sharing workarounds and tutorials for Tableau use; one of these is the Clearly and Simply blog.\(^\text{15}\)

Finally no matter what type of visualisation you create—map, graph, infoviz—it is important to understand that for information and data to be communicated effectively is must be well-designed.

**Colour And Information Design**

Information design is not graphic design; graphic design is only part of the effective communication of information. It enables the reader to make sense of what is being communicated. Information design is “the integrator that brings other disciplines together to create excellent information solutions . . . to provide the most possible clarity, understanding and effectiveness.”(Knemeyer, 2003 para 5-6). Once you have your data, your analysis is done and you have your story here are some points to consider when you create your visualisations.

1. Consider if the data is suited to a visualisation—if comparing specific values is required perhaps a well-designed table would be better.
2. Use colour sparingly—one spot of colour draws the eye to what is important, a plethora of colour causes confuses.

---

\(^\text{14}\) Data sources: Australian Taxation Office, the Australian Electoral Commission and the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data. I wish to acknowledge much of the data cleaning done by one of my Masters student Katrina Stolk.

\(^\text{15}\) Clearly and Simply [blog] [http://www.clearlyandsimply.com/clearly_and_simply/](http://www.clearlyandsimply.com/clearly_and_simply/)
3. Colour can encode the data—consider monotone gradations for comparative data.
4. Avoid ‘chart junk’ and reduce non-data ink—remember it is the data that you need to see, not the design.
5. If you have high-information graphics consider reducing the size of the graph. You can reduce data graphics by 50% with no loss of legibility—what Tufte refers to as the shrink principle.
6. Using the shrink principle consider creating a small multiples visualisation to show data density effectively.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introductory overview of data journalism, with the sections generally following the logical progression of the processes involved, from the finding of data through its cleaning to its visualisation. And as befits a chapter on data visualisation it relies on many visualisations to illustrate these processes.

Emphasis is placed on the finding of data sources, particularly public sector datasets now being released through the open government data initiatives and the importance of checking any restrictions on the reuse of these data. There is a section on data that is not in a useable format and the steps that are required to wrangle and clean it; while there are several tools to do this, I have concentrated on the use of Excel, an invaluable and indispensable tool in the tool kit of data journalists.

A key section is a discussion of analysis of the information and data, and while there is a brief introduction to the concept and usefulness of text analysis, the emphasis is on data analysis. The notion of using data visualisations for discovering connections, relationships and new knowledge is explored, thus demonstrating the power of data visualisation to uncover a new story.

The majority of the chapter is an exploration of the various kinds of graphical representations of data and the appropriateness matching of each to the data available. Of serious importance is the discussion of the need for graphical integrity, that is, that the visualisation does not distort the data.
Finally I have briefly considered the importance of information design in the effective communication of information and have given some points of consideration for good, effective design.

In conclusion this chapter provides an introduction for journalism students as well as more seasoned journalists for understanding data journalism and has provided a basis on which to hone their skills in the use of tools for creating meaningful graphics which tell an interesting and factual story.
Further Readings


References


Chapter Eight:

Information sources and data discovery

Maureen Henninger
Journalists use many different sources for obtaining information; these include interviews with experts, proprietary news archive databases such as LexisNexis and Factiva, and the Internet. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there are different types of information requirements; quick factual information—what is the gross domestic product (GDP) of Singapore; general background information—legislation of the gaming industry in Japan; and detailed data sources for investigative and data-driven journalism. This chapter focusses on the use of the Internet for searching for all three of these types of information. Chapter Eight will examine data-driven journalism requirements in detail.

First two points of clarification. The Web (originally called the World Wide Web) is not the Internet—it is an Internet application. While most people use both terms synonymously, the Web consists of pages that are written in a special mark-up language, unseen by the user, but are able to be displayed by browsers. Such Web pages I will refer to as the ‘visible’ Web. This point is very important as we shall see, since the Internet consists of a great deal more which is not Web pages, but rather an invisible, or hidden Web.

Material ‘on the Web’ can be of many types and formats including:

- textual material (reports, journal and newspaper articles, and Web pages themselves)
- graphic material (maps, photographs and charts)
- moving images (videos)
- sound material (for example podcasts).

On top of all this is the content held within social media spaces like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube—user-created content which can be any of the above formats. In this chapter I will consider all these materials to be information sources and will refer to them as ‘documents’.

Since the early 1990s when the Internet became commercialized, driven by the development of the Web and its concomitant development of hypertext browsers, the amount of material has become vast. In fact one Web blogger wondered if we had reached a world of infinite information (Bloch, 2011). There is no debate about this vastness—one study estimated that at the end of January 2013 there were at least 12.86 billion indexed pages1 and conceivably there are millions more Web documents that have not been indexed by the search engines.

---

1 See www.worldwidewebsize.com/ viewed 29 January 2013
This chapter covers the general principles of finding information and then explores the tools and techniques for finding firstly, information that has been indexed by search engines—the visible Web, and, secondly, tools for material which has not— the invisible Web.

**Information Discovery And Search**

Katz and Lazarfeld in the 1950s hypothesised that communication was a two-step flow; that ideas often flow from radio and print to opinion leaders who in turn pass them on to every day associates for whom they are influential (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). Donald Case suggested that this information and ideas, traditionally communicated in this two-step flow, is now found easily through the Internet (Case et al., 2004). The idea of ‘ease’ is very much the principle that dictates all human information-seeking behaviour; we generally take the easiest way—what George Zipf referred to as the principle of least effort (Zipf, 1949)—this along with the current attitude of instant gratification, makes the easiest way to ask someone. This, of course, is one of the main ways that journalists work—they find an expert to interview. If you do not know an expert the next ‘easiest’ thing, in fact the almost automatic strategy is to go to the Internet and use a search engine. So automatic is this behaviour that the phrase “to Google it” has become shorthand for searching online; and I often hear searchers say “Google will tell me”. The next section will examine the search process and the impact of search engines on journalistic practice.

**How Searchers Search**

According to ComScore search and navigation is the fifth highest Internet usage category world-wide, after portals, entertainment, community, and news/information (ComScore, 2012), and in their monthly statistics for the United States Google consistently dominates the search engine market followed distantly by Bing and Yahoo. The global trend is similar with statistics for November 2012 having Google leading (90.75 per cent), Bing (3.32 per cent), Yahoo (2.84 per cent) and Baidu (0.58 per cent). However there is some research to show that in Asia and the Pacific, searchers tend to rely on local search engines in order to find material that has non-English content. For example Baidu (China) and Naver (South Korea) each has over 60 per cent of the search engine market.

---

2 See ComScore at [www.comscore.com](http://www.comscore.com)
If the use of Internet search engines is so wide spread among the general public, then it can be assumed that it would also be the same among journalists. Diekerhof and Bakker (2012) point out that the majority of journalists use the Internet to verify and check facts when it is easy to do so, particularly as most journalists appear to trust online sources (see Messner and Distaso, 2008, Carlson, 2009, Abdulla et al., 2005). Other studies of journalists’ use of search engines bear this out, and that Google is the dominant choice; for example Machill and Beiler (2009) report German journalists use Google 90.4 per cent of the time when carrying out Internet research. As most of the search engines work in similar way (although their algorithms, which are proprietary, may be different and are constantly being adjusted and modified), I will use the big global ones, Google and Bing in most of the examples of searching techniques.

With the colossal number of documents available on the Web and because of the propensity of searchers to use simple queries—most studies show that searchers use only one or two keywords in the search bar—there is the likelihood of retrieving millions of documents per search. This leads to enormous information overload, not to mention the possibility that many of the results are not relevant to the search.

All search engines provide a simple search bar into which the searcher types some keywords, although most search engines do have advanced search screens, it is assumed the average user does not want to use advanced search features or create complex queries (Griffiths and Brophy, 2005, Park et al., 2005, Jansen and Spink, 2006). When journalists use the Internet for research, it was reported they tended to carry out sophisticated searches rarely and not always correctly (Machill and Beiler, 2009). Furthermore this study showed that journalists only rarely flick past the first page of Google results.

**How Search Engines Work**

Search engines, at their most simple level, use ‘exact match’ retrieval—the words in the search query are present in the index created from all the documents that are found as the search engines crawl the Web. For example a simple search for two words, *football* and *health* would deliver results that have both words in the
document, and the more words you use, the fewer the number of results are returned (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search query</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>football health</td>
<td>1,310,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>football health benefits</td>
<td>213,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>football “health benefits”</td>
<td>3,410,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intitle:football intitle:“health benefits”</td>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 1 you can make your query more precise by indicating a semantic relationship between words. This it typically done by indicating that words are phrases by using double quotes, for example “health benefits”. Most search engines have algorithms that attempt to do this automatically; however the use of double quotes signals you require documents with the phrase to be more highly ranked. Finally, since it can be assumed that words in the title of a document indicate relevancy, that is the words are pertinent to the subject of the document, by putting intitle: before the word or phrase can deliver such documents more highly ranked in the results (do not have a space—intitle:“health benefits”). However language is very complex and words can have many meanings in different contexts. Here are two examples:

- the word ‘crop’ can mean a plant to be harvested, to remove parts of an image or a whip used in horseback riding;

- depending on which country you live football can be soccer, rugby, gridiron, or Australian rules.

Search engines have developed enhanced techniques to retrieve a set of documents ‘on topic’, for example if your search for the word crop contains also the word market (one of the reasons for including more than one keyword in your search query), the algorithm will deliver documents about plants to be harvested. The results, while about or pertinent to the topic are then ranked in order of relevance, that is, about or pertinent to the topic, but possibly not relevant to the searcher. In the case of the football question, if the searcher is from Brazil, he or she probably wants documents about soccer.
In order to overcome these problems (and to keep the searcher satisfied with the service, the ‘stickiness’ factor that is vital to profitability), search engines have become very sophisticated, attempting to deliver highly relevant and pertinent information to the information seeker, while at the same time delivering profits, based on advertising to their corporate owners. One of the ways to achieve this is by introducing the concept of personalised search.

**Personalized Search**

Other names for personalised search are intent-based search and algorithmic search. Intent-based search is the notion that the search engine can determine the specific intention of the search, that is, the precise piece of information the searcher is looking for; algorithmic search, based on search algorithms that gather data from the searcher’s previous search history, including what has been clicked on (the click stream), and how long the searcher stayed on a retrieved document, in order to deliver *personally* relevant results. Google was the first to introduce personalised search and in 2009 made all search personalised; since then all the other major search engines have followed suite (Bing refers to this as ‘adaptive search’, the concept of adapting to the individual searcher’s intent). The following two examples show how personalised search works.

Suppose you live in India and search on the single word *cricket*; the search engine determines you are probably looking for information about cricket, the sport, since almost everyone in India loves this sport. In fact at the time of writing this chapter a search on [www.google.co.in](http://www.google.co.in) (the Indian version of Google) delivered 368,000,000 documents, and at least the first 50 pages of results were about the sport, not the insect.

This example concerns the search query ‘autocomplete’, where, based on your context, e.g. country, previous search history and popular searches are displayed or suggested. Figure 1 shows two sets of auto complete suggestions for the word *journalism*; on the left is done on Google Australia ([www.google.com.au](http://www.google.com.au)) and on the right is Google Philippines ([www.google.com.ph](http://www.google.com.ph)).
More recently search engines have begun to include social media content (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etcetera) in order to further contextualise search results based on the interests of your friends, or, more accurately those persons you are connected to through social media sites.

Finally journalists should be aware of the debates about personalised search, search engine bias, lack of objectivity, and privacy issues that arise from the trend in personalised search.\(^4\) This debate is not within the objectives of this chapter; rather it concentrates on explaining the functionalities of search engines and provides techniques for producing less personalised and possibly more relevant search results that may be more effective for journalists in certain circumstances. If you are concerned about these issues, here are some ways of circumventing personalised search.

Turn off personalized search; all search engines allow you to do this, Figure 2 below shows how it is done in Google.

Use open source proxy software such as Tor\(^5\) which prevents traffic analysis, which is the gathering of personal information when using Internet applications, including web browsers. Journalists, for example use it to protect their sources and to allow them to communicate more safely with whistle-blowers and dissidents.

Use DuckDuckGo a search engine which does not personalize search results; “it does not collect or share personal information [search leakage] . . . and prevents search leakage by default.”\(^6\)

Figure 2 Removing items from Google history and permanently turning off history

\(^{5}\) Tor can be downloaded from [www.torproject.org/](http://www.torproject.org/)

\(^{6}\) See [http://duckduckgo.com/privacy](http://duckduckgo.com/privacy)
Even if you use any or all of these techniques to attempt to search for objective, relevant information, it is still important to use some more sophisticated techniques to be a more effective and efficient searcher.

**Effective Techniques For Searching**

In order to be an effective searcher, take a little bit of time to think about what you are looking for. Because of the enormous quantity of information available, and the lack of quality of much of it, you should avoid simple keyword searches and think in terms of concepts. For example if you were writing a story on government policy to increase exercise among school children, you might consider the concepts to be, although each of us might translate these concepts into different search terms:

- exercise
- school children
- government policy

While there is no ‘right’ way of conceptualising or doing a search, as we shall see in below there some very useful ways of entering your concepts and keywords. The major search engines have advanced search forms but are a bit hard to find, since research shows most people do not use them and search algorithms are eliminating the necessity for them. Nevertheless advanced search functionality enables more effective searching, particularly if you are seeking specific and in-depth information for background to an investigative piece of writing. Search engines enable you to use their advanced search functionality in the single search bar as shown below. The following examples show queries which will deliver results that are less likely to be filtered by personalisation and which suggest a more sophisticated approach based on specific concepts.

**Tips**

- use phrase searching e.g. “shipping lanes”
- use more than one keyword or phrase
- use intitle: to ensure relevance
- for reports use filetype:pdf
- for government or non-government information use inurl:gov or inurl:org
Example one, using Google provides three possible ways of doing the search for government policy to increase exercise among school children, each of which show various keywords/phrases and syntax reflecting differing ways of looking at the information requirements and specificity. Examples two, three and four demonstrate other ways of thinking about search and employ techniques and functionality not only of Google, but also Bing, DuckDuckGo and Exalead.

**Example one**

This search query uses the concepts above but finds several phrases which reflect the concept of exercise (note in Google and DuckDuckGo you must put OR in upper case):

"school children" "physical exercise" OR "physical fitness" OR "physical activity" OR "physical education" OR sport "government policy"

Narrowing down the results to certain countries and making sure that the documents are about school children—for example by adding Singapore, etcetera requires the name of the country to be somewhere in the document.

intitle:"school children" "physical exercise" OR "physical fitness" OR "physical activity" OR "physical education" OR sport “government policy” Singapore OR “Hong Kong” OR Japan

We can further refine the query using some other techniques:

school children" "physical exercise" OR "physical fitness" OR "physical activity" OR "physical education" OR sport ~policy inurl:gov.sg OR inurl:gov.hk OR inurl:gov.jp filetype:pdf

Remove the requirement that the phrase “government policy” is in the document, instead it uses only the word policy and requires the document is from a government website, e.g. inurl:gov.sg (a Singapore government website). Place a tilde (~) directly in front of the word policy, Google searches for both singular and plurals (policy, policies) and for synonyms such as administration (note, only Google has this function).
If one assumes that governments publish documents in pdf format, add the requirement that all the results should be pdf files (filetype:pdf no space before or after the colon).

Filter the results to the past two years using the search tools custom range of dates, as shown below in Figure 3.

**Figure 3 Example one search results, filtered by a custom range of dates**

Example two

You are doing an investigation on oil pipeline construction in Asia and need some background information and you do not want documents from commercial sites. The following searches use Google and Bing and in each case I have used the currently available search functionality of each search engine.

**Google**—intitle:oil intitle:pipeline OR intitle:"pipe line" ~construction ~Asia ~inurl:com
**Bing**—(intitle:o1 OR intitle:gas) AND (intitle:pipeline OR intitle:"pipe line") AND (construction OR construct OR build) AND (loc:af OR loc:tm OR loc:ru) NOT inurl:com

In Bing you are able to group the ORs—this is called Boolean logic, that is the use of the Boolean operators **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**. George Boole was a mathematician and thus the syntax is the same logic as in mathematics, that is $2 + 2 \times 2 = 6$, whereas $(2 + 2) \times 2 = 8$. I have also used country codes for Afghanistan (af), Turkmenistan (tm) and the Russian Federation (ru).^{7}

**Example three**

Exalead is a search engine that is smaller than Google and Bing, however it is has some very powerful functionality and I have included it here to show how you could further create the semantic context using search syntax (and, as we shall see further in the section on the invisible Web, databases often use this functionality). For example if you used the phrase “pipeline construction” conceivably you would not retrieve documents that contain the phrases “the construction of a pipeline” or “to construct pipelines”. To solve this dilemma, Exalead has the facility to use **NEAR**, a proximity operator, which retrieves documents that have two words within ten words of each other. It also allows you to search by date within the query. Thus in a search for documents about arms or weapons shipments to or from Africa or Asia since the 1st of February, 2011, a possible search could be

(arms OR weapon) NEAR (shipment OR shipping OR transport OR transit) NEAR (africa OR asia OR asean) NOT inurl:com after:2011/02/01

**Example four**

If you are concerned about personalisation of your search results, try using DuckDuckGo, which does not collect personal information about the searcher;

---

^{7} The standard Internet country codes can be found at [http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes/country_names_and_code_elements.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes/country_names_and_code_elements.htm)
your search history is anonymous. Suppose you were interested in statistical information about HIV/AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) among indigenous peoples, particularly the Maoris of New Zealand, and you do not want your search tracked.

```
(maori OR indigenous) AND (HIV OR AIDS OR "acquired immunodeficiency syndrome") AND (statistics OR statistical) -site:.com -site:.co
```

In this particular search I have excluded any commercial sites and it should be noted that New Zealand and the United Kingdom use ‘co’ for commercial domains. Like Google use the minus sign to exclude and item and unlike Google and Bing you need to put the dot in front of the domain code (site:.co).

**To Sum Up - The Invisible Web**

So far this chapter has concentrated on the visible Web, that part of the Internet which consists of pages written in hypertext mark-up language and which can be displayed by Web browsers. But there is another part of the Internet, in fact which is even bigger than the visible Web and consists of billions of documents that are stored in millions of databases, digital libraries and electronic repositories. In 2001 Bergman estimated that is was “400 to 550 times larger than the commonly defined World Wide Web” and that it contained “nearly 550 billion individual documents” (2001 para 5). This is the hidden, invisible or deep Web because search engines currently are not able to index these pages which are very important sources of information for journalists.

**What Is In The Invisible Web**

Much of the invisible Web information is ‘grey literature’ (documents that have been published but not through any commercial publisher), for example government and non-government reports, briefing papers, technical reports and research papers. While much of this material is found by search engine crawlers (indexing systems) and thus can be listed in search results, to effectively search for with a search engine, you really need to know of its existence and its author or title; and of course, if it does exist it may not necessarily have been found by a search engine. For example a Google search for information on the effects of the global financial crisis on NATO capabilities ("global financial crisis" NATO
capability filetype:pdf) finds about 300,000 documents, many of which no doubt would give you excellent information. But in order to get the one produced by the RAND Corporation you would need to know of its existence and include RAND in your search; at the time of writing the above search did not find the one I required which was written in 2012—*NATO and the Challenges of Austerity*.

The major reason this material often cannot be found and thus not indexed by search engines is that it is stored in databases, hidden behind the database’s search interface that search engines, which rely on following hypertext links in Web documents, currently cannot breach.

Therefore other tools are required to find the material stored in databases, a two-step process, first to find the databases and then to search within them.

### Types Of Databases

Before examining how to find hidden Web databases we need to look at the types of databases that are available. These fall into several different categories; for our purposes there are three major types:

- **Bibliographic:** this type of database contains the records of published literature such as books, journal articles, reports, conference proceedings, and newspaper articles. The record contains information about the document, such as the information that is shown in the list of references and further readings at the end of this chapter. Sometimes a bibliographic database may also contain the entire text of the documents, in which case it may be called a full-text database. If the ‘document’ is non-text, such as a photograph or a video, the record is still referred to as a bibliographic record.

- **Statistical:** a statistical database contains numerical data for example population and demographic data, agricultural production data or education statistics.

- **Factual:** this type of database provides direct access to information such as definitions (dictionaries, glossaries), chemical properties, business directories, and postal code directories.

---

8 Search engines are working on this problem, but for the foreseeable future this is not possible
9 There is a computational search engine, Wolfram Alpha ([www.wolframalpha.com](http://www.wolframalpha.com)) that often can produce factual, that is statistical information, for example “what is the population of New Guinea”?
Let’s go back to the search for information about arms and weapons shipments (Example three above). Once you have begun your investigation you may wish to narrow it to specific data concerning anti-tank missiles shipped to Algeria. This information is not easy to find using Google, but the data is available within a statistical database which you would need to know about and in which you would have to search. So first, you need to be able to find a statistical database which may have this information. Some of the great tools for finding such a database are directories.

**Directories**

Directories are often referred to as subject directories and are like catalogues in a library where information resources are arranged by subject. Such an arrangement makes them very useful for *browsing* as you might browse the travel sections in a bookstore or a library. Some of the first attempts at organising Web documents used this approach; Yahoo started its life as a subject directory in 1994 and The Virtual Library, started by Sir Tim Berners-Lee in 1991 is still a very valuable information discovery tool.

Directories can be divided into two categories, general ones which include many different subjects and disciplines, and those which specialise in a particular subject or type of resource.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directory</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AcademicInfo Subject Guides</td>
<td><a href="http://www.academicinfo.net/subject-guides">www.academicinfo.net/subject-guides</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DADI (European directory of databases)</td>
<td><a href="http://dadi.univ-lyon1.fr">http://dadi.univ-lyon1.fr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infomine</td>
<td><a href="http://infomine.ucr.edu">http://infomine.ucr.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intute (unfortunately no longer being added to, but still good)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.intute.ac.uk">www.intute.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPL2 (Internet Public Library)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ipl.org">www.ipl.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next section examines the use of directories to find databases and their content.

### Use Directories For Finding Databases

There are several strategies for finding information that may be in hidden Web databases. Often this is a two-step process. First finding one or more potential databases and then searching in the database; sometimes as part of the discovery process you need to try more than one directory and more than one database. You also need to examine the Help screens if you have never used the database, since these often have very sophisticated functionality that make your search more efficient and effective. So for the question of arms and weapons supply to Algeria, let us suppose in particular you need data on the supply of 9M133 Kornet/AT-14 anti-tank missiles. Here is a possible strategy:

A search in the subject directory Infomine for (arm* or weapons) and database* (Figure 4) retrieves 116 freely available databases containing grey literature and datasets concerning weapons and armaments, including the specialised aerospace and military directory and digital library Aerade and the Rand Corporation International Affaires Digital Library, and the SPIRI Arms Transfers Database which contains the required data (Figures 5-6).

---

### Table 3 Examples of some specialised subject directories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directory</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerade</td>
<td>Aerospace and defence</td>
<td><a href="http://aerade.cranfield.ac.uk">http://aerade.cranfield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Planet</td>
<td>Databases</td>
<td><a href="http://aip.completeplanet.com">http://aip.completeplanet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DocuTicker</td>
<td>Grey literature</td>
<td><a href="http://www.docuticker.com">www.docuticker.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldis</td>
<td>Development policy and research</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eldis.org">www.eldis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFSTATS</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td><a href="http://www.offstats.auckland.ac.nz">www.offstats.auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian’s Data Store</td>
<td>Government datasets</td>
<td><a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/world-government-data">www.guardian.co.uk/world-government-data</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In many of subject directories and databases you can use a wildcard such as the asterisk (*), for example arm* will retrieve arm, arms and armaments; you need to examine the Help details for the available search syntax.
Figure 4 Searching in Infomine for databases

![Infomine search interface](image)

**Query:** (arm* or weapons) and database

**Expert-selected Resources Found:** 116

- Include Computer-Selected Websites
- Include UC Subscription eJournals and eBooks

**Result Pages:** 1, 2

**8. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, financed by the Swedish Parliament, conducts research on questions of conflict and cooperation of importance for international peace and security. From SIPRI’s page, you may:
- Find out about SIPRI, its staff, and its activities
- Use a searchable database which covers subjects of peacekeeping, weapons, international relations, etc.
- View country-by-country statistics on arms sales, arms production, and arms transfers
- View statistics on military expenditures worldwide
- View a SIPRI publications catalog

[More Info] [Comment on this resource]

Figure 5 Searching in the SIPRI database for a specific dataset

![SIPRI database search interface](image)

**SIPRI arms transfers database**

Shows all international transfers in seven categories of major conventional arms since 1960, the most comprehensive publicly available source of information on international arms transfers.

**Step 1:** Select which supplier(s) and recipient(s) to include

**Recipient(s):**
- Afghanistan
- Afghanistan/Mujahideen
- Afghanistani/NA
- African Union
- Albania
- Angola
- Angola/UNITA
- Argentine
- Armenia

**Step 2:** Select the range of years to cover

- From 2010 to 2011

**Step 3:** Select which weapon systems to include

- Missiles

---

201
Finding an appropriate database in which to search; you may have to try several directories and keep the search broad as you are not searching for the specific report or dataset, but for a database that may contain the information required. Searching in the database using advanced searching techniques; this requires examining the interface for the various options and reading the Help to see the appropriate search syntax.

Here are some further examples to give you some ideas and strategies. You should explore these examples for finding and searching in databases for highly specific information; you will find them invaluable for investigative and data journalism.

**Example One**

You are writing a story about water resources and one of the angles you want to address is conflicts about water. As background you would like to find a list of violent protests, skirmishes or wars have taken place in the past ten years in Asia. Select, for example, the general directory AcademicInfo Subject Guides and browse through listings for water.

There are four possibilities—in this directory it is often helpful to select a ‘digital library’, in this case, Water Resources Digital Library. Browse through the listings and you will find the Water Conflict Chronology compiled by Peter Gleick, Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security.
This database gives several ways of accessing the information and enables you to filter by region, date and type of conflict.

Figure 7 shows the partial results and helpfully provides a link to the source by which you can get more information.

**Example Two**

You have an assignment for a story on the safety issues of food irradiation and you would like to examples. For instance what is approved level of irradiation dosages of garlic for Thailand, China and Viet Nam?

- Select Intute which has an advanced search that allows you to filter your query by general subject area, which in this case is food, and by the type of resource, data.
- Enter irradiation as a keyword.
- Select the filter for the subject area Agriculture, Food and Forestry and for three of the resource types, Datasets, Non-bibliographic databases, and Statistics.
One of the results is the Food Irradiation Clearances Database that is maintained jointly by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Unfortunately the link is no longer correct. However you now know the name of the organisation that produces the database so use Google to find it—“IAEA databases”. The NUCLEUS – IAEA portal shows that the database has a new name, the Irradiated Food Authorization (IFA) Database.

Figure 8 shows the results of the maximum irradiation doses allowed in China.

Example three

Journalists are very familiar with services and tools which alert them to news and sources such as Twitter, RSS feeds. Another you should be familiar with is DocuTicker a directory of newly published government and non-government grey literature that provides a daily alerting service via Twitter or RSS. The directory can also be browsed and searched.
For example, if you were to be doing a story on human trafficking and wanted an up-to-date report, a quick search on Google, (“human trafficking” report filetype:pdf) found many documents, but not one of the latest (at time of writing January 2012) *Trafficking in Persons: International Dimensions and Foreign Policy Issues for Congress*. However DocuTicker contained it.

To sum up;

- Many of the documents and resources available online are hidden away in invisible Web databases, the contents of which cannot be found and indexed by search engines.

- Finding this material is often a two-step process; to find an appropriate database and then to search in it.

- It is useful to use subject directories, similar to library catalogues, to discover databases.

- It is important to read the Help screen of an unfamiliar database since databases often have very sophisticated functionality to enable effective searching.

**Statistics And Datasets**

Statistical information is generally available as analytical and/or formatted reports, which are secondary sources (grey literature), or as raw data often called datasets and are the primary sources from which the analytical reports are written. In most cases the analytical reports do not contain all the detailed data that is available and in many cases journalists wishing to do their own analysis need to be able to access the raw data. Almost all organisations, including governments and non-government organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations create statistics. Figure 9 is an example of an organisation’s availability of primary and secondary source material; in this case the United States Statistical Abstract.
Datasets are presented in a tabular format such as a CSV (comma/character separated variables). If you think of a spreadsheet, the values in each cell (or database field) are separated by any character, but most often a comma or a tab. This is an open, albeit not well-defined format, that can be imported into many proprietary software packages including Excel®; in many cases, such as those shown in Figure 9 above, the datasets have been converted to Excel spreadsheets. While we will cover the use of datasets in detail in Chapter 8, however it is important that we examine the various methods for finding datasets.

As in the discovery of most information, if you know who has produced the data the easier it is to find; Table 4 gives some examples of major government and non-government official statistical resources
Since the early 2000s there has been great momentum to make statistics, in the form of datasets freely available for public reuse; it this availability that has driven the trend of data-driven journalism. Open Government Data (OGD) initiatives are being introduced in many democratic countries, and led by Sir Tim-Berners-Lee as part of a World Wide Web Foundation grant to promote open data in developing countries.

While many, but not all of the open government data sources use a standard format for the URL—data.gov.state.country, for example

```
data.nsw.gov.au (New South Wales, Australia), and
data.gov.sg (Singapore),
```

some catalogues or directories of open government data are currently being developed. As well non-government organisations such as the World Bank also provide dataset catalogues (Table 5).

---

**Table 4 Examples of government and non-government statistical resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>National governments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian national statistics)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abs.gov.au">www.abs.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Statistical Abstract (US national statistics, includes some international comparative statistics)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/">www.census.gov/compendia/statab/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-government organisations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Development Bank (key economic and financial indicators for Asia and the Pacific region)</td>
<td><a href="https://sdfs.adb.org/">https://sdfs.adb.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) key indicators and other subject statistics for member countries)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oecd.org/statistics/">www.oecd.org/statistics/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank (over 8,000 development indicators)</td>
<td><a href="http://data.worldbank.org">http://data.worldbank.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 Examples of dataset catalogues/directories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data services</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>datacatalogs.org</td>
<td><a href="http://datacatalogs.org/">http://datacatalogs.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian Data store</td>
<td><a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/world-government-data">www.guardian.co.uk/world-government-data</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>datasets from around the world)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFSTATS</td>
<td><a href="http://www.offstats.auckland.ac.nz">www.offstats.auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reuse Of Data

It is important to remember that all datasets are the intellectual property of the organisation which creates and/or owns them. As with the reuse of any resource you need to check the conditions under which you may do so; at the very least you must always give attribution of the source (as I have done so with any quote I have used in this chapter). In general any online source, including datasets that may be reused fall into one of several public copyright licencing systems, the most widely used being the Creative Commons (CC) licences. These licences allow content to be “be copied, distributed, edited, remixed, and built upon, all within the boundaries of copyright law” (Creative Commons, n.d. para 13) The most common ones are described in Table 6.  

Table 6 The most widely used Creative Commons (CC) licences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licence</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>The broadest licence—lets others distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon original work, even commercially, as long as they credit the creator for the original creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution-NoDerivs</td>
<td>Allows redistribution even commercially as long as it is not changed in any way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs</td>
<td>The most restrictive licence—can download works and share them with others as long as they credit the creator, but cannot change them or use them commercially</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Full descriptions of the Creative Commons licences are available at http://creativecommons.org
Documents that have Creative Commons licences state so, and displays one of the various licence logos, for example, Attribution CC-BY

There are similar licences for government data, for example the United Kingdom has an Open Government Data licence for public sector information which grants a worldwide, royalty-free, perpetual, non-exclusive licence to copy, publish, distribute and transmit, adapt and exploit the information commercially, provided that the source is acknowledged by an attribution statement. Figure 13 below shows downloadable UK datasets that clearly display the licence statement. The following examples show you how to find statistical sources, create your required dataset (example one), and a strategy to find more up-to-date data (example two). Use these as exercises to reproduce the illustrated results.

**Example one**

Suppose you wanted some statistics on deaths caused by natural disasters in Australia since 2000. Use OFFSTATS to find a statistical source, define the data that you require and download an Excel table of the data (Figures 10 - 11 below).

**Figure 10 Browsing OFFSTATS by subject**
Example two

Often finding current data is more difficult. In this example suppose you are looking for data on tobacco use in various countries, but in particular you are interested in data from the United Kingdom. There are several possible sources including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the OECD Health Statistics, the US Statistical Abstract: International Statistics and the US Center for Disease Control’s Global Tobacco Surveillance System Data (GTSSData) found through OFFSTATS.

Let’s look at some of the choices and a possible strategy. As we need international comparative statistics I have used the United States Statistical Abstract 2012 since this includes such data over several years—time series—however the latest available figures are 2008 (see Figure 12). The OECD database covers only the OECD member countries, although this time series does include the 2009 data for the UK.

WHO data repository’s latest data is that of the OECD.
The UK open government data system—www.gov.uk—provides data for 2010-2011 (see Figure 13).

Figure 12 Downed loaded Excel spread-sheet from US Statistical Abstract (international statistics)

Figure 13 OGD (open government data) from data.gov.uk
As we shall see in Chapter 8 we can combine all three datasets to produce the most up-to-date information on world-wide tobacco use as well as a graph for the United Kingdom.

To sum up;

• Investigative and data-driven journalism relies on authoritative and current statistics and datasets.
• Organisations produce raw data (primary sources) from which they often create statistical and analytical reports (secondary sources).
• The Open Government Data and non-government organisation initiatives are making datasets available to the public.
• Datasets are often listed in directories or in government and non-government data repositories.
• Complete data time-series may have to be complied from several sources.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of online search and discovery that acknowledges that while journalists often depend on interviews for their information, research shows that there is a heavy reliance on search engines, particularly Google for finding information online. Research also shows that rarely do online searchers use more than two keywords in their search queries. Furthermore with the trends toward search personalisation there is the potential that possible relevant documents will be filtered out. I have introduced a number of sophisticated and effective techniques for using search engines in order to find documents that are relevant to the searchers’ specific needs, particularly for investigative journalism.

The concept of the invisible Web was introduced and I have argued that this part of the Internet is an extremely valuable source of documents for serious journalism. As much of the invisible Web is not currently accessible to search engines, I have presented the case for journalists to become familiar with subject directories that include databases of grey literature—government and on-government reports, for example—and statistical information, and I have given examples for their effective use.

The final section is an introductory overview of methods for finding data and datasets which are the basis of data-driven journalism. While data journalism is
covered in detail in Chapter 8, journalists are reminded of the necessity of examining policies for the use and reuse of public datasets.

In conclusion this chapter provides a basis for journalism students as well as more seasoned journalists for becoming sophisticated searchers of online information and, by including examples that can be explored to enhance their searching experience, as well as ensuring relevant results that satisfy their online information requirements.
Further Readings


References


CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

Reassessing Journalism’s Global Future

Edited by Alan Knight
First published in 2013 by

UTS ePRESS
University of Technology, Sydney
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia
http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/

© 2013 Copyright rests with the respective authors of each chapter

Challenge and change : reassessing journalism’s global future
Edited by Alan Knight

ISBN: 978-0-9872369-0-6

The chapters in this book are peer reviewed.