

SJC School Seminar Series
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Who is going to pay for journalism? Hunting the elusive business model

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& Regan Neal



We want to explore the process – the activity of hunting – rather than the outcome.

Neither of us know what the successful business model is. If we did, we would probably be on a plane right now headed to meet Rupert Murdoch with a large invoice.

What we want to do this afternoon is explore many of the key factors (most of them well-known and well canvasses) in the mix, and the possible constellations of those factors (which are perhaps less discussed).

In line with much of the work in this and related areas, we don't think this is an issue of 'either, or', of binary opposites; but of configurations which are sometimes not contemplated because of the polar oppositionalism which is brought to bear on this topic.

WTF?

All the news fit to print (by hand)

Calligraphers face loss of jobs as 82-year-old Indian newspaper plans to use computerized design in an attempt to save money

Sep 11, 2009 04:30 AM

RICK WESTHEAD
SOUTH ASIA BUREAU

CHENNAI, India—Hunched in front of a bright fluorescent lamp, mostly hidden from view by reams of stacked newsprint, Shabana Begum dips her pen in a vial of black ink and with a flourish, begins writing the headlines for her newspaper's front page. Literally.

She's one of four calligraphers at the *Musalman*, a daily



RICK WESTHEAD/TORONTO STAR

Shabana Begum is a calligrapher at India's oldest Urdu-language newspaper, *Musalman*, one of the last dailies in the world to be written by hand.

A group that includes former state lawmakers, high-profile attorneys and veteran former newspaper reporters plans to launch a non-profit online news organization to provide watchdog and investigative journalism in Orange County. The Voice of OC, which will get its start with USD 140,000 from the Orange County Employees Assn., hopes to fill a void left by shrinking staffs covering the county at the *Orange County Register* and the *Los Angeles Times* ...

First, they sack all the calligraphers

Then, they start doing it themselves

MAGCLOUD

MagCloud enables you to publish your own magazines. All you have to do is upload a PDF and we'll take care of the rest: printing, mailing, subscription management, and more.

How much does it cost?

It costs you nothing to publish a magazine on MagCloud. To buy a magazine costs 20¢ per page, plus shipping. ... You set your issue price and all proceeds above the base price go to you.

How are they printed?

MagCloud uses HP Indigo technology, so every issue is custom-printed when it's ordered. Printing on demand means no big print runs, which means no pre-publishing expense. Magazines are brilliant full color on premium paper with saddle-stitched covers.

...

What do I need to do to participate?

You'll need a PayPal account or major credit card to buy magazines, and publishers will need a PayPal account so we can pay you earnings. To create a magazine, you'll need to upload a PDF ...

Problem is, as Jay Rosen pointed out, it's pretty easy to DIY.

Of course, no-one makes money off the web – except Matt Drudge who makes about \$56m a year.

'The US print news industry is facing journalism jobs have gone away at almost three times the rate jobs have disappeared in the general economy and these are major companies in bankruptcy qualification to attach themselves to the digital 80% of news media, including newspapers, broadcast and edon't do much, but their changing behavior has pulled percentage of Americans opposed to a 100% tax cut on the other side of the trade which reduced dollars to help out falling newspapers will of for the us original content. But a 5% per cent of respondents said they had taught themselves losses were occurring at a fairly steady rate of about 1,000 a month starting in January 2008, and then accelerated, in December 2008 when 7,398 job for 46 per cent of respondents, while 47 per cent said they were required to produce online video clips.'

(Journalism.co.uk, 17/9/2009)

Not only are people not reading (or watching or listening, for that matter), but they aren't going to subsidise either.

The major effect is pretty obvious.

Not just in the USA.

In this environment, DIY applies to journalists, too.

As Lea Thompson said the other week, most people in the media business in Australia believe it is 'headed here like a train'.

In this environment, while the metro daily paper might have employed 300-400 journalists, a typical web operation employs 15-40.

ROCKYMOUNTAIN
I N D E P E N D E N T

an online news magazine featuring in-depth stories and stories that otherwise were not getting covered in the Denver area

Goodbye, from the RMI . . .

We have put everything we made into producing content and supporting our independent partners, but we can no longer afford to produce enough content to justify the membership.

Unproblematically transferring journalism to the digital domain is unlikely to resolve the issues.



Equally, conventional business models will not totally disappear.

Subscription is probably the oldest – the way *The Times* was sold in the 18thC.

It looks good for TV without ads or fussy regulators. HBO

For specialist information which is usually tax deductible or paid by the firm.
Financial newspapers

For regular news when the government controls the conventional media.
Malaysiakini

And for music and music downloads. Lots of examples.

A mix of 'old' and 'new' media.

Media dominate journalism



ABC



theguardian

But for regular, everyday journalism ... ?

Media branding has overtaken the Fourth Estate as the primary role of conventional media.



Chilkoot Pass. Klondike gold rush c.1898.

That has led to a structural refocusing of journalism – from object of inquiry to voyeurism.

In Habermasian terms, to spectatorship and the refeudalisation of the public sphere.

Voyeurism



Voyeurism straddles advertising and subscription models.

Leverages advantage out of either – or both.

Conflates journalism with entertainment, and even pornography.

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"I fail to see how filming the cat makes you a 'citizen journalist'."



At the same time, doing it yourself is made easy.

From the frivolous to the deadly serious.

So, there is less reliance on the conventional, top-down, lecturing media.

Spending on Internet advertising in Britain grew 4.6 percent in the first half of 2009, outperforming the wider ad sector, which slumped 17 percent, and making it the country's biggest ad medium ahead of TV.

- Reuters (29/9/2009)

Moreover, advertising is no longer going to pay for conventional media to carry journalism.

Hyperlocalism



The New York Times

Your town. Your neighborhood. Your block.
 Covered by you and for you.



Maplewood, Millburn & South Orange [Go >](#)



Fort Greene & Clinton Hill [Go >](#)

More Locations: New York Region | Dayton | Washburn | New Jersey | Long Island | Connecticut



Bill Hammerman on Petaluma's past, present, future



MAN FOUND DEAD AT MARYPORT HOTEL
 THE body of a 31-year-old man has been found at the Ellen...



A counter – where people seem to wish to participate, not spectate – where they are perhaps interested in the object of inquiry.

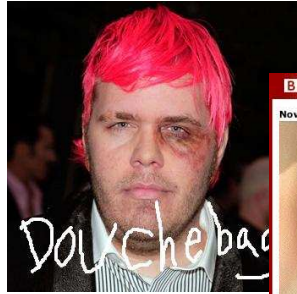
Hyperlocalism. Back to journalism's roots. It, too, straddles business models – from purely corporate commercial to truly community.

‘...while mass media leaves many people feeling powerless and uncertain of what to believe, the internet helps them understand the news. Online media also makes them feel they can make a difference by giving them access to unofficial accounts from people unaffected by professional interests or political correctness and by allowing feedback to authorities ... However, the report also mentioned that the internet is leaving some people more confused than ever, because of its size and abundance of sources.’

(Journalism.co.uk, 16/9/2009)

Not surprisingly, people want to feel both informed and in charge.

Mobilizing 'the people' Formerly known as the audience'



Crowd sourcing to user generated content – from Perez Hilton to Iran via the mobile phone.

So, what business are journalists in?

Media brands ... information ... communication ... the mobile business?



Making sense of this while also putting journalism first.

A range of attempts ... Based on wider social practices.

There are now more than 50 non-profit investigative journalism organisations around the world

Types of intervention

Pre-moderation Imitation
 Complementary UGC

Post-moderation Different
 Supplementary Blogs

Reactive moderation Disruptive
 Re-invention Social
 media

Founded on an understanding of social mediation.

• PARTICIPATION • SOCIAL LIBERTARIANISM
• REACTIVE MODERATION • VISIBLE CONTROL

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| • Orientation | • Dateline |
| • Alert | • 'News' |
| • Social relations | • Audience |
| • Cultural location | • Mediation |
| • Mobilization | • Objectivity |
| • Community | • 'Business' |

The last of those 3 categories tends to participatory, socially libertarian, reactively moderated mediation in which control over the process is rendered visible.

The shift from conventional mediation (on the right) is pretty obvious.

**‘protecting,
strengthening and
expanding spaces
for citizens and
their associations to
exist in, express
themselves and
engage
meaningfully in
public life’** (Civicus
annual report, 2006)



cheshmchap Mohsen Makhmalbaf in guardian - I speak for Mousavi. And Iran - take to the streets <http://bit.ly/RbGhb> **#Iran #iranelection #tehran**

less than a minute ago from web



no_ware_land sending peace and love to iran. u r in my prayers. **#iranelection**

less than a minute ago from TweetDeck



toosinbeymen RT Important way to support demo move. Quote Holy Qu'ran in tweets. Please read and share *URGENT* **#iranelection** <http://bit.ly/14NqVp> **#gr88**

less than a minute ago from web



m_roth #gr88 RT @austinheap Don't put your Proxy on default ports! 81/8080/8181/9090/3128 don't work! **#Iran #iranelection**

less than a minute ago from TweetDeck



danfortes <http://bit.ly/VWLEG> Flickr **#iranelection** - vou ser chato ate todo mundo da minha lista ficar verde tb =P

less than a minute ago from TwitterFox



oxfordgirl RT California - Solidarity for Iranian People - Protest at State Capitol Today, Friday at 5pm - California Sea of Green **#iranelection**

less than a minute ago from web

The objective is to mobilise mediation in the interests of civic expression and association.

‘people +
passion +
technology +
action’ (Brice-
Weller, 2007)



This is a perhaps more grounded way of putting it (which seems to be particularly applicable in the case of the protest in Iran earlier this year).

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

1. 'the socio-technologies of assembly'
(Girard and Stark 2007) – constraints and liberties
2. the 'material mediators' (Hutchins and Klausen 1998)
3. socio-cultural and economic desirability
4. the filling of structural holes (Burt 1992)

Yet before we are carried away by utopian visions of a 'brave new world', we need to know more about

The constraints as well as the liberties inherent in these circumstances

The identities of those who may make new forms of mediation possible materially

What makes these new forms desirable

How bridges will be built across the gaps between the elements

Thick citizenship

*community and individual ... **affective** relationships ... promotes a state of **animated flux** rather than contributing to the arrival at an acceptable consensus* (Kim 2006)

Social brokerage

linkages** across unconnected spaces/actors ... coalitions across boundaries ... activity in interstices ... **innovation (Kern & Nam 2008)

Situatedness

***collaborative** tool design ... skills **sharing** ... broad distribution* (Ananny & Strohecker 2002)

We suggest three possibilities on which those propelling new mediations are drawing.

DEVELOPMENT

1. Media literacy
2. Social activism
3. Initial challenge
4. Accommodation
5. Citizen journalism

Nevertheless, in its specific form, this new mediation does not arrive fully formed.

We have looked at citizen journalism and detect five stages ...

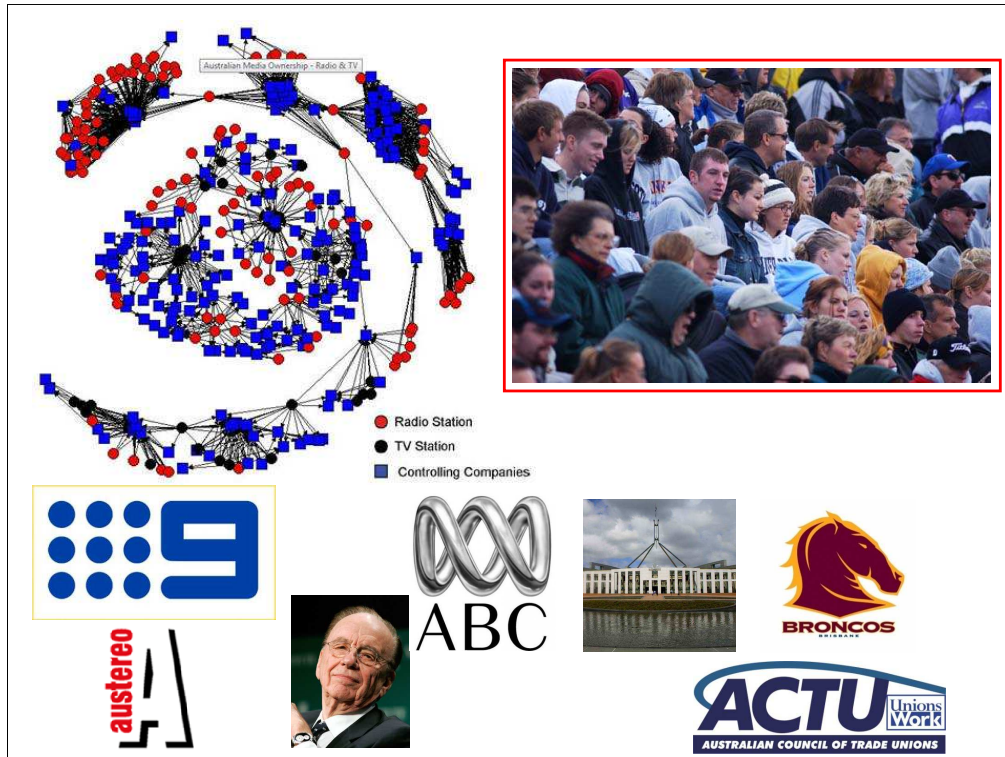
Summary

1. Evolutionary (not revolutionary)
2. Media-civics base (thick citizenship)
3. Bridging structural holes (social brokerage) = more unique information
4. Collaborative – sourcing, constructing, disseminating, participating, reflecting

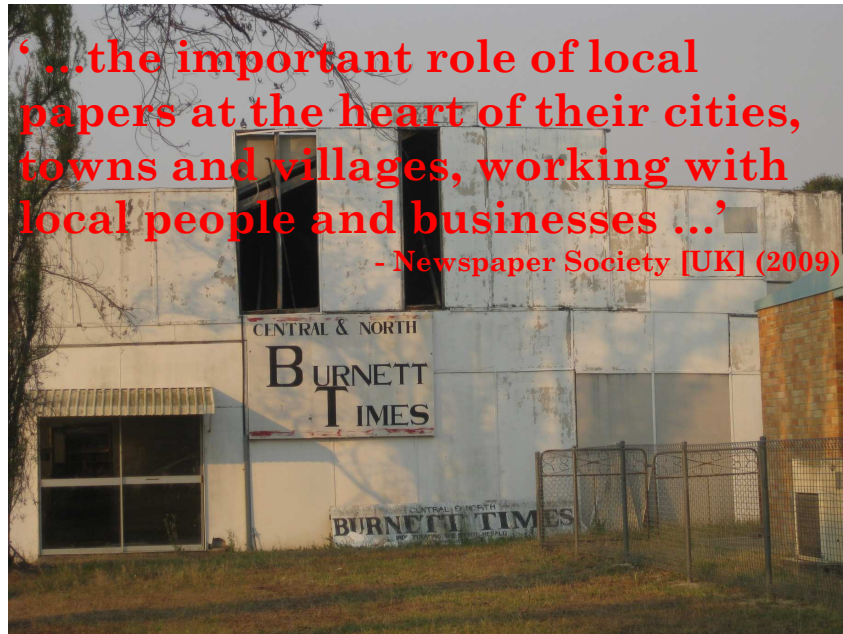
To summarise ...



It is within this kind of understanding that we can view both the main characteristics of these new forms of mediation (on the left) and how they are sloganised (perhaps provocatively).



What they add up to is a projection that journalism's orientation will shift away from centralised institutional power – both of themselves and in relationship to others – towards the marginalised, disorganized and powerless.



THE END?

The quote is from the UK and typifies the supposed relationship between local media (most commonly and historically newspapers) and the spatial community.

Is that relationship breaking down?

If so, it is because over the long 20th century, the local press was increasingly institutionalised (starting with consolidation in the 1920s and resulting in concentration by the end of the century)? The local press is no longer in any meaningful way local – that is, locally-owned, locally-run, or even locally located.

At the same time, 'local' has changed its social meaning in terms of work, (which is increasingly concentrated in metro areas), leisure (which increasingly arrives through a cable or wireless link), services, etc., etc..