



FOREWORD



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OUR NEXT-LEVEL CHALLENGES

Independent journalism – based on analysis, opinion, the disclosure of facts gathered accurately and uncovering situations that insist on remaining hidden – has brought us here in a big way and has certainly changed the world for the better. Now, however, in order to keep fulfilling our mission, we need to use these solid foundations, carved out by generations of editors, to catapult journalism into a new cycle of public recognition of its relevance.

Much of this next-level journalism is scrutinized in this 2016 edition of Trends in Newsrooms. Although we, the professional editors, no longer have the hegemony in the production and distribution of content, the future is curiously backed by a concept that lies at the genesis of journalism and that is now more necessary than ever: the search for truth.

Let us look forward. Establishing and keeping relationships with the public will increasingly be the essence of media, but there will be stability in this unwritten agreement only if it is based on trust. This sentiment can be translated by the obsession to practice something as simple as exposing facts ascertained accurately and without bias. The task often involves facing threats to the freedom of the press, or confronting previous versions circulating on social networks, generally at the request of lobbies, PR agencies, political interests or activist groups.

Journalism transformed into "professional certification of content" takes advantage of technology to multiply itself indefinitely for all current and still-tobe-conceived platforms. But in order to expand our activity, we definitely need to break with outdated and inefficient newsroom formats, and to improve the production of content with the attractiveness and reliability provided by independent professional editors. This is the only way we can be contemporary enough and essential to future generations.

On an increasing scale, newsrooms are becoming agnostic regarding media platforms. We are using social media more and more to amplify our job and to identify issues that deserve a professional approach. As can be seen by the trends exposed in this issue, the path of our editorial efforts will include designing newsrooms to quickly absorb new forms of storytelling and present them fast and creatively, without ever losing sight of the human dimension of the first-hand account that thrills and positively transforms society.

While enhancing our role as intermediaries between the facts and the public, we should also seek to be relationship managers, employing our expertise, our diversity of views and experience and, above all else, our professional independence to mediate conversations and contribute to a fairer society based on reliable information. This is what this new world is all about, synthesized in the trends carefully compiled by the World Editors Forum. As you will see in the following pages, there are many exciting and historic challenges ahead of us.

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ABOUT THE WORLD EDITORS FORUM

he World Editors Forum is the network for editors within the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).

WAN-IFRA's members are located in over 120 countries and have a combined reach of more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and 3,000 companies.

This vast network allows us to connect and support editors and newsroom executives across the globe as they navigate the journalistic and publishing challenges of the digital age.

The World Editors Forum's activities are underpinned by three core values. These are a commitment to editorial excellence and ethical journalism and an unyielding belief in press freedom.

For the past 23 years the World Editors Forum has proved its value as a supportive partner to editors: providing information and intelligence from daily news on our editors weblog (www.editorsweblog.org) to in-depth reports such as this Trends in Newsrooms study. Key to our success is our ability to connect editors around the issues that matter - from digital transformation and its effect on newsrooms to disruptive competition. We have helped editors anticipate changing reader habits and manage ever smaller budgets so they can focus on their wider, vital role in society.

The World Editors Forum is guided by a board of editors, representative of the media community from all corners of the world. If you would like more information about how we can be of value to you and your organisation, email Cherilyn Ireton at cherilyn.ireton@wan-ifra.org.

To join our network go to

www.wan-ifra.org/microsites/membership



NEXT-LEVEL JOURNALISM REGAINING PUBLIC TRUST

By Chia Lun Huang

"...THERE WAS ONE, SIMPLE OPERATING PRINCIPLE WITHIN THE CONSORTIUM: COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION! WE ARE STILL ONLY AT THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE. AND AMID A WORLD OF DEBILITATING POLITICAL DYSFUNCTION WITH THE MOST DIRE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES, THE CRUCIAL CONCEPT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE NARROWLY CONFINED BY LOCAL OR NATIONAL BORDERS, OR THE RIGID STRICTURES, ORTHODOXIES, CONCEITS AND INSECURITIES OF TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM."

- **CHARLES LEWIS**, FOUNDER, THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY AND INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS IN *THE GUARDIAN* AFTER THE RELEASE OF THE PANAMA PAPERS

NEXT-LEVEL JOURNALISM

s the media industry faces myriad existential crises, one key challenge does not appear to receive sufficient attention. Yet it is often considered the only currency that news organisations have. How did we lose it, and how can we gain it back as we aspire to move on to the next level of journalism?

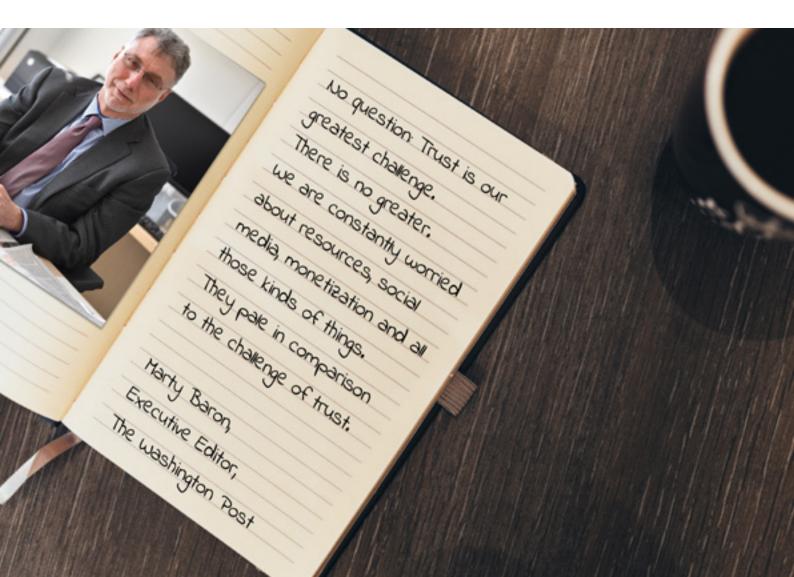
"No question: trust is our greatest challenge, there is no greater one," said Marty Baron, Executive Editor of *The Washington Post*. "We are constantly worried about resources, social media, monetisation and all these kind of things. All of those pale in comparison to this particular challenge."

Only six percent of Americans say they have a lot of confidence in the media, putting the industry on par with Congress and well below several other institutions, according the most recent survey released in April this year by the Media Insight Project, a partnership of the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the American Press Institute. In fact, trust in news organisations has been declining for several years. **Pew Research** reported that almost all the news organisations it surveyed have suffered a double-digit decline over the last decade, with the average positive-believability rating falling from 71 percent in 2002 to 56 percent in 2012.

While the conversation in the news industry has often centered on finding a sustainable revenue model, retaining the audience and social-media platforms, not enough importance has been placed on trust, Baron said.

Losing the only currency we have

Some scholars have suggested that trust in the media began falling even earlier. In the 1970s, when television killed off the second, third and fourth newspapers in town, people were left with fewer choices that spoke with less authenticity, said Jeff Jarvis, Professor of Journalism and Director of the Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism at the City University of New York.



"WE NEED TO START WITH THE COMMUNITY, HELP THEM IMPROVE THEIR LIVES. THAT IS WHAT IS GOING TO BUILD TRUST."

- JEFF JARVIS

"Our complacency comes from our monopolistic businesses. We thought we owned the media, we thought we owned the community. We didn't," Jarvis said. "Now we are hearing frustration from our communities that we were supposed to serve, we need to be humble and brave about that."

As technology has democratised the publishing process to the point where anyone with an internet connection can create and distribute content, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish what is news produced by professional journalists and what is not.

"We are raising a generation of people who make literally no distinction between media, blogs or some Listserv they are on," Baron said. "It all looks the same on Google and the web. So, how do you draw a distinction?"

Part of the problem is our own, reflected Baron, because we are not delivering on journalism and offering more beyond the bare-bone facts as we become distracted in the race to produce more, faster, but not necessarily with quality.

In research in 2008 that surveyed more than 2,000 articles from five dailies in the UK – *The Times, The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Independent* and *The Daily Mail* – it was found that only 12 percent of the stories were wholly composed of material researched and fact-checked by reporters, while 80 percent were mainly or partially composed of second-hand material provided by news agencies and PR agencies.

Polarisation and misinformation

As news organisations navigate an increasingly polarised world and in the pursuit of so-called "balanced reporting," many have taken the route of treating all points of views equally, Baron observed. "I don't think we should be afraid to report what we've found in an unflinching manner. The approach of trying not to offend anyone inevitably results in offending everyone."

The polarisation of society has also led people to believe in media outlets that affirm their point of view. "What has emerged is a 'you are either with us or against us' mentality," Baron said. "People are willing to believe so-called facts because they match up to their own preconceptions."

The rise of Facebook as the major source of news has also made it ever easier to live in digital silos, because its feed is determined by an algorithm designed more to entertain than to inform. This was one of the reasons why, after the 2015 Paris attacks, Facebook was filled with ill-informed criticism that the Western media was somehow ignoring terror attacks in Nairobi or Beirut. It was just that most Western users were less likely to have friends in those cities, so most of such feed did not surface as much as when news of the Paris attacks broke, Peter Bale, CEO of the Center for Public Integrity, said in a speech last year.

Aside from an overflow of information, what is worse is that some of the content produced is filled with errors, or is intentionally falsified. "There is this parallel media universe emerging. A lot of people are drawn to sites with pre-existing views, but more than that, they are drawn to sites that present facts that are actually false," Baron said.

Many news organisations are as guilty of publishing or spreading falsified information as they race to beat the competition, paying less attention to the verification process and damaging further what little trust people have in the media. CNN and Fox tripping on the Supreme Court's decision on President Obama's healthcare policy and the misidentification of suspects in the Boston Marathon bombing were all embarrassing reminders.

"You can be first, but you can also be first to say 'bullshit'," said Michèle Léridon, global news director at AFP. The agency experienced this first-hand when it misreported the death of a well-known French industrialist last year and had to issue an apology. AFP has revamped its policy of verification and during the Paris attacks, its journalists were repeatedly told to focus on accuracy and that this was not a race.

Be a certifier of truth

In a survey on trust in the media, 85 percent say accuracy is a critical reason they give for trusting a news source, followed by completeness, transparency and balance, according to the most recent survey released in April this year by the Media Insight Project.

"We need to rededicate ourselves to journalism: checking and double-checking, actually listening a bit more to what people say and to being fair," Baron said.

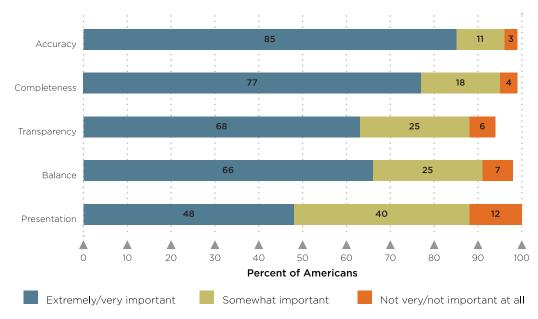
Many news organisations have recognised the need to be accurate. Compared to 2015, there is an increase of 50 percent in the number of fact-checking and promise-tracking initiatives across 37 countries, according to The Poynter Institute.

"We should be the certifier of truth and be considered the altar of trust," said Marcelo Rech, Executive Director of Journalism, RBS Group, Brazil and President of the World Editors Forum. As news organisations shrink in size and revenue, Rech believes that specialisation is the antidote to low public confidence.

"It's very difficult to be the best media outlet to cover technology and the banking crisis at the same time, but I think there is a lot of room for media companies to ultra-specialise," Rech said. "Don't just talk about 'horses', but 'bridle horses', not just 'hotels' but 'hotels at sea', go a step deeper, so that you can have quality and exclusivity."

Data also suggest that if you can't maintain scale, specialisation is another way to grow. While the number of jobs created by the news industry continued to decline last year, two categories of news organisations actually expanded. Those with daily circulations above 250,000 such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* grew 13.98 percent, and those with circulation below 5,000 grew 15.9 percent, while the rest decreased by 21.58 percent, according to the American Society of News Editors.

ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF TRUST IN A NEWS SOURCE TO AMERICANS



Question: Thinking about the sources you consider trustworthy, how important is each of the following factors?

Source: Media Insight Project's report on trust in the media

"THE PRESS SHOULD SPEAK WITH A MORE UNIFIED VOICE IF THEY WANT MORE INFLUENCE WITH SOCIAL-MEDIA PLATFORMS. INSTEAD OF ALWAYS [SPEAKING ENVIOUSLY] OF TECH PLATFORMS, THE CONVERSATION SHOULD BE ABOUT DEMOCRACY."

- MIKE ANANNY

Taking some bets is what news organisations have to do, suggested Butch Ward of Poynter. "Asking what we will stop doing is the wrong way to think about it. Instead, it should be: 'What does my community care the most about? What do they need the most from you?' "

Go back to the community

"You don't start with the content, you start with the community. You listen, you empathise, you discern needs and goals, only then do you bring tools of journalism to meet the needs, which can be journalism, can be education, can be products, can be events," Jarvis said.

While news organisations used to pride themselves in being able to control the news agenda and provide a set of basic facts that communities can use to debate for solutions, the advance in technology means that such power no longer rests in the hands of news organisations.

"I think there is a danger in believing we have a product called news, we already knew what it is and we just need to make people trust it more, that's just too media-centric," CUNY's Jarvis said. "Instead, we need to start with the community, help them improve their lives, that's what is going to build trust."

Readers have to see and feel every day that we are trying to do something important and distinctive, that we are doing something that no one else will do, Baron said. "If they don't see that, then I am fairly confident that they will abandon us."

One way to connect with the community is to carefully define your community – whether it's by geography, industry, interests, life-stage (such as parents or retirees) or use-case (such as those wanting news analysis or background information) – and to pay attention through social media, through surveys or by physically reaching out, Jarvis said. It also meant a return to the good old journalistic skill of true listening. "Too often now, stories are written based on hypothesis, no matter what. The only reason journalists are calling people – or most of the time, e-mailing people – is to plug in a comment, to show that they did their job and to get another point of view," Baron said. "That's not journalism, it's checkbox-journalism. It's terrible."

Two-way communications

An important aspect of gaining trust in the digital age is to have humility, said Léridon of AFP, especially when a mistake is made. "You can't just say 'we made a mistake', we have to explain why and we must be transparent about our process."

Given the convenience of technology where you can correct a mistake a lot faster than you could before, one of the downsides is that one can pretend the correction never happened. "If a story changes in a huge way and no one mentions it and no one talks about why, how can readers trust what they are reading on the website?" said Mathew Ingram, senior writer for Fortune.

An example is a *New York Times* article on Bernie Sanders that changed its tone and placement after its initial publication. This attracted enough criticism that its public editor wrote a response and admitted that the changes should have been explained.

Besides being transparent, news organisations should also engage in explaining their work, show the difference between journalism and content, and explain the pressure and complexity that journalists endure, said Ananny of USC Annenberg. "It's an allergy that the press has about raising conversation about what it is doing."

Some news organisations have taken heed to explain their work in first-person narrative, such as AFP's Correspondent Blog or the NYT's Times Insider: Story behind the story, some of which required a subscription

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to access. Others have established ombudsman roles, such as NPR's Elizabeth Jensen and The AP's Tom Kent, whose responsibility is to investigate reader complaints and also to explain or critique editorial decisions.

Creating standards

As technology empowers more and more citizens to be eye witnesses, the connections that news organisations have with their communities also become an important competitive advantage because they may influence with whom such materials or stories are shared.

"The better you think about how you work with your audience to capture the content that you can add context to, the more likely they are to come to you rather than post it to a [private] platform, or send it to a competitor," said Fergus Bell, News Consultant at Dig Deeper Media and former AP editor for social media and user-generated content.

However, a more pressing issue eroding the trust of the industry is the ways in which news organisations treat eye witnesses – often characterised by disrespect, disregard for safety and lack of proper accreditation or compensation. As social newsgathering is transparent on social-media platforms, such acts are often exposed and they defeat attempts by organisations that want to do it properly.

"Eyewitnesses don't need news organisations to publish their content. They have access to social media to publish whatever they want," Bell said. "There are new standards that need to be adopted, but everyone is just trying to work it out on their own."

To address the issue, the Online News Association (ONA) released a new ethical code (see page 14) in April to help the industry set standards around social newsgathering, a much-needed protocol given the mishandling of user-generated content even by large media organisations over the years. The code has been endorsed by 10 organisations including the World Editors Forum, and is gaining more support daily. "Working together will get us there quicker so that we can focus on other pressing issues," said Bell, who is also the co-founder of ONA's news-ethics initiatives and a co-author of the code.

Collaborate for impact

Social-media gathering is not the only area that needs collaboration. As news organisations work to regain trust, areas such as news literacy, technology platforms and even cross-border investigative journalism all need industry-wide collaboration to have any impact.

News literacy

"Before the issue the trust, we need to have media education because readers can't tell if a story is paid by McDonalds or written by random people on the web or by the New York Times," said Léridon. "If they can, they will be able to trust the media more."

Sometimes, it's not a just a question of distinction. "We need programs of news literacy in this country," Baron said, pointing to the large number of Americans who believed President Obama was a Muslim and not born in the US when all the evidence pointed otherwise. "It's a serious concern, there are a lot of people who can't distinguish fact from fiction and why they should believe one news outlet and not believe another."

Organisations such as the UNESCO and Knight Foundation have put forth curriculums and action plans, and WAN-IFRA's "News in Education" initiative involves more than 60 countries, with most of the effort focusing on children and teenagers within the school system.

"Our industry has done a terrible job thinking about this, we have scarcely talked about it," Baron said. "Ordinary people need to think things through and they need to be critical judges of us and some of the sources that they are drawn to."

Technology platforms

Technology platforms represent another area that needs the collaborative effort of the entire industry, especially since technology companies have grown much more powerful in recent years. Media companies have taken different approaches to technology companies, ranging from the more combative Axel Springer suing Ad Blockers to the French media accepting Google's Digital News Fund for innovation projects.

In an apocalyptic speech earlier this year, Emily Bell, director of the Tow Center at Columbia Journalism School, called the current state of affairs "the end of the news as we know it," and she singled out Facebook as the new unintended publisher whose opaque algorithm is making editorial decisions without living up to publisher responsibility. In an article entitled "Facebook has seized the media, and that's bad news for everyone but Facebook," Wired magazine concluded that "when Facebook says 'jump,' you jump. Even if the company can't promise the ground will be there when you fall."

"Media groups need to push for more transparency, to know what Facebook is doing to our content and what shows up when," said Ingram of Fortune. "They want our content to increase engagement, so media companies have leverage." Given the disruptions over the years, news organisations may feel fragile in facing large technology companies, but they do have a tremendous amount of cultural capital and legitimacy, Ananny said. He pointed to the decision that Edward Snowden had made in giving his material to a journalist instead of releasing it completely to the public. "It's a huge validation of the news organisations," Ananny said, adding that they should use it to make an intervention about the crisis they are facing in terms of distribution and platforms.

"A lot of talk is about how news organisations need to earn advertising money on the platforms, but very little is said about algorithm," Ananny said. "The press should speak with a more unified voice if they want more influence with social-media platforms. Instead of always [speaking enviously] of tech platforms, the conversation should be about democracy."

The power of collaboration was the clearest in the case of cross-border investigation in the Panama Papers affair, where the work of 400 journalists from more than 100 publications led to the resignation of the Prime Minister of Iceland. An exposé of the same firm (Mossack Fonseca) 18 months before, by a Vice investigative reporter, had faded into oblivion.

ROLLERCOASTER CONTINUES

Just as we thought that we might be finding a way to business sustainability in the new digital age with *The New York Times* confidently announcing its Path Forward, *The Washington Post* calling itself the new newspaper of record, and *The Guardian* reducing its losses, we are hit with another round of industry cuts, and not just from legacy media.

The Guardian announced it is cutting 250 jobs this year and Al Jazeera have closed its American operation, which meant 700 job losses. BuzzFeed did not announce cuts, but halved its earnings forecasts, while Mashable has cut 30 staff, *International Business Times* has cut 15, Gawker has cut seven and Salon has cut six.

We are not there yet. Yet as we continue to look for ways to survive financially, we can't afford to neglect the foundation of our industry. By recommitting to accuracy, to our community, to transparency, to standards, to working together, we might be able to arrive at next-level journalism with increasing public trust. Without it, journalism as we know it is fated.

RESOURCES: ETHICS ONA SOCIAL NEWSGATHERING ETHICS CODE



he ONA released its Social Newsgathering Ethics Code in April. It is a document that is intended to gather the support of news and journalism organisations of all sizes around the globe to endorse a set of standards and practices relating to the gathering and use of content created by members of the public.

The organisations, groups, companies and individuals that endorse and support these standards as best practices for the industry and can be found at http://toolkit.journalists.org/social-newsgathering/. This code can be integrated into your own operations or used to to form the basis of a new User Generated Content (UGC) ethics code. by any individual or organisation.

THE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Endeavoring to verify the authenticity of user-generated content before publishing or distributing it, holding it to standards that are equal or equivalent to those maintained for content acquired through other means.
- Being transparent with the audience about the verification status of UGC.
- Considering the emotional state and safety of contributors.
- Considering the risk inherent in asking a contributor to produce and deliver UGC, including whether it incentivizes others to take unnecessary risks.
- Considering technical measures to ensure anonymity of sources when required.
- Seeking informed consent for the use of UGC through direct communication with the individual who created it.
- Being transparent about how content will be used and distributed to other platforms.

- Giving due credit to the owner of the content providing that consideration has been given to potential consequences, including their physical, mental and reputational well-being.
- Endeavoring to inform and equip journalists to confront the dangers of engaging with sources through social media networks and the digital footprint they leave behind.
- Supporting and assisting journalists who are confronted with graphic or otherwise disturbing content. Maintaining an organisational culture that enables journalists to seek help or speak out when they need to protect their mental health.

If your news organisation wants to be listed as a supporter of the code, please send an email with your organisation's name to socialnewsgathering@journalists.org.

WORLD EDITORS FORUM

NEXT-LEVEL DISTRIBUTION: EARTHQUAKE IN CONTENT LAND

By Andreas Pfeiffer

"SOMETHING REALLY DRAMATIC IS HAPPENING TO OUR MEDIA LANDSCAPE, THE PUBLIC SPHERE, AND OUR JOURNALISM INDUSTRY, ALMOST WITHOUT US NOTICING AND CERTAINLY WITHOUT THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC EXAMINATION AND DEBATE IT DESERVES. ... WE ARE SEEING MASSIVE CHANGES IN CONTROL, AND FINANCE, PUTTING THE FUTURE OF OUR PUBLISHING ECOSYSTEM INTO THE HANDS OF A FEW, WHO NOW CONTROL THE DESTINY OF MANY."

- EMILY BELL, DIRECTOR AT THE TOW CENTER FOR DIGITAL JOURNALISM AT COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL

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NEXT-LEVEL DISTRIBUTION

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA REDEFINE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION



Cracks in content land Photo: Gordon Steiger

The (seemingly) humble beginnings

It all began in a comparatively unassuming way. As social media, and particularly Facebook, started to gain in popularity, publishers began to notice that more and more traffic came their way from popular social platforms. Facebook "likes" and "shares" became a precious commodity that could increasingly make or break a story. Publishers quickly adapted, and started expanding their presence on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest as well as several other social networks. Last year, traffic from these platforms to publishers' websites clearly outpaced search-related traffic: in mid-2015, 43% of referral traffic to a network of news sites came from social networks - compared to 38% from search, according to Parse.ly figures published in Fortune.

So far, so good. But in parallel, something else happened. Over the past few years the smartphone has become the primary computing device, and, more importantly, the primary source of news consumption for a majority of users, particularly in Europe and the US. Traffic from smartphones to websites was booming, mobile-ad revenues were soaring, and Facebook was quickly becoming a leading provider of mobile advertising, which in turn preoccupied Google, whose overwhelming leadership in desktop search did not translate smoothly to mobile devices.

The need for speed

Soon, another problem emerged. Mobile devices could take a long time to load content web pages, which often contain many megabytes of scripts and advertising content, and can take considerable time to display on a smartphone or tablet. So long, in fact, that many users, expecting page-load times similar to what they experienced on their desktop computers, stopped waiting for pages to load before they were properly displayed.

That's an issue for publishers and advertisers alike: no page-load, no content view, no ad dollars... Something needed to be done, and that's how Facebook's Instant Articles was conceived: a system that speeds up content display by hosting a limited version of an article directly on Facebook's site. In parallel, Google developed AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages), an open-source effort that aims to modify the structure of a webpage to speed up display. But the need for speed is only half of the story. The real drive behind distributed content, and the growing number of initiatives that fall into that group, is not so much that users are clamoring for faster page display, but that social sharing has become a primary driver for content consumption – and of course content monetization in its different forms and shapes. The future of content is social (well, at least a good chunk of it), and everybody wants a piece of the cake.

Where do we stand today?

But social-media platforms could not rely exclusively on the content posted by users, or links to articles that are published on news websites. And that's how distributed content was born: original articles from major news sources that are available directly on social-media platforms or news-aggregation apps. Some companies, such as BuzzFeed, have divisions entirely dedicated to creating and distributing content conceived specifically to be pushed out to as many platforms as possible.

In the meantime, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Google, Apple and a few other companies started to deliver dedicated technologies or content initiatives that are in the process of redefining how mobile users are consuming news and other editorial content. Without wanting to sound overly dramatic, there is little doubt that distributed content is one of the most profound changes in publishing since the advent of the web two decades ago. It challenges not only where we read news, but also what we read and how we share it. In the process, it upends workflow processes and redefines business models for publishers. Welcome to the brave new world of distributed content.

WHAT IT MEANS IN THE NEWSROOM

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

In practical terms the advent of platform publishing and distributed content is beginning to have **a considerable impact on the way newsrooms are organized.** Given the importance of platforms such as Facebook Instant Articles, Google AMP and Snapchat Discover have acquired for users, managing these new distribution channels efficiently has become a major challenge for many editors and publishers who are now **redefining and reshuffling the organisational structures of the newsroom** accordingly.

This is particularly visible with digital players such as Fusion: the millennial-focussed news site has a social newsroom of twelve people - out of which eight are exclusively working on content for Snapchat, Digiday reports

Part of the problem newsrooms now face has to do with engagement. Increasingly, publishers realize that simply running after clicks, views and shares is not enough: what really counts is the interaction with the reader. And in order to create content that resonates well with users of a particular platform, understanding user expectation in a granular way has become essential: you can't create content for Facebook the same way you are targeting readers on Snapchat—or on a publisher's own web-site for that matter.

This is why increasingly, publishers are now hiring "publishing platform specialists", "social media engagement experts", or, as is the case of Condé-Nast, "platform relationship managers", roles that were unimaginable for most publishers a year or two ago.

And it is unlikely that this increasing fragmentation of specialized roles in the newsroom is going to stop any time soon: as attention of readers shifts to a more and more diversified eco-system of platforms and apps, editors and publishers have no choice but to put their efforts where engagement makes a real difference.

THE WHAT AND HOW (AND WHY) OF DISTRIBUTED CONTENT

The key distributedcontent initiatives

If you look at it from a relatively safe distance, you may get the impression that distributed content is a coherent new way of distributing articles, a new publishing marketplace where a handful of distributors are competing for attention. In fact, the exact opposite is true. If you look at the key players in this new wave of content distribution, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Apple and to some extent Google, you realize that the only thing they have in common is the fact that the editorial content they host is displayed on their platform rather than the publisher's website. In any other aspect, be it technology, target audience and most importantly, corporate goals behind the initiative, they differ profoundly.

Facebook Instant Articles

With Instant Articles, launched in spring 2015, Facebook created a way for publishers to format their stories, complete with photos, videos and at least to some extent, ads, in a way that they display much faster than an outgoing link to a webpage. Technically speaking, Instant Articles are HTML5 pages optimized for fast loading, and hosted by Facebook rather than by the publisher's website. **Instant Articles only work on the Facebook app** (should you look at Facebook on the browser of your smartphone, you won't see any Instant Articles, just outgoing links on smartphones). More surprisingly, **they are strictly limited to smartphones,** and won't recognize iOS or Android tablets.

Producing Instant Articles is relatively straightforward. Publishers can automate production through customized RSS feeds. In addition, a recently launched WordPress plugin automatically converts pages from the popular CMS and blogging platform to Instant Articles.

Who uses Instant Articles?

By now, a wide range of publishers (The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian and Die Welt, to name just a few) are producing Instant Articles, and a growing number of them have decided to go "all in," releasing every single article they produce in Instant Articles format.

While it was initially invitation-only, **Facebook recently opened** **up Instant Articles to everybody, on a global scale.** This means that the floodgates are wide open for Instant Articles-formatted blogs and content from smaller publishers. It will be interesting to watch to what extent the Facebook algorithm integrates Instant Articles on a wider scale into newsfeeds, and how the overall Facebook experience, which after all is mainly focused on leisurely sharing of social content, will evolve under the impact of editorial content.

While speeding up page display is the official goal of Instant Articles, **the most important goal for the company is to prevent users from leaving the Facebook app**, to keep them in the walled garden of the social network, where Facebook can collect the most data about users' behavior. And of course Instant Articles will allow Facebook, already a leading provider of mobile ads, to increase its ad revenue significantly over referral traffic.

What are publishers thinking? While some publishers are adopting a wait-and-see approach, the consensus from most content providers is: Facebook is just too big to ignore, forcing them to play THERE IS A LOT OF SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR GOOGLE AMP IN THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY, WHERE GOOGLE'S INITIATIVE IS SEEN AS A WAY TO COUNTERBALANCE THE RAPID EXPANSION OF FACEBOOK.

along with its distributed-content initiative. But while traffic and engagement data from early adopters are good, **there is still widespread concern about the monetization aspects of Instant Articles.**

Google AMP

Unlike the other initiatives discussed here, **Google AMP (see sidebar) is not a content platform, but rather an opensource technology framework** initiated by Google with the aim of providing a properly structured basis for creating mobile web pages that load very quickly. From a technical perspective, this is achieved by tweaking HTML code, by stripping scripts and inappropriate ads and by adding specific JavaScript libraries, as well as sophisticated caching algorithms.

Creating fast-loading pages is not the key corporate aim for Google AMP. **The company is clearly trying to find a way to increase its foothold in mobile advertising,** a field where Facebook has grown increasingly strong over the past few years. And it is also a way of engaging with publishers around the world around content, particularly given Google's weak position in social media.

What are publishers think-

ing? There is a lot of sympathy and support for Google AMP in the publishing industry, where Google's initiative is seen as a way to counterbalance the rapid expansion of Facebook. That being said, it is still early days, since Google AMP was only officially launched in late-February 2016.

Apple News

Apple announced its News app for iOS 9 just one month after Facebook officially launched Instant Articles, and at first blush, it did indeed look like a direct attempt to out-Facebook Facebook in terms of distributed content. Apple's muchhyped content-aggregation app was going to be in inherent part of the iOS platform (which, at last count, exceeds 1.1 billion devices), and the company could pride itself on an impressive list of launch partners, including many traditional publishers that were conspicuously absent from Facebook at launch.

What are publishers thinking? Surprisingly, though, the actual showing of Apple's Flipboard-like news aggregator has been rather underwhelming. First of all it was initially available only to US customers, and even at time of writing, it is available only in the US, the UK and Australia. (Apple recently said it had 50 million active users of Apple News, but without substantiating that claim.) Add to that a rather lukewarm response from the first content providers to participate in the program, and you can see why only few of the publishers we talked to have any intention to devote serious resources to the platform - despite the fact that Apple recently announced support

for paywalls as well as native advertising.

Twitter Moments

Like Apple's News app, **Twitter Moments was one of the most talked-about distributed-content initiatives last year – yet does not seem to have garnered much traction.** This can partly be attributed to the fact that, for many months now, Twitter has been engaged in a deeply entrenched battle to grow its user base beyond the current level of 300 million Twitter loyalists.

Twitter Moments is a strange effort. Created and curated with a small number of hand-picked publishing partners, it aims to provide tools that tie together different bits of information posted on the social network in an effort to present a more magazine-like viewing experience of news-related information. This also means that we are not talking about distributed content per se, since Twitter's initiative only combines information already available, rather than relying on content specifically prepared for distribution.

What are publishers thinking? There is no doubt that in terms of news-gathering, Twitter is still an essential tool for journalists, and of course the vast majority of publishers have a Twitter page. But in terms of specific efforts and resources, Twitter currently rates clearly less highly for publishers than Instant Articles, say, or Google AMP.

GOOGLE AMP: THE POTENTIAL TO REDEFINE THE MOBILE WEB

REINVENTING CORE TECHNOLOGIES

Google AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) was only announced late in 2015, and officially launched in late-February 2016. **But** while it arrived a bit late to the distributed-content game, the excitement it has created in the industry is palpable – and not only because content providers are happy to have a sizable counterbalance to Instant Articles. Currently, many publishers are already running experiments with Google AMP, and are preparing to support it in a significant way. Part of this has to do with the way Google has structured the effort. AMP is an open-source initiative, quite unlike the closed-off development efforts at Facebook and Apple, and is likely to draw significant support from the development community. But there is also another potential, and that is that Google will start to give priority to accelerated mobile pages in mobile searches.

CREATING A HEALTHIER CONTENT ECOSYSTEM

In any case, Google is pushing very hard to make AMP a de-facto standard for content producers, including support for paywalls and subscription schemes. The fact that a recently released WordPress plugin will allow automatic output of AMP-compliant pages should also help to dramatically increase support for the initiative. And in the process, **Google AMP is also tackling a much bigger problem: adblocking. Google AMP supports advertising, but strips out many of the scripts and intrusive ads that have become the main driver for adoption of ad blocking.** So even if publishers are still complaining about insufficient monetization options on AMP, there is hope in the industry that Google's technology framework will give way to a healthier content ecosystem than existed in the past.

Snapchat Discover

Snapchat's distributed-content initiative Discover has been described as the most exclusive club in publishing. Snapchat is of course the messaging app that is wildly popular with teens and young adults – to the point where it has become the second most popular social-media platform in the US, ahead of Instagram and Twitter. When it launched Discover, Snapchat decided to artificially limit the number of participants to a cherry-picked list of content providers: a dozen at launch, 18 at time of writing. The happy few who have been invited, such as BuzzFeed, Vox, CNN or Cosmopolitan, produce heavily teen-focused news content, that happens to be extremely successful. After just a few months, and without any promotional efforts, BuzzFeed received 25% of its traffic from Snapchat.

What are publishers thinking? Since it seems quite unlikely that Snapchat will change its participant policy in the near future, most publishers view Snapchat Discover as an interesting experiment that one should keep an eye on, but they see no compelling reason to devote resources to the messaging service. But it should be interesting to see how Snapchat will diversify its content strategy in the future.

MOST PUBLISHERS VIEW SNAPCHAT DISCOVER AS AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT THAT ONE SHOULD KEEP AN EYE ON, BUT THEY SEE NO COMPELLING REASON TO DEVOTE RESOURCES TO THE MESSAGING SERVICE.

INSTANT ARTICLES, VIDEO AND VR: HOW FACEBOOK WANTS TO DOMINATE MEDIA

Instant Articles is just one part of the puzzle

Instant Articles is certainly an important part of Facebook's media strategy, because it gives the company **free access to first-rate editorial content.** But there is little doubt that Mark Zuckerberg has much more comprehensive plans in store, some of which are out in the open, others that for now we can only speculate about. **And publishers should observe all of them very carefully...**

Video is one of the areas where Facebook has been the most active over the past few years. Ever since the company launched auto-play videos, the importance of video content on the social platform has been on the rise. In the fall of 2015, Facebook boasted 8 million daily video views. But it should be clarified that any video that plays longer than three seconds counts as a view in Facebook's world, which means that most of the videos that start playing on a user's timeline on their own – and often without being actually watched – count as a video view. By comparison, YouTube counts a view after 30 seconds. Snapchat, on the other hand, which boasts similar daily video views to Facebook, counts as a view any clip that starts rolling.

And the social-media platform has some heavy competition in the video arena. There is YouTube of course, but also increasingly Snapchat, as well as live-streaming apps such as Periscope. That's why Facebook **is pushing its own live-streaming platform, Facebook Live,** launched in August 2015, and initially available only to celebrities and other public figures. The service was made available to all Facebook users in December, and has been gathering significant momentum since.

There is also 360 video, launched in September 2015. Facebook now supports video clips recorded with a camera system that can capture a complete 360° view of a scene, which the user then can navigate freely. These videos are very intuitive to use – and may be more compelling to the average smartphone user than content that requires virtual-reality (VR) goggles or dedicated headsets. Inside Facebook, in any case, these videos integrate seamlessly into the timeline. **It remains to be seen, however, to what extent publishers will start seriously integrating 360 video in their content, and how readers will react.**

And then there is VR, of course. Just over two years ago, Facebook acquired VR-headset maker Oculus Rift – and thus began a genuine development frenzy for both VR hardware as well as content, which in turn jump-started the intriguing field of VR journalism. How fast VR will take off, and whether it will reach a mainstream audience outside of gaming is the subject of many a heated debate. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain: a very significant amount of money and effort is being poured into VR developments these days.

Facebook, meanwhile, has made video one of its core preoccupations. And that means publishers would do well to pay attention: As Borja Bergareche, Chief Innovation Officer at Spanish newspaper group Vocento told me: *"To have a social strategy means to have a video strategy. You just have to create video for Facebook."*

NEXT-LEVEL DISTRIBUTION

PERSPECTIVES: WHAT ROLE FOR THE OTHER PLAYERS?

So far, it's all about Instant Articles and Google AMP

It is pretty obvious that, at least for the time being, the distributed-content arena is completely dominated by Facebook's Instant Articles on the social-media side, and by Google's open-source AMP project with regards to the mobile web. Most publishers we have talked to in recent months focus all their attention and available resources on those two initiatives: Facebook because they don't really have a choice, and Google AMP for its promise to open up the speed advantage of Instant Articles to an open platform that doesn't try to lock its users into a walled garden.

Which leaves us with the question: what role is there for the other players in distributed content? If we eliminate Snapchat from the discussion – after all, it is so far locking publishers out, rather than inviting them in – that leaves us with Apple's News app (along with as a slew of less-prominent news-aggregation apps such as Flipboard) on one side, and Twitter's Moments feature on the other. Both are facing significant hurdles to adoption.

Apple's problem is directly linked to the common way of using smartphones: In fact, while users install dozens of apps on their smartphones, only four or five of them get used regularly. This in turn means that any news-aggregation app will need to be compelling enough to break into the select group of everyday apps. And that's a tall order, given the popularity of constantly used apps such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook. In addition, while some news-aggregation apps are quite popular (albeit not on the same scale as Facebook et al.), they are facing usability issues as well as stiff competition from dedicated news apps published by trusted news sources, such as the Guardian app or NYT Now. These apps generally do a much better job of condensing need-toknow news than news aggregators do. News-aggregation apps tend to drown users in an algorithmically managed flood of information, from a variety of sources. In any case, it's hard to see how these aggregators could compete with the likes of Instant Articles and Google AMP pages once they are widely available.

THE DISTRIBUTED-CONTENT ARENA IS COMPLETELY DOMINATED BY FACEBOOK'S INSTANT ARTICLES ON THE SOCIAL-MEDIA SIDE, AND BY GOOGLE'S OPEN-SOURCE AMP PROJECT WITH REGARDS TO THE MOBILE WEB. Twitter's problem is totally different: the company is fighting an uphill battle to make the platform more accessible for new users – while having to make great efforts not to alienate hardcore Twitter users. That's why the company finally scrapped plans to eliminate the 140-character limit of Tweets, which would have opened the door for a more consistent distributed content offering than the Moments feature. What this boils down to is: quite simply, for the time being, Twitter has bigger fish to fry than to come up with its own version of **Instant Articles.**

But there is one more platform that publishers should pay close attention to, and that is Instagram. While the Facebook-owned company does not (yet?) have a distributed-content initiative in place, its remarkable popularity and its versatility in allowing the combination of images and video with text makes it an increasingly compelling platform for content providers.

And then there is messaging, of course, which, quite apart from Snapchat, **is poised to overtake social networks in importance very soon** according to Business Insider's predictions. Already, more and more publishers are experimenting with messaging for news delivery. But we are only scratching the surface.

SNAPCHAT AND THE MESSAGING WAVE

IS MESSAGING THE FUTURE OF CONTENT DELIVERY?

Messaging is on every publisher's horizon right now. Quite beyond the impressive success of Snapchat Discover (which doesn't really have much to do with messaging per se), the increasing popularity of apps such as Line, Viber, Facebook Messenger and Facebook-owned WhatsApp, points in an interesting direction. Namely, for teens and young adults, messaging has become an extension of their way of interacting with the world, therefore messaging apps could be ideally suited to deliver news content to potential readers who would never open a content website, and might not even use Facebook as much as older users do.

Several publishers have started using messaging as part of their news-delivery toolset: The Economist is distributing news on the Japanese messaging app Line, while the BBC is using Viber. And Quartz is breaking new ground with a news app that uses a messaging interface to deliver snippets of information in a quasi-conversational way.

NEW NEWS

It is quite clear, however, that **we are at the very beginning** of something that could become huge over the next few years: use of messaging apps is already outstripping socialmedia sites such as Facebook. And recent developments, such as Snapchat's Story feature, can show how crowdsourced video content can be compiled to provide first-hand content in the case of an event. As messaging apps evolve, we can expect new ways of formatting and distributing content to have a growing impact on mainstream media.

INSTAGRAM'S REMARKABLE POPULARITY AND ITS VERSATILITY IN ALLOWING THE COMBINATION OF IMAGES AND VIDEO WITH TEXT MAKES IT AN INCREASINGLY COMPELLING PLATFORM FOR CONTENT PROVIDERS.

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NEXT-LEVEL VIDEO: WHAT VIRTUAL REALITY CAN DO FOR JOURNALISM

By Ingrid Cobben

"NOTHING COMPARES TO THAT VISCERAL SENSE OF PRESENCE THAT VR CAN BRING; WE'VE SEEN PEOPLE BE SO MOVED BY THE EXPERIENCES THAT WE HAVE CREATED, IT'S CLEAR THAT WE'RE ONTO SOMETHING REALLY BIG."

- NONNY DE LA PĒNA, CEO EMBLEMATIC GROUP AND 'THE GODMOTHER' OF VIRTUAL REALITY IN AN INTERVIEW WITH CASIMIRTV

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NEXT-LEVEL VIDEO



Mark Zuckerberg at the 2016 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona Photo: Facebook elevision wasn't greeted with universal enthusiasm when sets first hit the shelves in the late 1940s. Legend has it that some people were scared of the images and covered the screens with bed sheets, using their sets for sound only, as if they were radios.

Today, there are reports of people watching 360° video on their smartphones, wondering why on earth someone shot a film of a pair of shoes, not realising they should move their phones up, down and around to see the entire scene.

It is clear. Virtual Reality (VR) is not yet a mainstream phenomenon.

The World Editors Forum spoke to several VR-innovators around the world to get their thoughts on the potential of this new medium for journalism.

Getting people to try VR

Considering the enormous hype generated by VR, it is surprising to learn that little re-

search has been done on the medium. Sarah Jones, a VR innovator at Coventry University, is one of the few to focus on researching how viewers experience VR. A former journalist and Apple Distinguished Educator, she tested 12 different VR films using a small focus group of young people. In her report, "Disrupting the narrative" she explains that "no one watches it [VR] in the same way". However, she said, an "Oh wow!" moment is almost inevitable for anyone trying a VR headset for the first time. People are blown away by the visceral, sensory experience. The level of so-called "presence" in a story is unprecedented and unimaginable in any other media. There is no question that VR has the power to break down barriers and deeply move people.

With this in mind, companies are trying hard to drive forward the technology:

• VR headsets like the Oculus Rift, HTC Vive, or Samsung's Gear VR provide the best viewer experience. While they used to be very expensive, they are now hitting the market at more affordable prices. Companies are putting a lot of effort into making VR go mainstream. Samsung, for example, includes their VR headset free for customers who pre-order their new smartphones.

• More than five million people have been able to try to the alternative low-cost Google Cardboard, thanks in part to a brilliant giveaway from *The New York Times*, which sent it free to their subscribers. A second round of giveaways provided 300,000 of NYT's most loyal digital customers - based on subscription length - with Cardboard headsets in May.

• Large brands like McDonald's and Coca-Cola have also jumped on the bandwagon, providing consumers with low-cost viewers they can build themselves from a "Happy Meal" box or cardboard container packaging. To get a real VR bargain, consumers can even opt for a pair of clip-on glasses to use with their smartphones.

The risk of a bad first VR experience

Bad content: While more people will have a chance to experience VR using low-cost tools, a big concern is that, with the ecosystem still in its infancy, people may stumble upon poorly made content, and never watch anything again. Consumers could be put off by the VR medium as a whole after a bad initial experience, even though there are tons of brilliant productions already out there. "The quality of the content will be crucial to the success of the headsets," Brian Blau, an analyst at tech market research firm Gartner told NPR.

Motion sickness: Stopping users from feeling motion sickness is another big challenge for headset manufacturers. This has to do with response time, where images need to refresh at least 90 frames per second so they don't blur, even if you whip your head around. Despite advances in technology, some viewers still report feeling a bit woozy after using the headsets.

Fear of missing out (FOMO): With the risk of isolation comes a fear of missing out. While immersed in the VR experience, users lack awareness of what is going on in the outside world. More importantly, viewers can experience FOMO within a VR experience. "Participants continuously felt like they were going to miss something important, a piece of the action," Jones concluded from her research. With scenes now available in 360° degrees, how do you know where to look? Have you seen everything? Have you missed important parts of the story? "Usually, you watch the news on television once and that is it. But this is the kind of content that we want to watch repeatedly and make sure we have seen everything - which, of course, raises other questions about its place in journalism," she added.

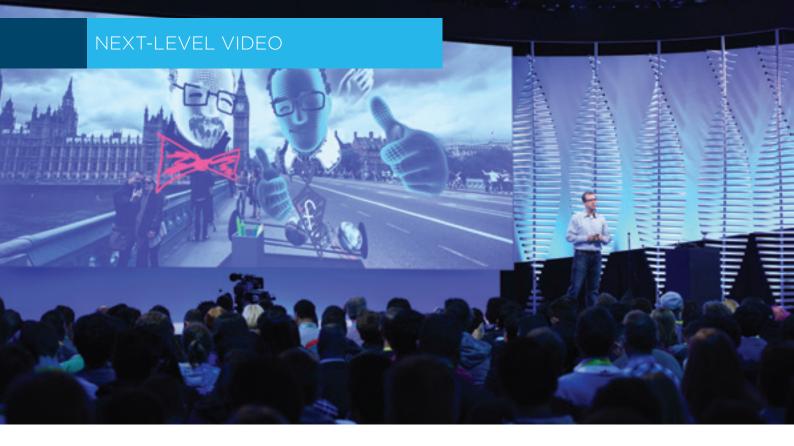
How social is VR?

Jones told us about her experience of a classroom of children watching a video through VR headsets. She was concerned about it being too insular because they all looked in different directions. "The experience can be

VR-STORYTELLING

VR-storytelling can take many different forms as the Knight Foundation report released in March explains:

- 360° video captures an entire scene in which the viewer can look up, down and around;
- Virtual Reality (VR) creates environments that allow people to be "present" in an alternative environment; and
- Augmented Reality (AR) starts with the real world and overlays virtual objects and information.



Mike Schroepfer at F8 2016 Photo: Facebook so immersive that it cuts you off from the rest of the world," she said. But her concerns evaporated when the pupils turned to each other afterwards to find out what their classmates had seen.

The most shareable formats of VR are 360° videos of hard news stories. What was it actually like to be in Paris after the November 2015 terrorist attacks? The BBC and *The New York Times* used a 360° degree camera to answer just that question. It enabled viewers all over the world to understand the atmosphere, only a few days after the attacks. These examples show great use of the medium as well as its potential to add value to journalism.

It is this type of short 360° video, and less so VR, that is most likely to be used on social media. They are more accessible, with just a Cardboard, smartphone or goggles. It's not really immersive journalism, but does provide an accessible way to create and experience a 360° view of a story, Jones explained. "It may help get a new, younger audience interested in a story, that they later go on to watch on VR," she added.

They can be easily shot with a small, onepiece camera, thereby overcoming a lengthy production process. The BBC published its story on the Paris attacks just a few hours after the events, while *The New York Times* took about six days to film, stitch it together and then edit it. BBC journalist Matt Danzico told the World Editors Forum that 360° videos can take a few hours or up to two days to produce, depending on how much editing is done. In some ways, it's easier than producing 2D videos, because it's 360°, so you only need one shot rather than different angles, he said.

Facebook has bought in, too. "VR is the next platform," Mark Zuckerberg said at the 2016 Mobile World Congress. His vision is for immersive 360° videos that make you feel like vou're right there, both in replay and eventually live, too. He has created teams, dedicated to researching "social VR" to explore how people can connect and share using VR with available technology; as well as the long-term possibilities for VR if it develops as a computing platform. However, in an interview with Business Insider, Zuckerberg said it could be a decade before VR becomes mainstream. "It took ten years to go from building the initial smartphone [for it] to reach the mass market. BlackBerry came out in 2003 and it didn't get to about a billion units until 2013. So I can't imagine it would be much faster for VR," he explained.

Jones, too, believes that social sharing of VR is going to be really big. "Facebook acquiring headset maker Oculus is a massive indication of where it's going to go and where the potential is," she told the World Editors Forum.



Invest in-house or outsource?

With the uncertainty as to whether the VR hype will catch on, many newsrooms wonder whether it is worth investing in training and equipment. The consensus is that VR has great potential to tell stories, but should be seen as an additional medium, not one that will replace other forms of storytelling.

The Knight Foundation reports that the overall VR market is growing. The number of new investors in the technology, content creation and distribution of virtual reality experiences increased 27 percent in 2015 over 2014 and is projected to continue increasing in 2016, according to analysts.

While some news organisations have already developed in-house VR teams, others are choosing to outsource production to independent film-makers. Benedict Moran, an independent film-maker who co-produced *PBS Frontline's* VR film on South Sudan's famine, said that working with a good combination of three independent film-makers was perfectly feasible. However, for smaller newsrooms with limited resources, expensive productions may not be an option.

One low-cost solution is to partner with academics. Robert Hernandez, Associate Professor of Professional Practice at University of Southern California (USC), Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, said it makes perfect sense for newsrooms to collaborate with universities. His students are experienced and well equipped for 360° video production. "What they need is to experiment and find best practices, just like anyone else using these tools. In an industry with such new technologies, nobody really is a professional," Hernandez said.

Universities have the liberty of focusing on great content because they don't have to worry about monetising the medium. They are also at the forefront of the latest technologies. USC is a great example. Palmer Luckey, one of its alumni, was interning for Nonny de la Peña, also known as the "Godmother" of VR, when he started developing VR headsets. What started out as a pair of duct-taped headphones later turned into the Oculus Rift VR headset, enabling Luckey to found a company that he later sold to Facebook for \$2 billion.

Journalists are learning a new "storytelling" language

Most VR innovators note that not every story is suitable for VR. It doesn't make sense to run VR stories for the sake of doing VR. "It doesn't work for an everyday 'man appears in court' news story," said Jones.

The main reason to use 360° degree video is "to put the viewer in a place where they can look around," Danzico told the World Editors Forum it needs to be a unique or an unusual, Photo: Facebook Newsroom

"WE ARE ALWAYS NERVOUS, ALWAYS WORRIED, ALWAYS LOOKING TO THE SKY" A TEACHER FROM ALEPPO

360° video used by Amnesty International to show destruction in Syria all-around hyper-visual environment and you need to make sure the story is for an audience that has access to this type of video.

Character-led or reporter-led?

Timeless, feature-led stories work particularly well in VR, Jones said, drawing from her latest research. Subjects associated with refugees feature highly, but also homelessness and other types of stories that have strong characters with whom the audience can connect, to understand them better. "These stories are easy to tell with VR because you can put the audience in a world for six or seven minutes that they don't normally get to experience," she said.

Traditional news organisations tend to use their reporters to lead 360° video more than digital native companies do. Sometimes reporter-led stories work because you feel safer; a reporter has authority, so you trust them to guide you through the narrative. This may overcome the "fear-of-missing-out" factor, said Jones.

Ben Kreimer, Journalism Technologist at *BuzzFeed's* Open Lab, said it is about "show-

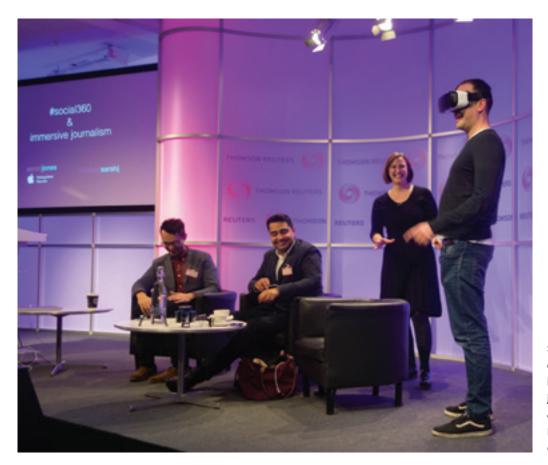
ing everything going on in a scene - so the reporter should be present." Jones confirmed that reporters may add authenticity and guide the viewer, but the point of VR is to break down barriers, and a reporter, just like a screen, is an obstacle to the immersive experience.

Navigation cues

Danzico said viewers still have trouble navigating through a 360° video. This is why film-makers are experimenting with cues, such as voice-overs, text and arrows.

Moran found that using too many graphics elements risked disrupting the immersive experience. One of the things that helped to fine-tune this narrative art was to simplify the storytelling without losing context and accuracy. "We believe the visual is so stimulating, that it takes a long time for the person to understand what is happening around them. If you bombard them with audio, narration, and too many facts, it jumbles up," he said.

Clever use of audio is often considered the most powerful navigation tool. A door closing on the left would automatically make you



Sarah Jones explaining immersive journalism to conference goer Photo: Ingrid Cobben

look to the left. Take for example the plane drop in *The New York Times* story "The **Displaced**". You hear a plane flying over your head, so your natural instinct is to look up. Then you see food aid dropped, and people start running towards it.

Unfortunately, these cues are pointless if publishing on Facebook 360, as the platform only allows mono audio. Stereo is limited to background music.

Video length

Another Facebook limitation is the length of a video, set at 10 minutes, which is considered the maximum amount of time by the VR community for a viewer to feel comfortable in a headset, without getting disorientated. The ideal duration for VR is around four to five minutes, according to Jones, but eight to ten minutes is quite common, she said.

Moran is not convinced about the 10-minute maximum. He believes that the time limit will change, as film-makers get better at creating narratives for the medium, and consumers become used to watching VR.

HOW VR CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR JOURNALISTS

Houston and the entire US economy face unprecedented dangers because the nation's largest refining and petrochemical complex is unprepared for the next hurricane to hit the region, according to an investigative multimedia project launched by ProPublica in March.

The investigation points out the astonishing lack of urgency among leaders to prevent a disaster from happening, a stark reminder of the devastating Hurricane Katrina of 2005, which was predicted by academics years before it happened. However, this time around, we have VR.

Robert Hernandez, Associate Professor of Professional Practice and his team of students at USC Annenberg are producing an immersive "VR mashup" in partnership with ProPublica, that will visualise the potential detrimental consequences of the disaster to "try to make people react before the disaster actually happens," he said.

NEXT-LEVEL VIDEO



Photo: Ingrid Cobben Producing longer videos also makes it more cost-effective. The production process for VR is still lengthy and expensive. Using about six go-pros on a rig, film-makers produce six videos, on six SD cards, stitching them together with software to edit afterwards.

Ethics

With a new medium come new ethical dilemmas. There is concern that the high level of immersion may be so intense that it could be psychologically damaging. Correct labelling is critical.

Privacy is a bigger issue for VR storytelling than for 2D video, because it is much harder to control who is in the shot if you're shooting in 360°. Imagine filming a refugee camp: it would be highly impractical to get consent sheets signed by everyone in the scene and most people are unaware they are being filmed, as they don't immediately recognise a 360° camera, as such. "The change in understanding as to what a 360° camera looks like will happen," said Danzico, comparing it to the time when DSLR camera users started shooting videos, and people would still pose for a photograph.

2016: the year of VR for journalism?

Journalists and film-makers are still trying to figure out best practice for VR storytelling and it is still uncertain as to whether consumers will adopt the medium. With only a few audience research reports available, it is hard to predict whether VR has the potential to go mainstream. What we do know is that stories told through VR can significantly increase a viewer's understanding of an issue, and produce an emotional effect more powerful than any other media can achieve. Being able to add virtual elements to a real environment, opens up a world of possibilities. For this year, it remains to be seen whether VR will be a unique addition to the current storytelling tools, or if the hype for VR catches on among the wider public.

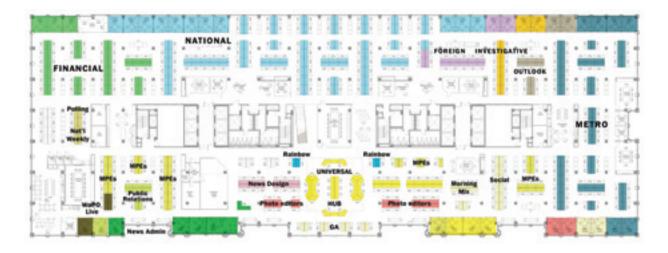
NEXT-LEVEL NEWSROOMS: CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT

By Federica Cherubini

"THE CHANNELS AND THE MEDIUM MIGHT CHANGE, BUT JOURNALISM REMAINS WHAT IT ALWAYS WAS: FIND THE NEWS, DECIDE WHETHER IT IS RELEVANT, FIND CONTRASTING VIEWS, TELL IT WELL AND PUBLISH IT FREELY."

- *EL PAIS* EDITORIAL 4 MAY 2016 ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY AND OPENING OF NEW NEWSROOM

NEXT-LEVEL NEWSROOMS



New newsroom layout Photo: The Washington Post The drastic changes the news industry has undergone in recent years have involved all parts of the process: from news-gathering to distribution to monetisation. Technology has brought digital journalism to a new level in terms of what we can do to enrich the way we tell stories and how we distribute them to a wider audiences – possibilities once unimaginable. But with everything changing so rapidly and drastically, newsrooms too must adapt and better reflect new roles, new skills and new workflows, alongside evergreen journalistic values and reporting principles.

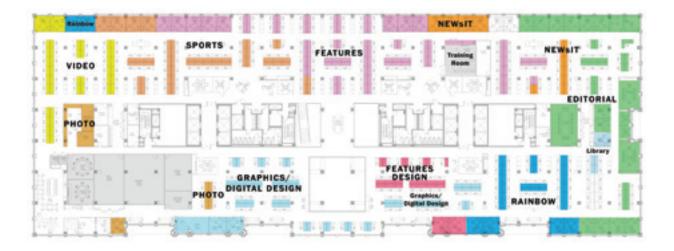
The next-level newsroom

In January 2016 *The Washington Post* moved to a new building, at 1301 K Street NW, a two-floor open space designed to encourage greater collaboration.

Speaking to the World Editors Forum, Tracy Grant, the Post's Deputy Managing Editor who oversaw the move, explained how integration and breaking down silos were two crucial parts of the thinking that guided the new newsroom planning.

In the central hub sit homepage editors and producers, photo and video editors, senior editors dealing with stories to lead the homepage and to be on A1 of the next day's print edition, and engineers. Immediately adjacent is the general-assignment news desk, which deals with breaking news as well as hot trending news. And very near to that is the social desk.

Grant explained how important it is for some of these new non-traditional sections to be close to each other and part of the conversation. She stressed that alongside being good at workflows and using Slack internal-communications channels effectively, it is still important to have an actual conversation. "Being within earshot sounds so old-school, but it really matters. Proximity matters," Grant said.



AMONG THE FEATURES OF THE NEW WASHINGTON POST NEWSROOM: A VIDEO DESK OF 40 PEOPLE, MONITORS THROUGHOUT THE SPACE SHOWING HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE READING STORIES AT ANY GIVEN TIME, AND TEAMS OF DEVELOPERS AND ENGINEERS EMBEDDED AT THE HEART OF THE NEWSROOM.

When designing the seating plan of the new newsroom, there was a lot of playing around with old constructs to make sure that the right people - not just the same people had a seat in the hub, Grant said. But it was equally important to not just want to be different for the sake of building a different newsroom. There is a reason for the national-security group and the foreign desk to always sit next to each other, and it wouldn't make sense to put them on different floors. "Some things of the past still make sense. It's very important, when thinking about the newsroom of tomorrow, to understand that much of what will guide our success in the 21st century are principles that we have long adhered to," she said.

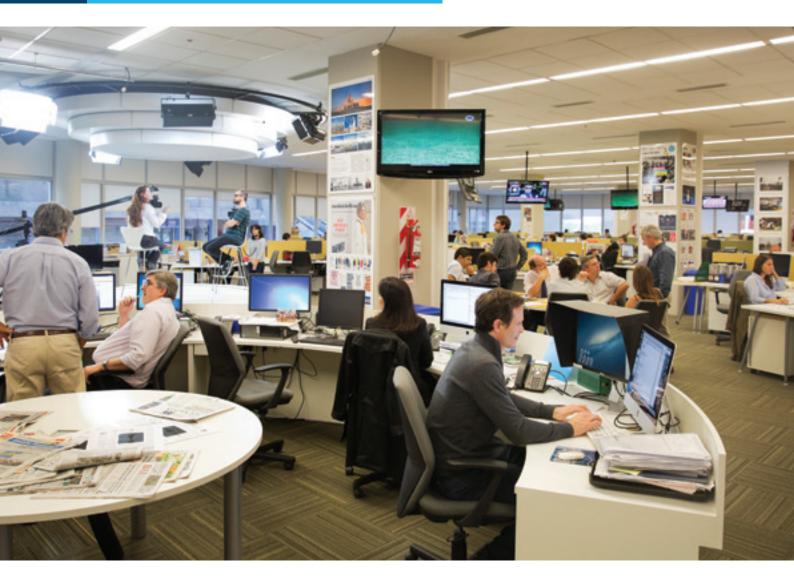
The best way to succeed in a world of metrics is to start by remembering that you have to tell stories that have an impact. Part of this means fully embracing the new opportunities and new forms of storytelling that digital journalism allows for. For instance, you have to embrace the notion that the graphics department is not just a service team, but an integral part of how we tell stories, Grant explained.

She cited as an example the moment in 2014 when Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 went missing, and an Australian vessel detected deep-sea signals consistent with those from an airplane's black box. There was a limit to expressing in words exactly how far down

Aftonbladet newsroom, Sweden



NEXT-LEVEL NEWSROOMS



La Nación newsroom, Argentina the signal had been detected from, whereas an image could be a much more powerful way to tell the story. Having the right people to participate in the discussion of how best to tell the story was fundamental in coming up with the scroll graphic "The Depth of the Problem", which so brilliantly illustrated the point. "This was a much more compelling way to tell that story. We should empower them to tell that story that way, and that's what we can do," Grant explained.

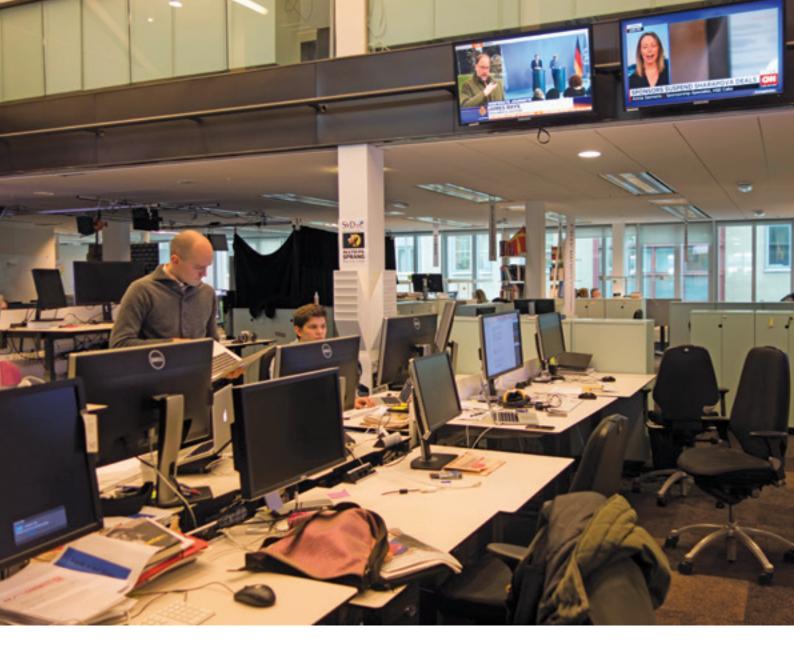
New roles and new teams

Once the new kid on the block, the social-media team is undergoing a transformation. In many newsrooms it has evolved to become the *audience development* and/ or the *audience engagement team*, and in some cases a *distributed news team*.

These teams are headed by people with new titles, such as growth editor or audience editor. Once a part of the marketing department, these roles have made their way to the

"YOUR EXPERIMENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IF THEY ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS SOLVING PROBLEMS RELATED TO YOUR NEWSROOM."

- ROBIN KWONG IN POYNTER



editorial floor with the task of using data and metrics to support the editorial strategy, and making sure that their journalism reaches the widest possible audience.

The audience engagement team

At the *Financial Times (FT)*, the audience engagement team, led by Renée Kaplan, is formed of 10 people and includes, alongside more traditional journalistic roles such as the social-media and the engagement team, a data analyst, a marketing manager and a search-engine-optimisation (SEO) expert.

"The [audience engagement] team helps coordinate strategies across the organisation, aligning the shared objectives of the newsroom with the commercial parts of the business. The shared goal is to grow the impact of FT journalism and the title's ability to engage its target audience. The team underpins the newsroom's general recent move to invest a bit less in producing content, and a great deal more in expanding its editorially led efforts to ensure that FT content finds an audience across multiple channels and platforms, including the print paper, the website, the app, newsletters and social media," according to a new Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's report that looked into how newsrooms are developing and using audience data and metrics.

The distributed news team

In a recent series on the role of the distributed news team, Journalism.co.uk looked at how some new players such as Fusion, Vox and BuzzFeed create content for social platforms.

As Mădălina Ciobanu reported, at Vox a social-media community manager, an audience-engagement manager, a video producer, a graphic designer, a Snapchat Svenska Dagbladet newsroom, Sweden



Toronto Star newsroom, Canada senior editor and a director of programming are part of the team that creates native content for social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tumblr and Snapchat Discover.

Similarly, at Fusion – a joint venture that Univision and Disney launched in 2013 to reach a young audience – the social-stories team is made up of 12 people from writers to graphic designers, and focuses on creating and packaging stories for Instagram, Vine, Tumblr and, more recently, Snapchat Discover.

As Ciobanu reports, the aim of the social-stories team was twofold: to increase the organisation's reach through "several internal mechanisms that gauge loyalty, read-through rates and time spent," but also to bring their storytelling to a "new generation."

The breaking news team

Less recently introduced, a breaking news team is also finding a more prominent role in newsrooms.

"My role was created in 2008 – but has changed and expanded and has elements of SEO and audience development," David Labanyi of *The Irish Times* told the World Editors Forum in an e-mail exchange.

"My primary function is the rapid sourcing, commissioning and publishing of news to our online platforms. I am also deputy news editor and work hand-in-hand with the news editor as part of an integrated newsdesk/newsroom. I have a direct team of around 15 who are engaged in a range of online reporting, production, social-media and publishing roles. I can also call on the full newsroom as required," he added.

"THE NEW MEDIA LANDSCAPE CALLS FOR NEW WORKING METHODS AND NEW WAYS OF ORGANISING THE NEWSROOM."

- SOFIA OLSSON OLSÉN IN SCHIBSTED'S FUTUREREPORT



In the past three years, *The Irish Times*, while gradually moving towards being digital first, has seen the introduction of new roles such as an audio editor, a social-media editor, an online-graphics team and a video team of four, Labanyi explained.

Bringing project management and design thinking into newsrooms

At the FT, Special Projects Editor Robin Kwong runs experiments and coordinates large-scale coverage projects. His job title didn't exist before he pitched it and got it approved in February 2016, he told the World Editors Forum.

If we take a look at what it takes to produce an ambitious piece of journalism, a long feature or an investigative series, we find that the level of complexity in producing them has risen dramatically, as have the possibilities in storytelling, now enriched, alongside text, by data visualisations, interactive graphics, videos and photos, Kwong explained.

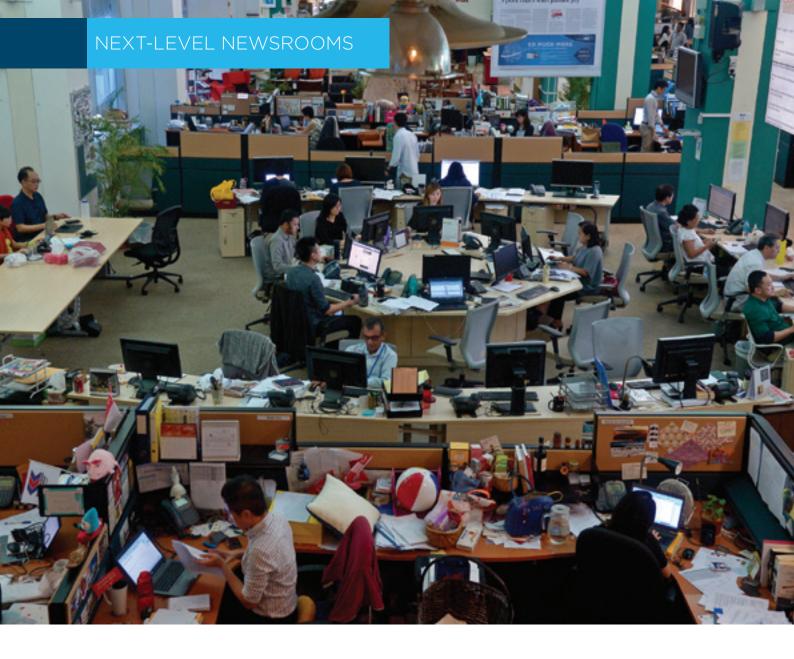
Back in the day, there was a system in place to produce and distribute journalism, which was reflected in the newsroom's structure and roles. Kwong stressed the need, in these new big teams with high level of complexity, for someone to stand in the middle and coordinate the project. Once part of the full-time job of the editor, these project-management functions now take up too much space and require a dedicated person.

"Aside of large-scale projects, another area in which complexity goes up dramatically is when you run experiments," Kwong said. He stressed that experiments teach us more when they are based on a real project, but

"THE ONLY THING WE CAN BE SURE OF IS CHANGE AND CHANGE WILL COME FAST. INNOVATION IS AT THE FRONT AND CENTER OF THE NEWSROOM."

- MARTY BARON

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Straits Times newsroom, Singapore that this gives the added pressure of delivering that piece of journalism while also, as a secondary goal, running an experiment in order to learn from it.

The definition of experiment implies something that's never been done before. That makes the project more challenging to coordinate and is another example of when a dedicated project manager is even more necessary. The project manager should be someone who has a deep knowledge of the newsroom and the editorial desk, he pointed out.

Sometimes these roles are already performed in newsrooms, Kwong added, but they don't always get fully and properly recognised for what they are.

"THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY TO PRODUCE AN AMBITIOUS PIECE OF JOURNALISM, A LONG FEATURE OR AN INVESTIGATIVE SERIES, HAS RISEN DRAMATICALLY."

- ROBIN KWONG

NEWS BOTS AND MESSAGING APPS

By Abigail Edge

"A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF MEDIA COMPANIES WILL COME FROM KNOWING HOW TO PLAY IN MESSAGING APPS. FOR JOURNALISTS, BRANDS AND MEDIA CREATORS, THAT MEANS REIMAGINING HOW THEY CREATE CONTENT, HOW THEY ENGAGE USERS AND HOW THEY GENERATE REVENUE."

- FRANCESCO MARCONI, STRATEGY MANAGER FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND AN INNOVATION FELLOW AT THE TOW CENTER

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newsbot (noun)

David Marcus,

VP of Facebook Messaging

at F8 2016

Products, onstage

Photo: Facebook Newsroom

Any of various pieces of software designed to harvest articles from newsgroups, or from news websites

or many publishers, news bots are the final frontier.

And until very recently, bots in newsrooms were mainly used only internally, to assist with processes such as curation and data gathering.

The Associated Press hired the industry's first Automation Editor, Justin Myers, in 2015, and announced it would be fully automating its corporate earnings reports, as well as its college sports coverage.

And *The New York Times* has found many ways to use Slack bots, including a bot named Blossom, which helps editors decide which of the 300 stories published every day they should post to social media.

However, 2016 has been the year in which news bots have gone mainstream.

People on Messenger Monthly

WSJ's Messenger bot

In April, Digiday reported that *The Washington Post* was working on a news bot, tentatively named WaPo bot, to deliver news via messaging platforms.

A week later, Facebook unveiled a bot platform for Messenger at its F8 developers' conference in San Francisco.

Addressing the audience from the F8 stage, David Marcus, Facebook's Vice-President of Messaging Products, rejected the notion that bots were simply command line interfaces.

"We think that the combination of user interface and conversation is what is going to work," he said.

CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* were two of the first outlets to announce news bots for Messenger.

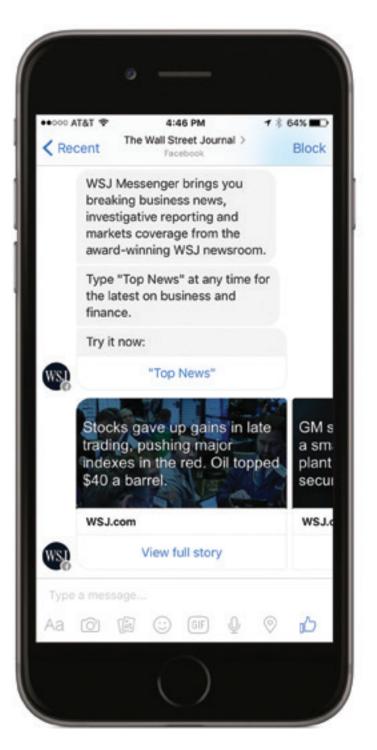
The CNN bot sends news stories in response to prompts such as "politics" or "breaking news."

It is conversational, using pronouns such as I, me and you, and over time, users receive more personalised stories depending on topics they have clicked on or requested in the past.

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) bot responds to prompts in a similar way, although it is less conversational than the CNN bot.

Stories are served up by What's News a free *WSJ* app that offers stories specifically optimised for mobile.

"We took that content because we felt that would work perfectly in terms of finite, short pieces of information that can be read very quickly," explained Himesh Patel, Creative Director at Dow Jones, the division of News Corp that publishes the *WSJ*.



IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS, FACEBOOK MESSENGER, KIK, WHATSAPP, TELEGRAM, LINE, WECHAT AND OTHER MESSAGING APPS ARE EXPECTED TO REACH 2 BILLION USERS

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NEXT-LEVEL PLATFORMS



ON FACEBOOK, WE HAVE THIS REALLY ROBUST, LOYAL COMMUNITY. THEY COME BACK TO US DAY IN, DAY OUT. AND I THINK THEY WANT A CONNECTION WITH US THAT'S MORE REAL-TIME AND MORE INTIMATE

Carla Zanoni, Global Head of Emerging Media, WSJ

The bot era for news

Though the announcement of the CNN and *WSJ* Messenger bots generated excitement within the industry, a bot era for news had been widely expected.

Bigger news outlets were locked in an arms race to develop a successful bot long before the F8 announcement, lured by the growing audiences on messaging apps.

In the next two years, Facebook Messenger, Kik, WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, WeChat and other messaging apps are expected to reach 2 billion users, according to eMarketer.

In common with many of the bigger publishers today, the *WSJ* has accounts on a variety of different messaging platforms, including WhatsApp, WeChat, Sina Weibo, Line, as well as a "Team WSJ" Snapchat profile in addition to its presence on Snapchat Discover.

On WhatsApp, for example, the *WSJ* has created a group for expats that serves up stories the outlet thinks will be of interest, but which also offers opportunities for crowdsourcing and generating stories about the expat experience.

What makes each of these platforms differ-

ent, explained Carla Zanoni, the *WSJ's* Global Head of Emerging Media, is their ability to offer "discrete experiences."

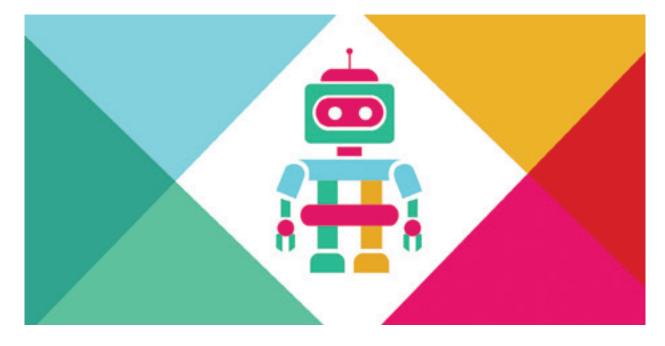
"I think there is a great need from the audience to have a curated experience that doesn't feel quite as overwhelming as the vast world of social media, or the robust yet sometimes overwhelming offerings from a website," she said.

However, Facebook in particular offered fertile ground for further experimentation, because it is a platform where the *WSJ* has one of its most engaged audiences.

"In terms of using bots, you want to find the sweet spot there where your audience is actually going to engage with the content you're creating," Zanoni said.

"On Facebook, we have this really robust, loyal community. They come back to us day in, day out. And I think they want a connection with us that's more real-time and more intimate."

An existing high level of engagement on a particular platform is crucial for reducing barriers to entry and getting audiences to adopt a news bot as a new platform.



Other examples of bots in news

With 900 million users globally, Messenger offers an enormous opportunity for publishers to reach new audiences. It is the second most popular app on iOS globally, after the Facebook app, and was the fastest-growing app in the US in 2015, according to Nielsen.

Slack is also a popular choice for publishers experimenting with news bots and messaging platforms.

Earlier this year, *The New York Times* released a Slack bot to enable readers to receive "live results and updates on the 2016 elections," as well as submit questions directly to the newsroom using the command "/asknytelection".

NBC's Breaking News also launched a Slack bot earlier this year to work with its existing Slack integration, allowing users to follow specific stories or receive push alerts on more than 90,000 subjects.

Meanwhile, Quartz captured the trend for chat-like interactions with its standalone iPhone app, launched in February, which has the overall look and feel of a messaging platform.

Overcoming the novelty factor

A key challenge for any news outlet experimenting with bots is ensuring the service is actually useful to audiences, and not just a flashy tool that people will lose interest in when the novelty wears off.

Slack bot

One way to overcome this, recommends Zanoni, is to use whatever data and analytics are available to determine what audiences want from the bot, and to guide the services it should provide.

Obtaining this sort of insight into your audience will also prevent a bot from coming across as spammy, with updates that are too frequent or insufficiently relevant.

Bot ethics

While bots may offer benefits for publishers in terms of enabling them to reach new audiences and offer new experiences, they also have inherent limitations in terms of accountability and algorithmic transparency.

A report published at the end of 2015 by the Philip Merrill College of Journalism investigated how automated Twitter bots try to spread news, and found that of the 238 bots analysed, researchers were unable to determine the sources used to generate content for 45 percent of them.

"It's a problem because you don't know exactly what the person's intention was when they made the bot, and actually very few people even deign to tell you why they made it, or what the idea was," explained co-author of the report Tanya Lokot.

NEXT-LEVEL PLATFORMS



"Very often, it's just a black box."

Meanwhile, Microsoft's AI Twitter bot Tay, which was designed to learn from interactions with other users but which ended up mimicking the language of racists and holocaust-deniers, was a worst-case example of what happens when bots go bad.

However, Zanoni is confident the WSJ Messenger app is as sturdy as it can be, since it is rooted in the human curation behind What's News, rather than in artificial intelligence.

Having said that, she noted that there may be potential challenges for news bots in general, in terms of what the bot serves up when asked a question about divisive subjects such as politics.

"Are you serving up one side's viewpoint more often than you're serving up another viewpoint?" she asked.

"In terms of this experiment, having as discrete and curated an experience as possible allows us to avoid some of those pitfalls, but it's something we definitely need to be thinking about as we move forward."

Bot monetisation

As a news outlet with a website operating under a subscription model, a key commercial objective for the *WSJ* is obviously converting more of its audience into subscribers.

The initial goal of the WSJ Messenger bot is

"WE TOOK THAT CONTENT BECAUSE WE FELT THAT WOULD WORK PERFECTLY IN TERMS OF FINITE, SHORT PIECES OF INFORMATION THAT CAN BE READ VERY QUICKLY"

Himesh Patel, Creative Director at Dow Jones

to distribute *WSJ* content to a new audience – and to grow that audience – rather than to generate subscriptions.

"Then we can decide, moving forward, if this is a platform that we can monetise, either through subscription or as a promotional attraction," explained Patel of Dow Jones.

Sponsored-content platform Outbrain has also ventured into the bot space, with a new service that allows publishers to create and run their own bots, on which Outbrain content will appear as links.

Though it is not clear which publishers, if any, are currently using the service, Outbrain Executive Vice-President John LoGioco told Digiday: "Over the long run, we want to make sure there's a native monetisation strategy tied to this."

The future of news bots

Now that Facebook has opened up the Messenger API to bots, we are likely to see many more publishers – and retailers – getting on board.

At the time of writing, Business Insider, Mic and men's lifestyle site Thrillist were also reported to be developing Messenger bots.

Messenger is not the only, nor even the first, messaging app to release a bot store.

Telegram launched its bot store in 2015, and Kik beat Messenger by a week to release a bot store of its own. However, Messenger has the advantage of a huge global audience, which dwarfs that of most of its competitors.

In the not-too-distant future, Patel believes news bots will begin to develop into integrated services similar to WeChat, a Chinese messaging app that offers everything from video calls to the ability to send money, read news or book movie tickets.

So, for example, a news bot could incorporate a number of different publications, allowing users to dictate the sort of stories they want to read, and when they want to read them, from which particular outlet.

Patel believes the bot movement will grow quickly, with bots becoming more sophisticated as developers learn, from analytics, what users want.

"From that, we can also gauge what kind of content types actually work within this platform," he added.

One probable development is the use of bots to deliver customer service, something that some online retailers already offer.

A potential future plan for the *WSJ's* Messenger bot is to enable it to serve up a particular telephone number or e-mail address in response to a user query.

The *WSJ* may also tweak its bot to be more conversational, enabling it to interact with users in a seemingly more natural way.

As bots become more sophisticated, Patel believes they will develop their own "languages" to communicate in the same way that SMS spawned its own abbreviations and linguistic quirks.

"I think there will be some bot language that people will intuitively understand to 'pull' information," he explained.

Advice for bot developers

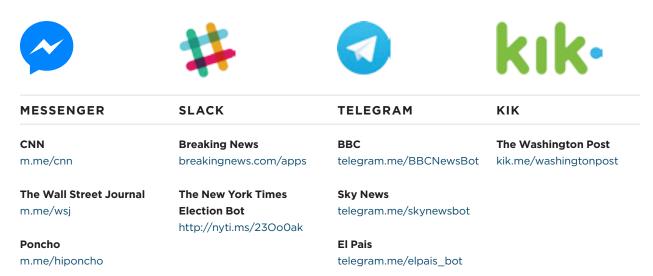
As with any news product, the development of a news bot requires close collaboration between different departments.

At the *WSJ*, editorial and creative teams worked closely together to try to determine what an audience would want from the bot experience.

A basic prototype was deployed two months before the bot was ready to face the public, and the Messenger app was built in just four weeks.

During those four weeks, Dow Jones refined the bot experience with input from David Marcus, Facebook's VP of messaging products, and from San Francisco-based development company Notify.io.

News bots on various platforms (that we know about)



NEXT-LEVEL PLATFORMS

Legacy news outlets such as the *WSJ* have a reputation for being more siloed than their newer, digitally native counterparts, so the work that went into the Messenger bot signified "a big shift" in how teams operate together at the *WSJ*, Zanoni said.

"I love that we're calling it an experiment, because it is, but it also is a large-scale experiment in how we optimise working together," she added. "And we're all learning that as we go."

Keep it simple

For news outlets interested in building their own bots, Patel advised keeping things simple – at least to start with.

"In terms of just creating it, I think we all started off as 'let's make this as simple as possible, let's learn, and then we can build on it'," he said. *The WJS's* Messenger bot has an insights dashboard, built by Notify.io, which shows the keyword searches, what alerts users have created, and peak times when people are most likely to use the bot.

At the time of writing – a day and a half after the Messenger bot was launched – Patel said data were not yet available on the number of users.

However, he added that while the amount of data available was still quite basic, more analytics would be added as the bot became more sophisticated.

Voice and authenticity

As with any ventures into new spaces and platforms, Zanoni said it was essential for publishers "to know the core of your identity as an organisation, and to retain that voice and that presence in whatever it is you build."

NOW THAT FACEBOOK HAS OPENED UP THE MESSENGER API TO BOTS, WE ARE LIKELY TO SEE MANY MORE PUBLISHERS -AND RETAILERS - GETTING ON BOARD.

> Patel also underlined the importance of publishers not being afraid to experiment or to fail when developing a new product such as a news bot.

"You're never going to get it right the first time, because there's always going to be technical issues or whatever else," he said.

"But that's just part of the journey of launching something and playing in this field. So I advise: go ahead and try, but keep it simple and learn, then make it bigger and better."

Bot metrics

Data and analytics are, of course, essential for determining how audiences are using different platforms, and what kind of content they are looking for. "There's a huge pull and draw to mould yourself like a chameleon to whatever the platform needs," she noted.

"But at the end of the day, the audience is coming to *The Wall Street Journal* to interact with us. They want that essential characteristic or voice or analysis and product."

One way to ensure the longevity of a news bot, continued Zanoni, is to really spend time "refining the voice" of the bot, so audiences feel they are connecting with your outlet "in an authentic way."

"And to have that kind of conversation lead us – and support the journalism that we're doing – frankly is the most important core of our mission," she said.

NEXT-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT: THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY

By Federica Cherubini

"WHEN CONNECTED TO JOURNALISM, WE FIND THAT 'COMMUNITY' CAN BE QUITE POWERFUL. IT'S A MEANS NOT ONLY TO AUGMENT WHAT HAS BEEN REPORTED ALREADY, BUT TO PLANT SEEDS FOR WHAT CAN BE REPORTED IN THE FUTURE."

- GREG BARBER, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL NEWS PROJECTS, THE WASHINGTON POST

NEXT-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT



findings and impact

A Guardian investigation revealed the true number of people killed by law enforcement, told the stories of who they were, and established the 2015 / Young black men killed by US police at highest rate Pinal total of people killed by US police officers in 2015 shown rate of



The Guardian's US police killings' database **P**opular Science, Recode, Reuters, Mic, The Week, Bloomberg, The Verge, The Daily Beast, Toronto Sun, South Africa's News24, Toronto Star, Daily Dot, Süddeutsche Zeitung, UK's Daily Telegraph South Africa's Daily Maverick have one particular thing in common:

At some point over the last couple of years, all these publications have opted to shut down the "comments" thread below articles on their websites. The most common reason cited for doing so is the ongoing challenge of keeping the conversation civil, in order to stem trolling and harassment. Moderation is a time-consuming practice and requires resources. Some news organisations have decided that it's simply not worth the investment. A few have shut down their comment threads entirely, while others have reduced the number of articles or topics open to readers' contributions.

However, not allowing readers to post comments below the articles hasn't necessarily meant the end of the conversation, as many news sites have moved readers' contributions to social media platforms.

At the International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Italy, on April 7, industry experts debated the importance of creating and fostering communities and how any publisher can build one.

What makes a community?

"Community can have lots of different contours, but when connected to journalism, we find that community can be quite powerful. It's a means not only to augment what has been reported already, but to plant seeds for what can be reported in the future," said Greg Barber, Director of Digital News Projects at *The Washington Post*.

Barber, who spoke in Perugia, is also responsible for strategy and partnerships at the *Coral Project*, a joint effort by Mozilla, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* to help communities work better online. He cited the virtuous example of *The Washington Post's* Capital Weather Gang community, which, he explained, has been owned and shaped by community members themselves. However, the community has also seen active involvement by journalists, who have spent time thinking about what kind of community they want and what kind of interaction they want to have with it.

At *The Guardian*, community interactions can develop in two ways: there are existing communities that journalists can tap into, as well as communities they can create directly, Executive Editor for Audience Mary Hamilton explained. "You get a community of shared circumstances (all the people who live in DC, who really need to know what the weather is); a community with shared desires and aspirations (you see a lot of this on Pinterest, for example); and communities that share needs, which is where sometimes journalists can do the most interesting work. We think about serving these different types of communities in potentially quite different ways," she said.

When it comes to offsite communities, *The Guardian* wants to identify the needs of certain communities and build a space for them, wherever they are, rather than trying to deliberately draw them onto *The Guardian's* platform when that might not be the most natural behaviour for those people.

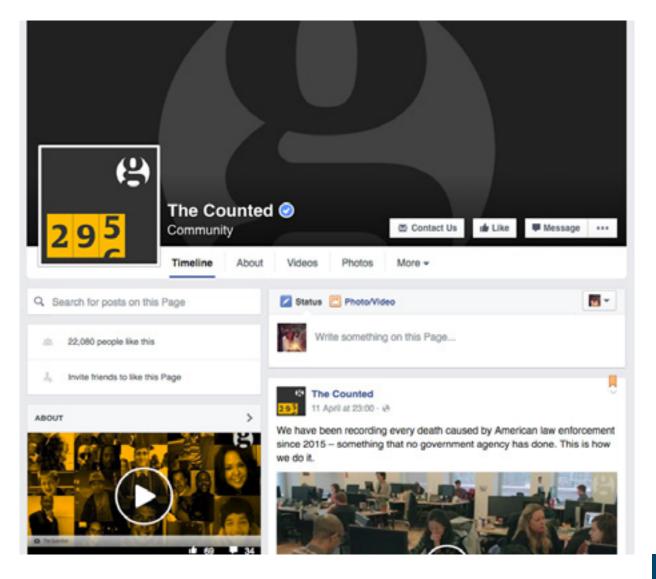
With *The Counted*, the paper's investigation into the number of people killed by law enforcement in the US, The Guardian chose to build a community on Facebook. It needed and wanted to reach people who care about the issue but might not know or really care what The Guardian is and what it does. "We needed to be where these people were interacting naturally," Hamilton said. "The impact that that has on the reporting is that we can then bring their needs back into the commissioning process and bring their tips and their contribution back into our journalism," she added.

Nurturing your community

Not all communities are inviting though. In fact, comment space has increasingly become a synonym for discourteous conversations and trolling.

News organisations sometimes have a platonic idea about the sort of community they want, with perfect human beings who are only saying things that are valuable. However, this is very rarely true, *Fortune's* Mathew Ingram commented. "The struggle for media companies is to deal with the communities we have, not with the fictitious community that we wish we could have. And that chang-

The Counted's Facebook page



es the way you look at what you're doing", he said. He stressed that *how* you deal with the challenges a community might pose also determines the kind of community you'll end up with. "The behaviour you choose to highlight or to not highlight, the behaviour you choose to single out or not single out, how you react to the people who are behaving badly, all this says as much about you and what your community will become as it does how you deal with the 'good behaviour'.

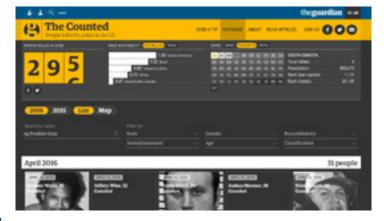
"It's crucial to think [*about*] what type of behaviour you're trying to encourage, because that's going to determine how you [*as news organisations*] behave and what kind of parameters you set," he said.

The panel agreed that those tasked with crafting these communities have to be transparent about the terms of their relationship with readers. "Too often the approach is 'Here's a blank wall and some spray paint at the bottom of our story, please engage however you wish and we'll be over here, not reading or paying any attention'. Doing that, you're going to get some kind of behaviour. You don't invite someone to your house for a party and then go away," Ingram explained.

Add value to the relationship with your readers

According to Barber, it is really about value. "It's about creating value for the people who are participating," he said. He also pointed to the value of the number of people who regard posts on community spaces as content and consume it in the same way they read articles, a point which is not often mentioned in discussions about comments and community. "Look at your analytics, there are a lot of people who read the comments as content

The Counted: connecting with the community



and they are amongst your most loyal users, as are your commenters," Barber said.

With many publishers moving the conversations onto social platforms, the consequences are sometimes missed. "There is probably already a community somewhere discussing your content, whether you know it or not, and it's probably on some other social platform. By either not engaging through those platforms or not thinking strategically about how you're doing it, you're effectively giving away one of the most important things you have - your relationship with your readers and your audience," Ingram said. "You're giving that relationship away to another entity. So, then, Facebook has the relationship with your readers and Facebook is the one who determines the quality and the criteria of that relationship, not you. And the implications of that are huge," he added.

How to manage controversial topics and hate speech

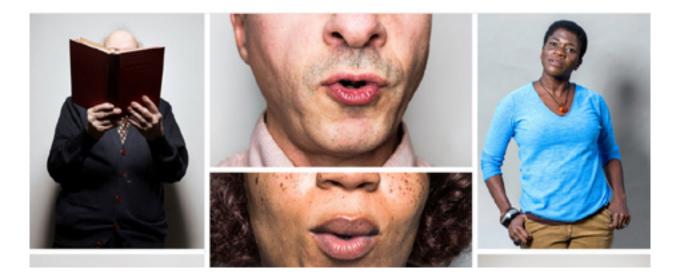
Despite willingness to dedicate resources, attention, and give value to conversations in the comments section, some topics are undoubtedly more difficult to moderate than others. Stories that cover race, religion and migration attract an extraordinary amount of toxic contributions and abuse. For this reason, at the beginning of 2016, *The Guardian* decided to cut down the number of articles open to readers' comments.

"We decided to move away from the idea that we have comments open on half a dozen stories on the refugees crisis all at once as that makes it really difficult to manage them and difficult to deal with it, [not only as a news organisation but also] as a reader and specifically as a commenter. [Instead] we moved towards having one or two threads open, so that we can really put moderation resources into those threads. This will also encourage journalists who want to get involved in the conversation to go to a particular place where their contribution is most likely to be seen and to be actively instrumental to the way the conversation develops," Mary Hamilton told the audience at the International Journalism Festival. "Some of this is just about how we manage our resources effectively on really difficult conversations, acknowledging that we don't want people just to be shouting

Meet Some of Our Top Commenters

By BASSET ETIM NOV. 25, 2015

A Presbyterian minister. An electrical engineer. A science fiction writer. These are some of the most influential contributors to nytimes.com.



The New York Times: connecting with commenters

into a void, especially on the most controversial topics because this is where, potentially,

the most damage can be done," she added.

Trolling abuse is not limited to certain topics, however. Research commissioned by The Guardian, and released in April 2016 as part of a series on the rising global phenomenon of online harassment, analysed 70m comments left on the site since 2006. It discovered that out of the ten most abused writers, (regardless of the particular topic of the article), eight are women, and two are black men. Far from having found a definitive solution to the problem, with the "Dark side of Guardian comments" project, the paper has decided to turn the 70m comments it received over the years into a data set to be explored in order to acknowledge the problem, and work towards a solution with a better understanding of the issue.

FINDING AND HIGHLIGHTING VALUE: THE NEW YORK TIMES' TOP COMMENTERS

On November 23, 2015 *The New York Times* took a major step towards recognising the value of its community by publishing an article that highlighted its top commenters. On the day of publication, it was featured on a prime position on the paper's homepage, drawing an overwhelmingly positive result - huge traffic, great social buzz and more than 1,400 comments, as *The New York Times* Community Editor Bassey Etim explained.

Although compiling the "Top Commenters" story was time-consuming and might not easily be replicated (the data analysis, interviews and professional photography took months to complete), the lessons learned show the need for creating a vibrant online society and protecting it, Etim writes. "Our work also suggests that if we made it easier for commenters to brand themselves, more of them might become recognizable figures within the community."

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Moving away from comments as we know them

In his Nieman Lab Prediction for 2016

Andrew Losowsky, Project Lead at the Coral Project advocated moving away from the notion of comments as strictly the box below the article, in order to rebrand them under the more comprehensive term "contributions". Greg Barber added to this point in Perugia: "One of the things we should push back on is this notion that comments as [they are] constructed are the perfect form of discussion, that they need to be present on every article. [...] One of the things that news organisations need to do is think strategically about what they want in this space, and what their readers want as well. We need to push back on the concept that open field comments are exactly the best use case for everything."

THE CORAL PROJECT WORK

The Coral Project is a joint venture by the Mozilla Foundation, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, funded by the Knight Foundation. It aims to change the way news publishers and audiences interact. Part of the project includes working on the comment section in order to figure out a way to stop trolls and abusers and encourage civil conversations instead. As Project Lead Andrew Losowsky highlighted in his Nieman Lab predictions for 2016, this is a mental shift away from comments and towards contributions. It could also mean the end of the comment box, as we know it, with more prominence given to different type of interactions where meaningful contributions can surface.

The first open-source tool that the Coral Project realised is a listening app called Trust. As Coral explained in a blog post, the Trust app aims to scale the moderation of usergenerated contributions by focusing on the user's history of contributions, in addition to moderating individual contributions themselves.

More info on the Coral Project at coralproject.net

How can algorithms help in moderating conversations?

Given that moderation is time-consuming and requires dedicated resources, some automation can come in handy.

Nicholas Diakopoulos, Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland and fellow at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, described four ways in which algorithms can help with the moderation process. First, automated moderation can help to identify really low quality contributions, through key words that indicate nasty content, profanity, and uncivil behaviour.

Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, automation can help to highlight quality contributions and people who are experts on a particular topic. Thirdly, automation can quantify the context around one user, looking at their contribution history, what kind of comments they made, on what sections, how often they have been blocked, and how often their comments have been highlighted on the site. Providing that kind of quantified context to moderators can help them make a more informed decision about the moderation itself.

Lastly, algorithms can alert moderators to threads or articles where it might be useful to have an adult in the room, if the topic is particularly sensitive or controversial.

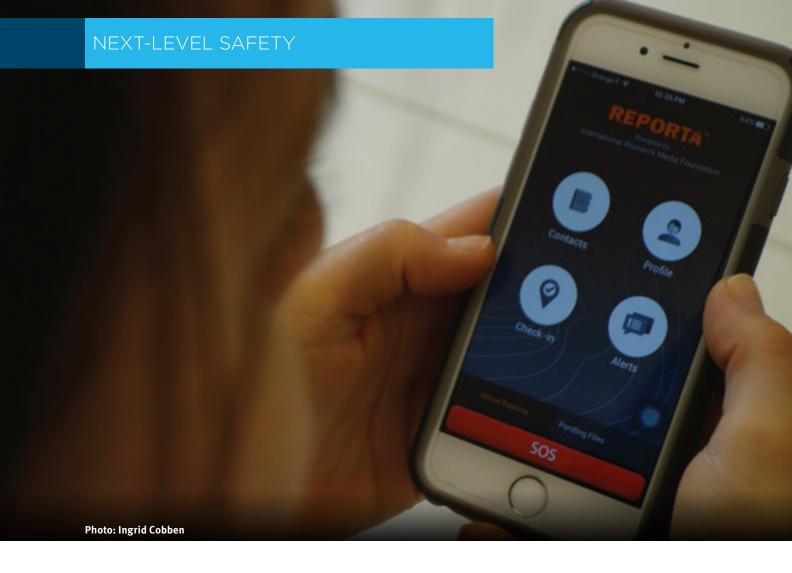
But algorithms can't do everything by themselves. "I'm a strong proponent in integrating human capability with automated capability," Diakopoulos said. "We use automation to sort and rank, but I'm not an advocate for automatically removing content and automatically deleting things, but rather having the human integrated in those type of decisions," he added.

NEXT-LEVEL SAFETY: THE ADVANTAGE OF DIGITAL TOOLS

By Javier Garza Ramos

"WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO PROTECT THE STORYTELLERS BOTH PHYSICALLY AND DIGITALLY SO THAT THEY CAN REPORT ON THE DIFFICULT STORIES INVOLVING UNTOLD VICTIMS. WITHOUT THEIR COVERAGE, WE RUN THE RISK THAT ABUSES REMAIN HIDDEN."

- JOYCE BARNATHAN, PRESIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR JOURNALISTS (ICFJ), IN THE HUFFINGTON POST



B esides reporting the news, journalists around the world are getting used to being the news. Whenever a journalist is attacked, threatened, sued or gets his or her phone or e-mail hacked, a big story is inevitable. Journalist security is a topic that is getting increasing attention from reporters, editors and executives all over the world.

The year 2015 featured its share of news stories involving journalists: 71 were murdered with a confirmed professional motive in 20 countries, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), up from 61 the previous year. Additionally, 25 journalists were killed without a professional motive being confirmed.

But the stories do not stop there: government crackdowns on media extended from Europe to Latin America to Central Asia. Even some stories that did not directly involve journalists actually meant a great deal to the press, such as the attempts by the US government to force Apple to crack a terrorist's iPhone, which raised serious concerns for the protection of journalists' data. Another big tech story of 2015 was the revelation that Italian firm Hacking Team had been hired by scores of governments (national and local) around the world to provide software for spying on digital devices, probably including those of journalists.

These events over the course of last year highlighted the need for journalists to have adequate protective measures. Gradually, a door is being opened for the development of digital tools that might improve their security.

Most journalists are not experts in security measures, but they do need them. Journalists at risk have little support. News organisations, especially at the local level, have little or no budget for safety training and equipment. Freelancers are in the worst situation, working with no safety net.

"The good news is: news organisations seem increasingly aware of the need to adopt good digital-security practices. Hackers penetrating newsrooms, denial-of-service attacks on news websites, and the ongoing vulnerability of journalists' sources, have all contributed to making news professionals know they need to better protect their networks, information and communications," said Frank Smyth, executive director of Global Journalist Security and senior adviser for journalist security to the CPJ.

The bad news, Smyth added, is that "only a relative few have actually begun to implement the reforms that are needed."



"THE GOOD NEWS IS: NEWS ORGANISATIONS SEEM INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO ADOPT GOOD DIGITAL-SECURITY PRACTICES"

Frank Smyth

Executive director of Global Journalist Security and senior adviser for journalist security to the CPJ

In the past few years, as journalists (like everybody else) move their lives into their digital devices, there has been a boom in digital-security technology. Reporters and editors can take advantage of encryption tools to send and receive e-mails or text messages, store and share their electronic files, protect the data in their devices from outside searches, or hide their location when browsing the web.

Digital security is one field undergoing constant improvement. Another emerging area is one focused on digital tools for other security concerns, such as physical or psychological risk. Applications for conducting risk evaluation, or allowing a journalist to share his or her geolocation when entering a dangerous area, are also being developed.

However, as a recent report published by the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) suggests, this is not a widespread culture among journalists around the world. The survey I conducted among 154 journalists in North and Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa shows that most of them have yet to adopt digital tools for their protection. http://www.cima. ned.org/publication/journalist-security-in-the-digital-world/

A majority of journalists who said they use digital tools for security came from North America and Europe, and their concerns seem to be mostly about protecting communications (e-mail or text messages) and secure file storage and sharing. This suggests a reaction to the debate on eavesdropping by governments, especially in the United States, after the revelations of the National Security Agency's programs for intercepting communications.

Less attention was paid to secure web browsing and device encryption, but there seems to be a huge window of opportunity for journalists and news organisations to expand their use of digital tools for security.

The use of these tools also extends to protecting the relationship between journalists and sources, an issue in which WAN-IFRA has been very active.

A digital dimension to the legal issues surrounding the protection of sources must also be considered.

In an article on the Poynter Institute's website, commenting on

the CIMA study as well as a report from the digital-rights organisation Access Now, developer and journalist Peter McKay pointed out that "there are glaring holes in the processes journalists around the world use to protect communication with their sources. At the same time, the threats are increasing every day from governments, criminals and other bad actors." The "glaring holes" are not only in journalists' habits of protecting sources, but also in other digital activities. For instance, in the CIMA survey, some journalists said they feel safe with a certain tool, even when that tool is not secure. When the survey was conducted, for example, the message application WhatsApp had not completely rolled out its encryption feature, and vet several journalists thought WhatsApp was encrypted. Other journalists said they use Google Drive or Dropbox to store and share files, even if these tools are not encrypted and are vulnerable to penetration.

In other cases, there are simple steps that journalists can take but often ignore, such as protecting social media. A survey by the CPJ of more than a thousand journalists showed that almost quarter of respondents (23%) do not use "2 Factor Authentication" to access Twitter, a simple practice that involves a step other than the password to prevent an outsider from hacking and taking over an account.

But that number does not mean that the other three-quarters do use this measure. A startling 54% of respondents said they do not even know what 2 Factor Authentication is. The report's author, Kamal Singh Masuta, recommends that journalists and media companies "enable immediately" this

NEXT-LEVEL SAFETY



Kamal Singh Masuta

feature, which is also available on other online services.

On digital security, CPJ adviser Smyth pointed to The New York Times as a news outlet leading the way, becoming the first major US-based news organisation to establish a newsroom digital-safety position. Its new Director of Information Security, Runa Sandvik, has long experience in training journalists around the world on digital safety. "Hopefully, other news organisations in many nations will follow the Times' lead to finally start taking digital safety seriously."

Security protocols need not be limited to a newsroom; they are also necessary in collaborative efforts. A good and timely example of a collective digital-security plan can also be seen in the "Panama Papers" revelations. coordinated by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

The security around the Panama Papers began with the German reporter who originally received the leaked documents, using several encryption tools along with old-fashioned verbal phrases to communicate with his source. But the protection later extended to the whole network of 370 journalists in 109 news outlets across 76 countries. The ICIJ designed a secure database, a search engine protected by 2 Factor Authentication and a chat system so reporters could communicate, while URLs were shared over encrypted e-mail. This case highlights the need for journalists to have a digital-security protocol when sharing material with colleagues or sources.

Protecting their online activity is but one aspect of the advantage that journalists can take from the expanding field of digital tools. Another area of opportunity is the development of tools used for other aspects of security, especially physical security.

There are general threats to journalists, affecting not an individual but a community, and the best way to begin a protection strategy is to form networks. And even non-secure tools can help. Take the case of Pakistani journalists who started a WhatsApp group called "Editors for Safety", which editors across the country use to share news about attacks on their colleagues. This way, any aggression against a journalist anywhere in the country (and whether in a big city or a small town) can instantly become news at the national or international level. Zaffar Abbas, one of the editors behind the idea, told the World

"TWO-STEP (ALSO KNOWN AS TWO-FACTOR OR MULTIFACTOR) AUTHENTICATION CAN PREVENT A HACKER FROM GAINING ACCESS TO AN ACCOUNT FAR MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN A PASSWORD ALONE. WHEN LOGGING IN FROM A NEW LOCATION, IT REQUIRES USERS TO ENTER A PASSWORD AND A RANDOMLY GENERATED CODE SENT TO A DEVICE, TYPICALLY VIA A TEXT MESSAGE OR SMARTPHONE APPLICATION. IN OTHER WORDS, ACCESSING AN ACCOUNT REQUIRES HAVING TWO THINGS: SOMETHING YOU KNOW (THE PASSWORD) AND SOMETHING YOU HAVE (A PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED DEVICE)."

- WIRED

DIGITAL SECURITY IS ONE FIELD UNDERGOING CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT. ANOTHER EMERGING AREA IS ONE FOCUSED ON DIGITAL TOOLS FOR OTHER SECURITY CONCERNS, SUCH AS PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK. APPLICATIONS FOR CONDUCTING RISK EVALUATION, OR ALLOWING A JOURNALIST TO SHARE HIS OR HER GEOLOCATION WHEN ENTERING A DANGEROUS AREA, ARE ALSO BEING DEVELOPED.

Editors Forum about the kidnapping of a journalist in Quetta. Less than five minutes after the alert was put on the chat group, the attack had been broadcast on more than 20 television channels.

The group helps editors everywhere get the details of a particular story and – a crucial point – indicate how some details have to be treated, out of concern for the victim's safety. But Abbas's rationale for creating the group is simple and powerful: an attack on one journalist is an attack on the industry, and speaking with one voice helps to provoke a bigger response.

Even though WhatsApp is not a secure platform, its widespread use

among journalists is a first step toward developing a network that can later use a stronger encryption tool to protect more delicate communications.

Threats are also specific and individual, which require risk evaluation to be habitual. In the past two years, several applications have been developed to mitigate physical danger during high-risk coverage.

Amnesty International and Front Line Defenders rolled out Panic Button, an app that allows users to establish a network of trusted contacts and to share with them their geolocation and a track of their movements. The app was developed for human-rights defenders,





Zaffar Abbas showing the WhatsApp tool at a UNESCO safety conference Photo: Ingrid Cobben

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PR[©]TECT JOUR NALISTS





Now is the time to #ProtectOurJournalists Join our campaign ProtectOurJournalists.org

Background photo by Mstyslav Chernov unframe.com under CC BY-SA 3.0

but journalists can benefit greatly from it too.

The International Women's Media Foundation developed a similar app, called Reporta. After some controversy about the way the app protects the user's data, the IWMF has moved to address the shortcoming and enhance its security measures. However, tests showed it to be a handy tool for journalists working in a dangerous area.

At the International Center for Journalists, an app called Salama combines a record of attacks against the press in a certain region with a test to measure a journalist's safety network (peer support, company benefits, labor protections, equipment, and relationship with sources). This produces an assessment of the risk a journalist would face in the place he or she works, or will be working.

Another tool is Umbrella, by Security First, which provides a checklist of recommendations that journalists can follow before going on a dangerous assignment. I tested the app in Mexico with a few journalists who covered the manhunt for drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán in the fall of 2015, venturing into remote areas of the Sierra Madre under a high level of risk.

Journalists can use these tools in intuitive ways and on a personal level, but they need a policy. A good culture of safety must be developed at an institutional level, with the support of media companies helping reporters and editors to assess the threats, and helping them get the most suitable digital tools. Even a good security plan at the individual level can represent a danger to a journalist's colleagues if that plan is not shared within a news organisation.

While newsrooms are still adapting to emerging threats and to a new security culture, hopefully in the coming years we will see a growing number of journalists taking advantage of digital tools to ensure their protection.

NEXT-LEVEL STORYTELLING: MOVING FROM MIGRATION TO INTEGRATION

By Ingrid Cobben

"THE REFUGEE CRISIS IS NOT GOING TO GO AWAY AND THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A GREATER NEED FOR USEFUL AND RELIABLE INTELLIGENCE ON THE COMPLEXITIES OF MIGRATION. BUT IF THAT IS TO HAPPEN, WE MUST STRENGTHEN THE CRAFT OF JOURNALISM."

- AIDAN WHITE, DIRECTOR, ETHICAL JOURNALISM NETWORK, ON THE RELEASE OF THE REPORT MIGRATION STORIES

NEXT-LEVEL STORYTELLING

igration into Europe was the number-onenews topic last year and is likely to remainhigh on the news agenda for the remainder of 2016. But the focus is set to change from the very personalised, human stories of migrants' andrefugees' journeys that have featured on news pages.

The World Editors Forum spoke to Patrick Kingsley, The Guardian's specialist migration reporter, who says the emotional type coverage of migrants' journeys has reached saturation point. He now expects more focus on 'integration stories'. "Journalists need to think of different ways of attacking the story," he said, "and perhaps focus a bit more on how refugees are getting on now in Europe."

Hind Al-Harby, a 28-year old Iraqi journalist, currently lives with her family in a refugee foyer in Luxembourg, awaiting asylum. She worked for privately held TV station Al-Sharqiya in Baghdad for five years, but was forced to leave her country after receiving death threats. She fled with her family to Turkey, where they lived for two years. But out of fear of being sent back to Iraq, last year they decided to take the socalled "death journey" to Europe.

As both a journalist and a refugee, Al-Harby is well placed to discuss the media coverage of stories of migrants and refugees. She was impressed with the approach of Spanish journalist Javier Bauluz, whom she met during train rides as he covered the migrants'

GETTING THE LANGUAGE RIGHT Definitions from the Ethical Journalism Network

Migrant: someone who moves, temporarily or permanently, from one place or country to another. A migrant is someone who moves freely.

Refugee: someone who is forced to move because of persecution, or is displaced by war, humanitarian disaster or some other external and compelling factor. States are obliged to provide them with protection under international law.

Asylum seeker: a refugee seeking protection from war or persecution, who applies for refugee status under international and national laws. stories. "He ate with us, stayed in the camps with us and took the same train rides with us," Al-Harby said, "and I urged him to tell the people in Europe that we are normal, and educated."

But in most newsrooms, resources are limited, and journalists cannot go to such lengths to get the full story. Even if they could, it is still a difficult – almost impossible – task to accurately portray a story of migrants or refugees. "No-one can describe the journey, even me, I cannot. It's a feeling you can only understand if you've been through it: putting your family in a plastic boat, you're in the middle of the sea, and you have nothing, you just hope that you will arrive safely. And I even had to pay to feel this horrible," Al-Harby said.

Journalists face a huge challenge to accurately portray migration stories. The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) analysed the international media coverage last year, and concluded in an in-depth report called 'Moving Stories' that "journalists often fail to tell the full story and routinely fall into propaganda traps laid by politicians." Examining the quality of the coverage in the European Union and in 14 other countries, the conclusions were surprisingly similar:

- Journalism is under pressure from a weakening media economy
- Political bias and opportunism drive the news agenda
- · Dangerous hate speech is still widespread
- Migrants and refugees are stereotyped and socially excluded.

"Around the world, media coverage is often politically led with journalists following an agenda dominated by loose language and talk of invasion and swarms, but at other moments, the story is laced with humanity, empathy and a focus on the suffering of those involved," said Aidan White, director of the EJN.

Looking back at the challenges from 2015, there are a few lessons we can draw upon to improve our reporting:

Initial reporting came too late

The EJN found that the media initially failed not only to challenge the European Union and its member states' readiness to deal with the migration crisis, but also to alert its audience to it. It took a picture of Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian child found drowned on a Turkish beach in September 2015, to wake up the public to a crisis that was already in full swing. The image of the little boy was shown on 20 million screens around the world within 12 hours and triggered a change in coverage to focus more on the human side of the story. Straight after the image of Kurdi went viral, the use



of the word "refugee" took precedence over the word "migrant" on social media.

Getting the language right

The terms "migrant," "refugee" and "asylum seeker" were used interchangeably by most media, particularly at the start of the crisis. Analysis by Cardiff University, commissioned by UNESCO, showed that in Germany and Sweden, the words "refugee" and "asylum seeker" were most common, whereas Italy and the UK predominantly used the term "migrant." In Spain, the media generally spoke of "immigrants."

The use of terminology is still up for debate, as publishers are divided on the issue. Al Jazeera decided to use "refugee," while the BBC – although criticised for it – went for "migrant." "There was nearly as much outrage about the use of language as [there was about] the plight of the people," Lindsey Hilsum, Channel 4's international editor, wrote on her blog.

The Guardian's Kingsley said that if you don't know exactly why a group of people you're writing about are on the move, it is better to call them migrants – referring to the actual movement, rather than the reasons behind it. "It shouldn't be a dirty word, it should just be a factual, neutral term that refers to people who are moving from A to B across international borders."

Challenging hate speech

The EJN reports that "outrageous anti-migrant or anti-Muslim statements by politicians like Donald Trump in the United States and some European leaders fueled increasing public concern and hijacked media coverage." As migrants and refugees are a vulnerable community, they are easily scapegoated. Combating this type of hate speech, not only from authorities but also from the public, is a challenge.

Hate speech is an incredibly dangerous and growing problem, whether by politicians, religious groups, on social media or elsewhere, according to EJN director White, who used the attitude of US presidential candidate Trump towards migrants and Muslims as an example. "From that hate speech, there springs a possibility of inciting others to intense hatred and to take violent action," he said.

The challenge for journalists is to identify hate speech, to decide how to report on it and to put it into context. "Living in an age of hate speech, journalism is needed more than ever to counteract the drift towards intolerance and extremist violence," said White, whose organisation put combating hate speech high on its agenda for 2016.

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Debunking social media

A fake Instagram account from a refugee named Abdou Diouf turned out to be the work of Spanish production company Getxophoto, aiming to denounce Western frivolity. "We have to take selfies at all times, and it seems that an event has not been experienced if you have not shared it." said Joana Sendra, one of its producers. The spoof was a harsh reminder for journalists to remain sceptical when dealing with social media. While *The Huffington Post* and other media companies treated the story as legitimate, *Storyful* soon uncovered the hoax.

In general, the EJN points out, the debate was dominated by two things – emotions and numbers.

THE CHALLENGE FOR JOURNALISTS IS TO IDENTIFY HATE SPEECH, TO DECIDE HOW TO REPORT ON IT AND TO PUT IT INTO CONTEXT.

Visualising the human side of the story

There have been some brilliant migration-storytelling productions, many of which were character-led using immersive storytelling techniques.

Think of *The New York Times*' "The Displaced," which used Virtual Reality to shine a light on the 30 million children forced to leave their homes, or the interactive documentary "Refugee Republic," which lets the viewer navigate through a digital world of images, videos and graphics to get a better understanding of everyday life in a refugee camp in northern Iraq.

Even the old art of comics journalism provided a refreshingly sensitive approach to migration storytelling. Not only because it is very visual, yet allows more privacy than picture or videos, but also because the newsgathering process enables easy access. Holding only a sketchbook and a voice recorder rather than a big camera, people tend to be more open, said Jules Calis, a graphic journalist.

Last October, Bobbie Johnson, a senior editor and co-founder of *Medium*, set up a crowdsourcing project called The Ghost Boat, asking the public to help investigate the disappearance of a boat containing 243 people trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Italy. The latest update from the project takes the investigation to the next level. Reaching out to the community, Medium asks people to get involved in a satellite-image search using Tomnod. Each viewer gets shown a random area of the sea, hoping that this collaboration will lead to solving the mystery of the missing boat.

In terms of photojournalism, migration stories were overwhelmingly present. *Time* magazine had six photographers covering the crisis from Europe, and World Press Photo reported receiving an enormous number of migration-related submissions. Out of more than 80,000 submissions, the foundation selected an image by Australian Warren Richardson for its Photo of the Year award – the most prestigious prize in photography. The black-and-white picture shows a man handing a child through a barbed-wire fence in Hungary. The Budapest-based freelance photojournalist decided to walk to the Netherlands to pick up his prize – in solidarity with the refugees.

The other side: the numbers game

While these visceral human-interest stories have been very powerful in providing a better understanding of how the migration crisis has affected the lives of thousands, a lot of the debate has been dominated by numbers.

Firstly, certain numbers have been repeatedly misused in the media – for example, the number of people claiming asylum in Europe, as opposed to the total figure for those actually arriving in Europe. This caused confusion because it doesn't only refer to the number of people arriving by boat. Those claiming asylum include people from Albania, Kosovo and other parts of the Balkans, which is a separate issue.

Secondly, politicians, religious figures, community leaders and public figures have twisted and exaggerated statistics for political reasons, which challenges journalists to decide what's genuine and relevant to their audience. While numbers are prone to manipulation, having the correct data is absolutely essential for quality reporting.

"Surprisingly, the numbers that were so crucial to the migration debate weren't available," said Nicolas Kayser-Bril in an interview with the World Editors Forum. His data-driven storytelling agency called Journalism++ set up a project to count the financial and human cost of migration. In its Migrants' Files database, it reports that more than 23,000 people have died since 2000. While a focus on numbers may have dehumanised some of the reporting, data journalism plays a vital role in the debate. By counting and reporting the number of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, journalists can detect trends. The latest March 2016 update of the project shows how migrant routes have changed and that the number of deaths on the eastern Mediterranean route has increased significantly.

"Projects like The Migrants' Files play an essential role in covering the migration story, providing both accurate information and context for other journalists to draw upon so that media do not miss future opportunities to hold the EU and its members to account," Tom Law, communications officer at the EJN told the World Editors Forum.

Worth noting is the unique collaboration on this project among 15 journalists from different European newsrooms. They managed to create the database on a budget of only 7,000 euros, and used this research to produce stories that have appeared in Italy's *L'Espresso*, Greece's RadioBubble, Switzerland's *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Sweden's *Sydsvenskan*, France's *Le Monde Diplomatique*, and Spain's *El Confidencial*. *The Guardian* also did some write-ups drawing from the project.

Kingsley of *The Guardian* said he usually quotes arrival numbers sourced from the UNHCR-database. But the main problem is discerning the nationalities of the arrivals. "We know that some people lie about where they're from," he said. "At one point, the records were showing that 66% of the people coming to Greece were from Syria. Maybe part of those were actually Iraqis pretending to be Syrians, because they may have heard that it was easier to get asylum if you were Syrian."

Partner up: journalists are not alone in the challenge

There are many more organisations out there ready to assist the media; publishers can apply to them for funding to help with specific aspects of reporting. Publishers can also reach out to journalists' unions and media associations, which can assist in, for example, access to information requests, when journalists aren't allowed to enter refugee camps.

Besides that, newsrooms can connect with NGOs, refugee groups, activists and refugees to get interesting insights into the community and for useful editorial guidelines on the sensitivities of reporting on migration. Larry Moore Macaulay, a refugee-rights activist, analyst and social commentator, founded an online radio station called the Refugee Radio Network.



Refugees on "death journey" Photo: Hind Al-Harby, Iraqi journalist and refugee

NEWSROOMS' CHECKLIST FOR MIGRATION COVERAGE

The Ethical Journalism Network provides a list of recommendations to set up a newsroom for migration reporting:

- Appoint specialist migration/ refugee reporters
- 2. Provide journalists with the background and consequences of migration
- 3. Avoid political bias, and challenge hate speech
- 4. Respect the privacy of sources of information
- 5. Establish transparent and accessible internal systems for dealing with audience complaints
- 6. Ensure newsroom diversity with reporters and editors from minority communities
- 7. Provide training for journalists, covering everything from international conventions and law to refugee rights, as well as what terms to use while covering refugee stories
- 8. Monitor coverage regularly. Organise internal discussions on how to develop and improve
- 9. Manage online comments and engage with the audience, to avoid hate speech



700 660 rate

Refugee camp in Dunkirk, France Graphic: Jules Calis

Speaking on a panel at this year's International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Italy, he emphasised the need for refugees to have a voice in the debate: "If we let other people tell our stories for us, we're doomed."

In a debate on media and migration at UNESCO in Paris last March, organised by the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC), EJN director White suggested more effective partnerships between media, the refugee community and policymakers, to build a public information system that provides reliable and useful data. "Publishers need to recognise that there is tremendous goodwill available to support media that want to do the right thing: report on this issue humanely, fairly and balanced," he said.

Regarding editorial independence, White said there were ways to partner up without compromising. The key is in the terms of negotiation, or to have an intermediary who can help mediate between different parties.

Then, there are several initiatives from journalists that can be a great source of information. For example, **Refugees Deeply**, an independent digital-media project dedicated to covering the refugee crisis, which is a hub for articles, news and opinion on the subject.



Refugees on "death journey" Photo: Hind Al-Harby, Iraqi journalist and refugee

WHILE A FOCUS ON NUMBERS MAY HAVE DEHUMANISED SOME OF THE REPORTING, DATA JOURNALISM PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN THE DEBATE. BY COUNTING AND REPORTING THE NUMBER OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES ARRIVING IN EUROPE, JOURNALISTS CAN DETECT TRENDS.

RESOURCES: FREE TOOLS 20 FREE TOOLS FOR CREATING MULTIMEDIA AND INTERACTIVES

By Abigail Edge



A PICTURE MAY SPEAK A THOUSAND WORDS, BUT WHAT IF YOU WANT TO MIX THINGS UP A BIT?

Here's a list of interactive apps and tools you can use to enrich your stories and boost engagement, from copyright-free images to video, data visualisations, and infographics.

And the best thing?

They're all free.



IMAGES AND GRAPHICS

Canva: Super simple graphic design tool.

Unsplash: Searchable database of royalty-free, high-res photos. Also check out-Dreamstime, Pixabay, and Death to the Stock Photo.

Pixlr: In-browser photo editor for fixing and adjusting, plus layers, filters, and more.

Skitch: An Evernote product, Skitch is a screenshot tool that allows you to add annotations, shapes and sketches (Mac and iOS only).

PhotoCollage: This tool for Mac, Windows, Android and iOS does what it says on the tin. Choose from collage templates or use your skills to create freeform collages.

VIDEO AND GIFs

Pexels Video: Copy-right free stock video footage, divided by topic. Also check out Wedistill.io.

Giphy: Quickly create a GIF from a gallery of images, YouTube videos, or uploaded videos.

TouchCast: Create interactive videos by adding elements such as photos, Google Maps, polls, and social feeds. Originally iPad-only, TouchCast is now available in beta for desktop PCs. Magisto: For video editing on a budget you can't go wrong with iMovie, but Magisto is a good free alternative. It allows you to make basic edits, like trims, filters and transitions, as well as add background music and sound effects.

Miro Video Converter: Converts almost any video to MP4, WebM (vp8), Ogg Theora, or for Android, iPhone, and iPad.



MAPS, DATA VISUALISATIONS AND INFOGRAPHICS

Silk: Upload a dataset and create interactive charts and maps in minutes.

Plotly: Plot your data using line plots or bar charts, 'scatter plots', and heat maps.

MapJam: Quick and easy web app for cus-

tomising a map with place markers.

StoryMap JS: Tell stories with interactive maps featuring images and video.

Piktochart: Easy infographic design app for powerful visuals.

OTHER INTERACTIVES

Timeline JS: Beautiful timelines that are easy to build, and intuitive to use.

Thinglink: Created embeddable images with tags containing text, other photos, videos, music, and more.

Riddle: A tool for polls, quizzes and Buzz-Feed-style GIFs.

Storify: Curate social posts from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and more into an embeddable vertical timeline.

Typeform: Build engaging, mobile-ready forms and surveys.

BONUS TIP!

If you're using a tool that doesn't generate a responsive embed code, you can use embedresponsively.com to make sure it works well across any device.



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NEXT-LEVEL MODELS: CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM GAINS GROUND

By Ingrid Cobben

"IN A WORLD OF 7 BILLION PEOPLE, WITH A CACOPHONY OF VOICES THAT ARE OFTEN ILL-INFORMED AND BASED ON NARROW AGENDAS, WE NEED RESPONSIBLE MEDIA THAT EDUCATE, ENGAGE AND EMPOWER PEOPLE AND SERVE AS A COUNTERPOINT TO POWER. WE NEED THEM TO OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES IN THE CURRENT STREAM OF NEWS AND WE NEED TO SEE SOLUTIONS THAT INSPIRE US TO ACTION. CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM OFFERS A WAY TO DO THAT."

- MICHAEL MØLLER, UN DIRECTOR, IN THE GUARDIAN

NEXT-LEVEL MODELS

few years back, it was easy for critics to dismiss the idea of constructive journalism as "sunshine" journalism or development journalism in which critical elements of a story are ignored to project a positive idea. However, the movement of constructive journalism is gaining ground among journalists and academics internationally. Publishers, too, are keen to get involved as they discover the positive response of audiences.

It's a journalist's responsibility to report on society's problems, but also to tell the stories of people with creative ideas that solve these problems. That's what advocates of constructive, or the closely-related solutions-oriented journalism stand for. Doing this consequently leads to more positive stories, too.

Constructive journalism is about seeing the world as a well-being model rather than a diseased model. It aims to "depict a more accurate picture, whilst adhering to the core principles of journalism," says Danish journalist and author Cathrine Gyldensted, a pioneer in the field. The process involves journalists rethinking their habitual approach of focusing solely on covering problems and conflicts and expands it to facilitate a future-oriented debate; embrace solution-focused coverage; and engage and co-create with citizens.

Solutions-based, constructive stories are highly relevant to our societies. This example shows how citizen action has led to concrete, positive results: The French solutions journalism publication **Reporters d'Espoirs** carried a story about the fight against the Italian mafia in Sicily, where shopkeepers pay protection money (*pizzo*), to the *Cosa Nostra*. In 2004, a grassroots movement called *Addiopizzo* (goodbye to the *pizzo*) shook things up, with a coalition of shopkeepers refusing to pay. More than ten years later, hundreds of vendors have signed up to defy the mafia and fight for dignity, security and solidarity.

A common concern about solutions journalism is the risk of advocacy. Critics say that journalists should stick to reporting the facts and telling the audience what is happening.

"That risk [of advocacy] is not higher than for any other type of stories as long as we do our job as reporters and anchor story selection and storytelling in credible evidence, data and good sourcing," says Keith Hammonds, President & Chief Operating Officer at of the US-based Solutions Journalism Network, which provides training in newsrooms. "We make decisions all the time as reporters that reflect our judgment about what's important, what's relevant and what the evidence is telling us."

Such concerns about journalistic integrity will soon be a thing of the past, he explains, because newsrooms are running out of alternatives. The potential for conflict isn't much different to financing journalism through advertising or sponsors.



CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM IS ABOUT SEEING THE WORLD AS A WELL-BEING MODEL RATHER THAN A DISEASED MODEL. IT AIMS TO "DEPICT A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE, WHILST ADHERING TO THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM."

- Cathrine Gyldensted

Gyldensted has a bolder approach. She is not averse to a bit of activism, as long as you're transparent about it. Stop being blind, she says, "we [journalists] are not mirroring the world, we are moving the world". In her book "From Mirrors to Movers" (free to download), Gyldensted provides five practical ways to implement constructive journalism:

1. Expand the mind: Work with journalists' hidden, unconscious biases;

 Storm the brain: Brainstorm on constructive story framing;
 Change the question: Use constructive journalistic interviewing techniques;

4. Tell it right: Engage audiences through technology; determine what emotions cause stories to go viral on social media; co-create with audiences; use systemic overviews on complex story topics; and 5. Move the world: Facilitate future-oriented debate.

The aim of constructive journalism is to produce more positive stories without being Pollyannaish, separating it from the so-called "positive news" approach that doesn't adhere to essential journalistic principles, resulting in "fluffy" stories that often try to be positive at the expense of telling the truth. This risks watering down the news and undercutting the accountability of journalism. Positive news stories may be happy and uplifting, but they do not rely on critical journalistic judgment - unlike constructive and/or solutions stories.

It's mostly journalists, though, who care about the distinction says Danielle Batist, Acting Editor of constructive journalism magazine *Positive.News.* "Of course, journalists, cynical as they are, immediately ring the alarm bells when they hear about positive news, but readers don't have a problem with the term," says Batist. "On the con-

THE FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM

Constructive journalism contains many closely related forms of journalism: explanatory, participatory, community, social, and slow journalism. Despite these different approaches, quality journalism requires the same underlying core principles.

The Ethical Journalism Network describes them as follows:

- **Truth and Accuracy** Journalists cannot always guarantee 'truth', but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism. We should always strive for accuracy, give all the relevant facts we have and ensure that they have been checked. When we cannot corroborate information, we should say so.
- Independence Journalists must be independent voices; we should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. We should declare to our editors - or the audience - any of our political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.
- Fairness and Impartiality Most stories have at least two sides. While there is no obligation to present every side in every piece, stories should be balanced and add context. Objectivity is not always possible, and may not always be desirable (in the face, for example, of brutality or inhumanity), but impartial reporting builds trust and confidence.
- **Humanity** Journalists should do no harm. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others.
- Accountability A sure sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to hold ourselves accountable. When we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere, not cynical. We listen to the concerns of our audience. We may not change what readers write or say but we will always provide remedies when we are unfair.

WHAT IS CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM?

Add a "now what?" to the 5W's of information gathering on every story you run. The result is a focus on possibilities, growth, and solutions while adhering to the core principles of journalism. But the approach goes beyond merely reporting on solutions, and here is why:

- Strengthened engagement with citizens

 Readers are often the greatest untapped source of knowledge. Tapping into local communities, The Counted, an initiative from *The Guardian*, crowdsourced hundreds of tips and submissions about people killed by law enforcement officers in the US. It is counting the killings because there is no official tally.
- 2. Strengthened credibility by sharing the journalist's learning curve Journalists at *De Correspondent* act as discussion leaders who combine input from calls to their members with their journalistic expertise to produce stories that are socially relevant to their readers. The result? Not just one story, but a series of updates and insights for ongoing debate.
- 3. Understanding of what makes stories go viral – Positive stories get shared, whereas those evoking sadness create no action, says Cathrine Gyldensted, a pioneer in the field, and the first to apply positive psychology to the innovation of journalism. It's not about clicks and shares, but about understanding the psychological principles that engage readers.
- 4. Asking future-oriented questions to make political debates more visionary – Journalists don't mirror the world, they move the world, Gyldensted told the World Editors Forum, explaining that we risk slowing down or even counteracting visionary decisionmaking on social development if we don't shift to future-oriented questioning.

trary, the publication has benefited a lot over the years from such clean wording that it is easily found on the Internet."

The publication successfully relaunched earlier this year following a crowdfunding appeal, attracting 1,525 people who, together invested £263,000, creating a co-ownership. "There is a growing demand for intelligent coverage of positive developments, and an opportunity for it in the shifting media landscape," said Seán Dagan Wood, *Positive*. *News* Editor-in-Chief.

One of the new co-owners, Louise Ann Knight, said she invested because it enables her to offer ideas as to how news can be delivered to people in a way that empowers rather than undermines them. "The publication offers a much broader view of what is happening in the world. Most media marginalises a lot of news and presents what little they do share in a negative light," she said.

People respond very well to stories that generate positive emotions, whereas emotions such as sadness create no action, according to Gyldensted, who applies her academic background in positive psychology to the innovation of journalism. The integration of behavioural sciences is what has revitalised constructive journalism, and distinguishes it from closely-related earlier movements such as civic or public journalism and peace journalism.

Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania found that stories evoking meaning and awe go viral because they invigorate people. Their project "What makes content go viral?" analysed almost 7,000 articles from the *The New York Times*, and is currently being taken forward to look at engagement time and impact, on top of clicks and shares.

"Millions of people are looking for positive news online, it has generated an enormous amount of traffic," said Batist. The fact that solutions stories tend to be more viral may just be the key factor that triggers publications to get on board.

The Huffington Post, which tapped into this shareability potential, saw their traffic

increase significantly when they introduced new sections called "impact", "good news" and "what's working". This has worked too, for other media organisations, like South Africa's Times Media Group, the UK's Guardian Media Group, *Upworthy*, and several Scandinavian broadcasters, which also reported generating more traffic and loyalty by adding constructive elements to their coverage.

"It is not just about generating traffic, but in this media environment where there is so much information out there, it is very important to understand the underlying psychological principles in order to spread good and important stories to the maximum," Gyldensted says.

Solid evidence to prove that solutions stories generate higher news consumption than "normal" or "problem" stories has yet to materialise, even though the approach has been around for 15 years. Although the number of research projects is increasing, most initiatives are based on small sample analyses or quasi-experiments.

That's why the Windesheim School of Journalism in the Netherlands is taking it to the next level. Last year, it hired Gyldensted as Director of Constructive Journalism, not only to integrate the approach into the students' curriculum, but also to create a central hub to gather research and methodology for like-minded media professionals to collaborate internationally.

With research progressing, awareness is also increasing. More and more newsrooms are training their journalists in this approach. The biggest hurdle, editors say, is to find the time and resources to implement solutions journalism. However, advocates generally agree that there's no need to assign a specialist constructive journalist or create a team.

Best practice is to integrate the approach into the day-to-day newsroom culture, they argue. Simply apply the following rule to every story: Instead of just asking the 5W's (who, what, when, where, why) and "how", also ask "now what?". It is about changing the mindset, which is free for all, and not very time-consuming.

DE CORRESPONDENT: A LAB TO TEST CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM INITIATIVES

Last February, the health correspondent from the Dutch news website De Correspondent asked readers to share their experiences of bureaucracy in the country's health system. This process is how almost every story on the publication is initiated.

More than a hundred responses were received within two weeks. Among them were physicians' complaints about insurance companies overloading them with unnecessary administrative tasks. Contributions from insurers, on the other hand, emphasised the need for detailed information on treatments to be able to cut costs, whilst maintaining quality.

The in-depth information and stories of dayto-day struggles sourced from "members", combined with journalistic expertise, led to a series of articles that were published throughout the year as the story evolved.

"They [*De Correspondent*] are sophisticated in solutions-reporting, they facilitate future-oriented debate and they share a learning curve around a topic with their readers, which is a constructive, nuanced element," Cathrine Gyldensted, Director of Constructive Journalism at Windesheim University told the World Editors Forum.

"MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR POSITIVE NEWS ONLINE."

- DANIELLE BATIST



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NEXT-LEVEL ETHICS: REFINING NATIVE ADVERTISING STANDARDS By Chia Lun Huang

"I HAVE A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH SPONSORED CONTENT, THE OLD-SCHOOL JOURNALIST IN ME DOES NOT LIKE IT. I FEEL THAT IT CAN BE MISLEADING. IN FACT, I THINK A LOT OF TIMES, IT'S DESIGNED TO BE MISLEADING, AND I DON'T LIKE THAT ABOUT IT. THE JOURNALIST AND EDITOR IN ME RESISTS THAT. NOW, THE PUBLISHER IN ME AND THE PERSON WHO WANTS JOURNALISM TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE, HAS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT'S ATTRACTIVE TO ADVERTISERS. ... HOWEVER, AS LONG AS IT'S CLEARLY LABELED, AND IT'S NOT PRODUCED BY THE JOURNALISTS IN MY NEWSROOM, I'M OKAY WITH IT."

- TERRY ORME, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, IN *EDITOR AND PUBLISHER*

NEXT-LEVEL ETHICS

o longer a taboo, native advertising has become a favorite among publishers. Yet, the questions of labeling and editorial involvement remain an ongoing evolution. In fact, the line between native advertising and journalism is becoming even more blurred.

This January, *The Guardian* revamped the way it labels its sponsored content or native advertising, thereby conforming to the industry standard of labeling commercially produced content "paid content/ paid for by," and of labeling content produced independently by *The Guardian* but financed by a third party as "supported by".

"We wanted to make our labels even clearer," said Anna Watkins, head of The Guardian Lab, the publication's native-advertising arm. Watkins said previous research showed that Guardian readers were already clear with previous labeling, but that the change was meant to strengthen the trust. It was also influenced by the UK's Advertising Standards Authority, which began ruling against publishers in what it considers inappropriate labeling of native advertising.

The Guardian's change also followed the US Federal Trade Commission's new enforcement policy on native advertising last December "to ensure that long-standing consumer-protection principles apply in the digital marketplace, including to native advertising." Released with an extensive native-advertising guide for business that details 17 examples – specifying what type of content and in what circumstances needs to be labeled, and how – the policy raises the bar for this very new form of advertising.

"The FTC enforcement policy is well-placed, it tightens up a lot of practices that some publications were using a bit irresponsibly," said Chris Rooke, senior vice-president for strategy and operations at *Nativo*, a US-based native-advertising technology company. In fact, *Nativo* requests all of its native-advertising clients to adopt a double labeling policy and to include their logo. "It sets the standard for how native ads have to be administered, for the buy and sell side."

Need for standards

Most publishers and agency content producers understand that clear labeling and transparency with readers are paramount to protect reputation. Yet the range of labeling *—supported by, brought to you by, promoted by, brand sponsors, energized by —* has created a sometimes confusing jungle for readers who may have to adjust from one publication to the next.

"To be honest, we would rather that there is some global or national standard on labeling because every single media organisation is using something different," said Watkins. "The clearest is when everyone has the same labels, but it's probably not going to happen because there are so many different publications with so many different views." The FTC policy has been widely expected, because several studies have shown that readers could not tell the difference between a piece of native advertising and editorial content. In the most recent study published in the December issue of Journal of Advertising, researchers from Grady College in Athens, Georgia showed that only eight percent of subjects were able to identify native advertising as a paid marketing message.

In fact, many media companies do not measure up to the standards that the FTC has drawn up. Only 30 percent of the publishers are in compliance with the FTC's new guidelines, according to reports by Digiday. Especially now that content lives on several different platforms and on shrinking mobile screens, the FTC's request for prominent labeling on all devices will make it harder for native advertising to mix in with editorial content. Some expect 2016 to be the year that the FTC brings about native-advertising cases.

"It costs more to maintain that distinction [between editorial and native advertising], and there is very, very large institutional tension," said George Brock, Professor of Journalism at City University London and a former editor at the *The Times.* "Publishers have to constantly police a large amount of negotiation and adjust their rules since we are exploring a new form of advertising."

Native advertising becoming the norm

As print revenue continues to fall – to less than half of what it was in 2005 in the US – and with digital only slowly catching up, native advertising is seen as a potential savior of the faltering industry. eMarketer has said that spending on native advertising is **expected** to grow to nearly \$9 billion in 2018,

AS NATIVE ADVERTISING GROWS, SOME PUBLICATIONS ARE LOOKING FOR GREATER DISTRIBUTION AS BRANDS LOOK FOR GREATER IMPACT. rising from just \$1.5 billion in 2012. The price it commands, sometimes in the six and seven figures, is also attractive to the diminishing cost-per-impression values of banner ads.

"Publishers and reporters were really, really against native advertising five years ago," said Ebele Wybenga, an Amsterdam-based journalist who published a book on branded journalism in 2013, The Editorial Age. "Now we can discuss this with less shame because more people are doing it. This is not to say that all problems related to integrity are resolved, but it is easier to discuss it than before."

With more people consuming content on mobile devices – a figure that increased from 10 hours per month in 2012 to 34 hours per month in 2014 – fewer are willing to accept the interruptive nature of banner ads, pop-ups or pre-roll on smaller screens. Use of ad blockers – up from 21 million users to 181 million in the past five years – is also prompting marketers and publishers to find new formats of advertising.

Perhaps even more importantly, native advertising plays to publishers' strength of storytelling as opposed to online advertising, which has been trumped by technology giants such as Google and Facebook with their wealth of user data.

Native advertising has been the main source of income for many digital natives such as *Refinery29*, *Vice, Vox, BuzzFeed* and *Quartz*. Now, almost every major legacy publication has now established some form of native-advertising team, such as *Forbes* in 2010, *The New York Times* in 2013, *The Wall Street Journal* in 2014 and *Condé Nast* and *CNN* in 2015.

The line between church and state

Besides labeling, who actually produces the native advertising is also still a cause of debate in the industry. While many publications have faithfully created a complete separate team to produce native advertising, some media companies have decided to directly involve editors in branded-content creation.

Time Inc. Chief Content Officer Norman Pearlstine has said that it makes sense for editors to be involved, as long as it's transparent. Earlier last year, *Condé Nast* announced that it is enlisting its editorial staff to work on branded journalism because if ads are to be as good as editorial, editors should make that content. In light of ad blocking, culture and fashion magazine *Nylon* announced that it is combining the role of the chief editor and head of advertising.

While separating editorial and content creation is an easier distinction, combining the two roles can work but is riskier, said Brock of City University London, and it requires an enormous amount of vigilance to work. As revenue pressure leans in on publishers, Brock is not very optimistic about the future, and said he is expecting a "spectacular disaster" where a media company will be exposed for letting journalistic standards slip in exchange of an enormous bribe from a brand.

"I don't like that prediction, but the weight of money now being poured into these things is bound eventually to break the kind of care that people would have to give to stop it," said Brock. "I am afraid that something will go wrong."

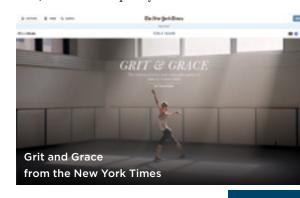
Future of native advertising: becoming programmatic?

As native advertising grows, some publications are looking for greater distribution as brands look for greater impact. "The problem brands have with premium publishers is that the scale is often not large enough for them to justify the investment," said Seraj Bharwani of Visible Measures, an analytics firm based in the US.

Many technology start-ups such as Sharethrough have jumped in to help. Created in 2007, its platform has a database of more than 400 publishers and a combined reach of 270 million global uniques across 3 billion monthly impressions. In partnership with AppNexus, one of the biggest technology companies providing online ad selling, Sharethrough allows real-time bidding and programmatic selling of native advertising.

Such platforms mean that content created by one publisher for a brand can instantly be distributed across different native-advertising space in several publications. It also means smaller publications that do not have the content creation capability can sell native-advertising space and fill it with branded content created by other publishers or by brands themselves.

However, while automating native advertising such as banner ads makes it more efficient and scalable, the fear that quality will suffer



NATIVE-ADVERTISING BEST PRACTICE

TRANSPARENCY

"If you want someone to trust your journalism, you want it to be as uncontaminated as possible by hidden influences or undeclared ones," said George Brock, Professor of Journalism at City University London and a former editor at the *The Times.* "There is no journalism that is 100 percent objective or neutral. If you want trust to be maximized, you want to be sure you declare any influences that exist."

SEPARATING EDITORIAL AND CONTENT PRODUCTION

In his book on native advertising called The Editorial Age, Dutch journalist Ebele Wybenga pointed out the difficulty of cross fertilization between journalism and commerce. In 2013, *Het Finaancieele Dagblad* posted a clearly labeled "Paid for by Aegon, yet 100 percent journalistically independent" article on pension funds. But further investigation by *Follow the Money*, a Dutch collective of investigative financial journalists, found that "while the information offered will most likely have met the standards of reliability expected of a quality newspaper like *Het Finaancieele Dagblad*, Aegon's agenda may well have been advanced by the omission of information less favorable to insurance companies."

FOCUS ON USER EXPERIENCE

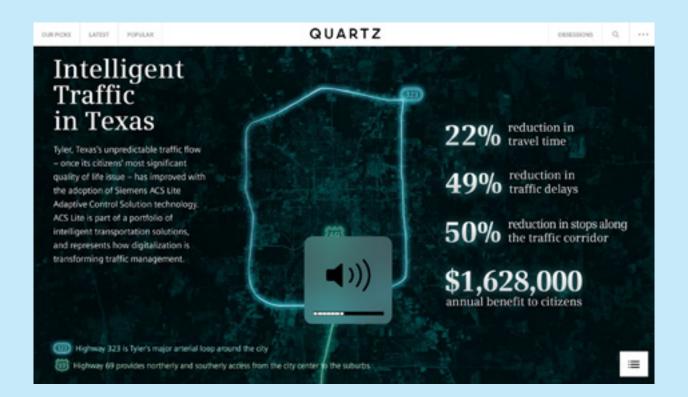
"We messed up," wrote Scott Cunningham, senior vicepresident of Technology and Advertisement Operations at the Interactive Advertising Bureau, in a statement to advertisers and content providers in response to the rise of ad-blocking software. "We lost sight of our social and ethical responsibility to provide a safe, usable experience for anyone and everyone wanting to consume the content of their choice. We need to bring that back into alignment, starting right now." is discouraging some from going in that direction. Digital native publishers that depend almost exclusively on native advertising as a source of income – such as *Refinery29*, *Vice*, *Vox*, *BuzzFeed* and *Mic* – are saying "no" to programmatic native advertising, worrying about a disruptive user experience as is the case in banner advertising.

Some publications are also are trying to differentiate themselves. Forbes has just introduced a "money-back" guarantee on its native ads. Niche media such as *The Economist* and *The Financial Times* are both offering "attention-based" ad sales, which, instead of charging clients by impression, charges by active user attention, also called "cost per hour".

The format of native advertising is also blurring the line between journalism and content. Called the "next level of native advertising" by Nieman Lab, *The Guardian* recently published a true-crime investigative series on a 35-year old unsolved murder case, paid for by Amazon to promote "Bosch," a detective series produced by Amazon Studios.

As more and more publishers offer native advertising, the topic is getting more scrutiny in terms of its effectiveness, and there is pressure to drop the price. In addition, some research is showing that native advertising may not have as good a return as would a piece of content-marketing material, and advertisers are taking note by cutting back on native-advertising investment.

"Native advertising is going to get more crowded and cluttered, and publishers need to maintain a disciplined practice," said Rooke of Nativo. "When publishers begin to deviate from the placement they originally create for, what you are doing is training the user to avoid the placement, and consumers adapt very quickly."



CASE STUDY: QUARTZ

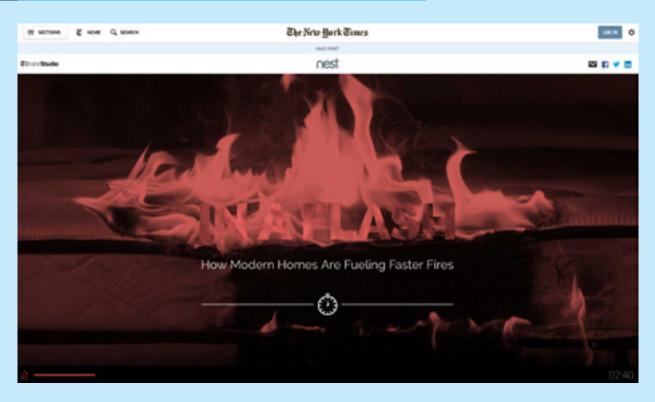
A nearly four-year-old digital startup with a global footprint, almost half of its business coming from mobile, an extremely popular e-mail newsletter, a newly launched smart-phone app and a business-revenue model that is doubling every year, *Quartz* has been described by Neiman Lab as "doing every-thing right". "One of the most important principles for us is that readers have a frictionless experience. They come for news on global economics and we don't want anything to get in the way," said Jane Grenier, executive director of client services at *Quartz*.

A key reason for high growth is *Quartz's* high engagement rate for its advertisements. As a comparison, Grenier said on average a banner may receive 0.01 percent of engagement, but at *Quartz* that figure stands at 1-2 percent. To ensure the quality of its advertising content, Grenier said her team applies a level of "scrupulous vigor that is equivalent to the editorial side" to ensure that the content is "organically engaging." For Siemens, the *Quartz* article began with "Your last glorious run of green lights was no accident," and explained with charts and figures the digitalization effort to reduce road congestion. For United Airlines, *Quartz* crafted an article accompanied with drawings that showcased 50 years of in-flight entertainment.

For Lexus, *Quartz* created an interactive network chart called "The influence network of product design in electronics and communications," which examined the relationships between different technology inventors across different products and platforms. For example, did you know it was Dave Hyatt who invented the tab browsing in Netscape and Firefox, and later moved to Apple to help build Safari?

Quartz's growth is helped by the fact that its 17 million readers are "business elite," with a median age of 38 and half considered to be senior executives or higher. Part of the *Atlantic* media company, *Quartz* employs around 170 people and has a customer-retention rate of nearly 90 percent. *Quartz* is looking to keep pace with the growth and to incorporate more video into its offerings. Sponsored content the Quartz way

NEXT-LEVEL ETHICS



Paid Post for NEST

<u>Case study:</u> NYT FOR BRANDS

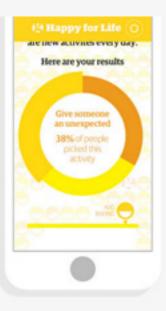
In 2013, *The New York Times* ventured into content creation with its T Brand Studio with top talents in journalism and film-making. "Because we are associated with *The New York Times*, we are incredibly conscious that we need to make content that editorial is proud of," said Kaylee King-Balentine, an Emmy-winning producer who oversees video production and now heads its London office. "Every brand, every piece of content, we are careful in ensuring that we respect the history and storytelling and the brand of *The New York Times.*"

Within two years of its launch, *The New York Times* has evolved its Paid Post offering from print to a full package of video and interactive features. Beginning with a long-form article for Dell in early 2014, T Brand Studio moved into infographics with United Airlines and Goldman Sachs and ventured into mini-film productions with Cole Haan, a shoe brand. Combining multimedia tools, the studio created an interactive experience for Nest, a producer of fire detectors, to demon-

strate how the use of synthetic materials in modern homes has reduced the amount of time available for occupants to escape a fire.

In a 12-month study done in conjunction with Chartbeat, an analytics company, which compared editorial content with Paid Posts, at least five Paid Posts were among the top 5,000 editorial posts on NYTimes.com. The Paid Post made for Netflix, "Women Inmates," which was considered to be the new "Snowfall" of native advertising, even made it to the top 1,000 posts. *The New York Times* publishes about 150,000 articles a year.

With strong demand, the T Brand Studio opened a new office in London last year and has recently launched its first native-advertising campaign. It is also aggressively pushing its native-advertising content on its platforms. The team has grown to nearly 40 people, from just nine when it started in 2013. It has created around 100 campaigns for more than 60 advertising clients.





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CASE STUDY: THE GUARDIAN'S IN-HOUSE MARKETING AGENCY

Compared to its competitors, The Guardian moved to create a full-fledged marketing agency when it created the Guardian Lab in 2014, offering everything from written editorial to video production, mobile experiences, interactive design and event organisation. It recently ventured into a sponsored investigative series involving real crime.

For life-insurance company Beagle Street, the Guardian Lab created a "Happy Life" app that offers mood-boosting tips. By asking how users feel about their day, the app can also generate a real-time UK-happiness map. In addition, the Guardian Lab launched a social-media campaign to encourage people to share photos that looked like a smile. It also set up a 24-hour phone hotline to receive readers' questions about their unhappiness, and produced videos with the answers provided by a well-known psychotherapist.

One of the strengths of the Guardian Lab is finding ways to bridge client needs and editorial interests. *The Guardian* initiated an investigative series into privacy with support from Silent Circles, an encrypted-communications firm. They launched a special business section on sustainability with support from Unilever.

In addition, the Guardian Lab created a permanent Guardian Witness mobile app with support from EE, a UK 4G mobile network. The app allows users to directly share videos, pictures, text and ideas with *The Guardian's* editorial team, as well as to browse contributions submitted by other users. *The Guardian's* editorial team can also issue direct assignments and solicit materials for breaking news. The app has won four awards related to journalism, social interaction and innovation.

The Guardian Lab is headed by Anna Watkins, a seasoned advertising executive with a track record at top advertising agencies who last served as the managing director at Interpublic's Initiative. The Guardian Lab's 133-person team regularly competes in pitch proposals against marketing agencies in the UK, the US and Australia.



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Cherilyn Ireton is Executive Director of the World Editors Forum where she is focused on supporting editors in their drive for quality, sustainable journalism. She is passionate about newsrooms having spent 21 years on newspapers in South Africa, including the Sunday Times and Business Day, in various editorial roles. She shifted to operations management and was COO of BDFM Publishers, a business media joint venture between Times Media Group and Pearson. She left South Africa and moved to the UK as a media consultant 12 years ago, and joined WAN-IFRA in 2011 to run its network for editors. @CherilynIreton

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Please meet "GAMI"

The official name may be "**WAN-IFRA Global Alliance for Media Innovation**"... but among friends the name is simply "GAMI".

Why does GAMI exist?

We are passionate about turning innovation into practical benefits for the news business and our goal is fostering a renewed innovation ecosystem in the news media industry.

How do we work?

We work to connect, support and expand a global community of stakeholders innovating in from the news media world: Publishers, suppliers, start ups, academic and research centers. We aim to bridge the gap between our industry and research.

What are some of the GAMI activities?



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