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A perfect storm:

Journalism facing unprecedented challenges

Stephen Jukes

“Working in a news factory, without the time to check, without the chance to go out and make contacts and find leads, reporters are reduced to ‘churnalism’, to the passive processing of material which overwhelmingly tends to be supplied for them by outsiders, particularly wire agencies and PR.”

Nick Davies, Flat Earth News

“There are millions of human monitors out there who will pick up on the smallest things and who have the same instincts as the agencies — to be the first with the news. As more people join, the better it will get.”

Alan Rusbridger, Editor of the Guardian

The “hacking” scandal that has engulfed the British press has been described as possibly the worst crisis for journalism in modern times¹. The tawdry practices of the tabloid press and the disdain for basic ethics have been laid bare once and for all, both shocking and disgusting the British public. But behind the lurid revelations of phone hacking, the “blagging”² of personal data and illegal payments to the police, lies what is arguably a far deeper crisis – a growing decline in traditional news gathering and original reporting. This assertion may seem counter-intuitive in an age of social media in which consumers of news are bombarded 24 hours a day with information through the internet, mobile phones, iPads and every conceivable mobile device now carried by man. Yet the world of traditional news gathering is undergoing sweeping changes which could arguably undermine the ability of the media to hold power to account. The combination of a technological revolution, new (and as yet not fully understood) business rules, and global recession has created, to use a cli-

ché, a “perfect storm.” rules, and global recession has created, to use a cliché, a “perfect storm.” The result has been a wave of cost cutting and consolidation in ownership. This in turn is reducing the plurality of the news offering, leading to an ever more homogenised news agenda in which news gathering is being replaced by news packaging.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that modern journalism is thus facing an unprecedented set of challenges – a collapse in public confidence, a decline in original news gathering potentially weakening its watchdog role, a decidedly uncertain financial future and an at best ambiguous relationship with an increasingly influential army of “citizen journalists.” Will the enormous and diverse volume of “user generated content” compensate for the growing deficit in traditional reporting? Or are we witnessing a watershed in history, a point at which the very nature of journalism is changing and challenging the deeply ingrained normative values we have all take for granted for so long?

This chapter first examines the confluence of deep-seated factors behind the current crisis in what I have called traditional news gathering³ and their impact on mainstream British media, particularly newspapers at national, regional and local level. It then looks at the uneasy relationship between traditional news gathering and the rapidly expanding volume of user generated content which now covers the whole spectrum of media platforms and information from showbiz gossip and rioting on the streets of inner London to the Arab Spring.

Whatever happened to the public sphere?

Testimony by media owners, editors and victims of the hacking scandal to the Leveson inquiry⁴ has illustrated graphically the dirty tricks that some newspapers, most notably Rupert Murdoch’s now defunct *News of the World*⁵, have employed to entrap the famous and not so famous. It was the revelation that the voicemail of murdered school girl Milly Dowler was hacked by journalists that was one step too far and outraged the public. But these lurid tales have also served to underline the extent to which British journalism has become increasingly dominated by commercial considerations and, put crudely, the need to sell newspapers. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion

that the current crisis is symptomatic of a much deeper insecurity in the industry and that ethics were cast aside over the past decade in the drive to scoop rivals and bolster sagging circulation figures.

As such, traditional journalism appears to have moved far away from the, admittedly, idealised concept of the “public sphere” that can be traced back to the Frankfurt School and particularly the work of the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas⁶. There is hardly a place for what Habermas termed rational critical debate in the pages of today’s tabloid press, dominated as they are by consumerism, gossip and entertainment. For some critics, there is little evidence to suggest that contemporary journalism fulfils the role of encouraging civic engagement and promoting public participation in policy debates (Howley, K. (2007) p. 346). Journalists and executives at the News of the World went as far in the minds of some commentators to betray what News Corp’s many newspapers and networks insist is their prime function: “to hold power to account” (Lloyd, J. (2011) p. 9). Rather than being participants in a debate, media audiences have become consumers, viewed as an audience, or fodder, for advertisers.

This trend is, of course, hardly new and dates back well into the 20th Century with the advent of mass communication of film and broadcasting which led theorists of the Frankfurt School to chart the decline of the public sphere. It is not the place in this chapter to outline the rise of popular culture and consumerism or to debate the extent to which audiences are passive, suggestible receivers of media messages or are actively engaged in decoding and/ or creating meaning. But suffice it to say that in today’s media world it is often difficult to differentiate between information and entertainment, fused into one as “infotainment.” In her study of Reality TV, Misha Kavka (2008 p.8) observed that “...information is increasingly harnessed for the purposes of spectacle and entertainment is more spectacular when based in actuality.”

From Tandy 100 to Twitter

This trend of commercialisation has been exacerbated by the digital revolution we are living through which is rewriting the business rules that sustained much of the British media

(particularly newspapers) throughout the 20th Century. Of course, every generation looks at advances in technology and predicts a fundamental change. More than 100 years ago, the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde described the ability of newspapers to create what he called “publics”, bound together by mass communication and not by their physical location². Presciently, Tarde spoke of the “indefinite extension” of such publics and the “transportation of thought across distance”. In doing so, he foreshadowed the ability of social network sites such as Facebook to embrace global communities.

It seems incredible to think that when I started in journalism thirty years ago I was using a typewriter, “sandwiches” of paper and carbon paper which subeditors would “cut and paste” into shape, not very dissimilar to Tarde’s experience of newspapers in France at the end of the 19th Century. By the mid-1980s, as a foreign correspondent in the Middle East covering amongst other things the Iran-Iraq war, I was struggling to master what Fleet Street was calling “new technology”. In my case, this was a Radio Shack Tandy 100, complete with acoustic coupler. Given a good phone line, and a bit of luck, stories could be transmitted back to London, followed of course by a phone call to see if the text had actually landed somewhere. But if the phone receiver happened to be the wrong shape and didn’t fit into the coupler, it simply wouldn’t work. Soon after that the pace started to pick up.

The 1991 war against Iraq put CNN on the map, by 1996 America Online was starting to make a name for itself, and in 1998 the Drudge Report broke the story of President Clinton’s affair with Monica Lewinsky (although it has to be said only because Newsweek decided not to run with the story). The pace has quickened still further in the last 10 years. The 2003 Gulf War saw television correspondents reporting live from the battlefield by video phone. And then something else changed – the ability for everyone to take and transmit images via their mobile phone ushered in the age of user generated content or “citizen journalism”. When suicide bombers struck the London transport system on July 7, 2005, television news crews couldn’t gain access to the Underground tunnels. But passengers caught up in the bombing took pictures with their mobile phones and sent them in their hundreds to the BBC and other news organisations. It was a defining moment in Brit-

ish media. The same had been true when the Asian tsunami wreaked its havoc on Boxing Day 2004 or when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in August 2005.

Today, news organisations have embraced, albeit with varying levels of enthusiasm and sometimes downright antagonism, mobile phone footage and Twitter to help tell stories whether at home or abroad, rioting in London or the fall of dictatorships during the “Arab Spring. To what extent this can expand the diversity of news sources and complement traditional news gathering is examined later in this chapter.

One thing is, however, clear. The mobile phone, in the hands of a digitally literate population, has fundamentally changed the relationship between the media and consumers of news. Under the old model, journalists would tell the public what they needed to know, when they “needed” to know it (i.e. when it suited them). Today, consumers of news pull down what they need, when they need it and how they need it. Sometimes, as in the examples above, they actively contribute to news gathering. These are today’s “digital natives”, a term coined by the U.S. academic Robert Premsky (2001) but popularised by Rupert Murdoch in a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 2005. There he set out the dilemma facing his generation of “digital immigrants”, none other than the owners, movers and shakers of the established media organisations. “The peculiar challenge then,” said Murdoch “is for us ‘digital immigrants’ – many of whom are in positions to determine how news is assembled and disseminated - to apply a digital mindset to a new set of challenges.”

Bumping along the bottom

Seven years later, the established media organisations are still grappling with that dilemma. It is abundantly clear that the advertising model that supported newspapers throughout the 20th Century has collapsed. Younger audiences have deserted newspapers for the immediacy of the online environment; this in turn has attracted advertisers who can more accurately target their audiences online and can better track the impact of their spending (Freedman 2010, p35). The global recession has simply compounded the problem, striking the British local and regional newspaper industry particularly hard. Sly Bailey, the

(now ex-) chief executive of the UK newspaper group Trinity Mirror, spelt out this double-headed blow in her evidence to the Leveson Inquiry:

*“The pressures on the business over about the last five years have been intense, and the businesses face two challenges. One, which is structural, as we see the growth of new devices... first of all we saw the internet and now we’re seeing new tablet devices and smart phones and the proliferation of news and information on those sources. And, at the same time, the business has been under the most intense cyclical pressure as a result of the poor economy... we’ve been through the cycle and we’re bumping along the bottom....”*²

To cite one example, advertising revenue at Trinity Mirror’s regional titles fell in the year to May 2012 by 10%, with recruitment advertising especially hard hit and down 22%. Regional newspaper editors speaking to the same inquiry estimated that advertising revenues had halved over the past five years. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that when first faced with the challenge of the Internet, newspapers made two strategic – and with hindsight costly – mistakes.

Firstly, they believed they could protect their advertising revenue in a defensive move by setting up their own web sites. But advertisers, instead of transferring loyally their business to the newspaper online presence, found they had far more effective ways of doing business. Small ads for car sales and the like migrated quickly to specialist web sites, drawing on a far wider geographic market and offering customers greater choice. Crucially, advertisers have been able to target and track the behaviour of their customers in a way they had never been able to do with newspapers. Spending on Internet advertising outstripped that on national newspapers in 2006 and that on regional newspapers in 2007. As Freedman sees it, the Internet’s “ability to connect advertisers directly to consumers without the mediation of a newspaper... raises with it the possibility that the historic link between advertising and editorial will be broken and, with it, the model that underpinned the delivery of news for many years” (Freedman 2010, p.39).

A second strategic mistake was for newspapers to believe that news would have a monetary value on the web. This too

has until now proved to be in most cases wrong. So far only a handful of newspapers, most notably the *Wall Street Journal* and *Financial Times*, have managed to build up successfully a paid-for online circulation. Their's is, to use the jargon, "value added" specialist news about the financial sector, a far cry from the commoditised general news or infotainment offered by much of the tabloid press, most of which is available online for free. It remains to be seen whether newspaper owners such as Murdoch can turn the back the clock on 15 years of free news on the web and persuade enough customers to pay for an online edition of *The Times*. That is likely to be an uphill struggle, as Sly Bailey observed shortly after Murdoch announced his "paywall":

*"It won't be possible to charge for general content, I can't see why people would pay for high quality content when it is free elsewhere ..."*¹⁰

To be fair, the jury is still out on the attempts of newspapers such as *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* to build a paying online customer base. The sudden global success of Apple's iPad, with its large touch screen and ability to display high resolution photographs and graphics, has given the industry new hope. But that aside, the past five years have been dominated by falling advertising revenues, falling newspaper circulations, cuts, consolidation of operations and closures.

Circulations of UK national newspapers have been in constant decline over the past decade, actually well before the arrival of online news. According to Audit Bureau of Circulations data, *The Times* had an average daily circulation at the end of 2011 of 409,000 compared with 726,000 in January 2000. The Sun has shrunk to 2.53 million from 3.6 million while The Daily Mirror has more than halved to 1.1 million from 2.3 million. Faced with a dramatic loss of advertising and circulation revenues, many newspaper groups have turned to cost-cutting. In the three months between Trinity Mirror's Sly Bailey submitting written evidence to the Leveson Inquiry and her actual appearance before it the number of regional titles in the group had fallen from 160 to 140. Another regional group, Johnston Press (which took down paywalls at six of its titles after a three-month trial in 2010) cut 1,130 staff in 2008 and reduced

headcount by further 768 in 2010. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) estimates that between the end of 2008 and mid-2010 some 8,800 jobs have been lost in UK newspapers while 54 offices have been closed¹¹. In its Journalism Matters campaign, launched in 2007, the NUJ did not mince its words, stating:

“The major media conglomerates have been falling over each other to be the most brutal in slashing staff numbers to impress the shareholders.”

Further consolidation in the UK regional newspaper industry is an inevitability, according to a report by media analysis firm Enders published in April 2011¹². Enders argued that any recovery in advertising revenues would benefit national newspapers or television at the expense of regional titles. Enders predicted there would be “even fewer massive corporate entities, perhaps as a few as one or two within a few years”, and a “long tail of small players”.

Consequences for news gathering: an era of “churnalism”

This economic storm has had a devastating impact on the craft of journalism and traditional news gathering. In 2009, Nick Davies, an investigative journalist with *The Guardian* who has played a major role in exposing tabloid phone hacking, broke the taboo that dog does not eat dog by writing a scathing book about the state of the media. Entitled *Flat Earth News*, it sets out Davies’s central argument that less and less original news is being generated. Partly because of the cost cutting that has been examined earlier in this chapter and partly because of the need for speed, fewer stories are being written, fewer stories are being checked and increasingly newspapers are falling back on agency copy (within the UK principally from the Press Association) and public relations material. Davies (2009: 59) states:

“This is churnalism. This is journalists failing to perform the simple basic functions of their profession; quite unable to tell their readers the truth about what is happening on their patch. This is journalists who are no longer out gathering news but who are reduced instead to passive processors of whatever

material comes their way, churning out stories, whether real events or PR artifice, important or trivial, true or false.”

This damning verdict on the media is supported by academic research that Davies commissioned for the book at Cardiff University. Their researchers examined the news sections of five mainstream newspapers, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Mail*. They found that 60 per cent of stories were wholly or partly made up copy either taken from the Press Association or from public relations agencies. A further 20 per cent of stories contained clear elements from these sources. In fact, the researchers were only able to state with any certainty that 12 per cent of the copy was original and generated by a newspaper’s own staff. That shocking finding illustrates the extent to which the content of today’s newspapers has been reduced to a commodity and has become infiltrated by PR. The term coined by Davies, “churnalism” has stuck and has major implications in assessing the ability of today’s press to perform the function of holding power to account.

These cost cuts have led regional newspapers to introduce “hubs” or “print centres” where junior journalists often spend their time repackaging the same story in various formats – print, streaming audio and video – for several editions across large swathes of territory. Michael Williams (2011), a former News Corp executive turned academic, describes in scathing terms the environment young journalists encounter today:

“These days, young journalists who thought they might occasionally leave the office to talk to real people are disappointed to find themselves shackled to their computers, where they recycle stories and quotes off the Internet like grey water in a sewage plant.”

The news output is reduced to the lowest common denominator of “a low-grade package of TV, ‘lifestyle’ and celebrity coverage and heavy reliance on press releases which are frequently published verbatim and unchecked” (2011: 42). The logic of the market and often the need to satisfy shareholders has had a similar impact in reducing the number of foreign correspondents for national newspapers. Although this

chapter does not examine broadcasting, similar cost cutting at the BBC and commercial companies alike means that 24-hour news channels often opt for talking heads or – for conflict coverage - “arm chair generals” as an alternative to original news gathering in the field.

Phillips (2010) argues that the Internet, by increasing the availability of information, in theory at least creates better opportunities for checking material, finding alternative sources and improving the reliability, independence and therefore the democratic and cultural relevance of newspapers. The reality is, however, different. She concludes that the speeding up of modern news reporting and the need to be visible online is impacting negatively on the quality of following up routine news items, adding:

“It would seem that ... far from broadening and democratizing, the Internet is actually narrowing the perspective of many reporters.”

Rather than leading to an increase in original news gathering, many journalists play safe by cannibalizing copy from other newspaper online offerings for fear of missing a story. The result adds further to the homogenisation of news content. Andrew Currah (2009), an Oxford lecturer specialising in the digital economy, concluded that increasing commercial pressures driven by the technological revolution are undermining the business models that pay for news and threaten “to hollow out the craft of journalism and adversely impact the quality and availability of independent factual journalism in Britain.”

The Media lose control

In addition to its economic impact, the revolution in technology has contributed to a fundamental shift in power away from media organisations towards ordinary citizens. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his parting shot at the media in 2007, spoke of “a radical change in the nature of communication.”¹³ The Media, he said, were no longer the masters of this change but its victims. He went on to bemoan the impact of web-based news, blogs and 24-hour news channels to draw the conclusion that standards were unravelling. He spoke of a “Media that in-

creasingly, and to a dangerous degree, is driven by impact.” So did Blair call it right? Certainly he didn’t pull his punches but nor did he really address the idea that there may be some sort of trade-off or relationship between traditional news gathering and “new media” or “user generated content.”

Clearly, instant communication is often driven by image, is emotionally charged and can be superficial when compared to an analytical newspaper story. On the other hand, it is certainly true that such technology in the hands of citizens has delivered a wealth of content we would never have otherwise seen. Only five years ago, Blair was referring to blogs as the latest invention. Today, we can see the impact of Twitter, a global phenomenon in its infancy when his speech was made. Twitter, where messages are limited to 140 characters, was launched in 2006 and had just 400,000 “tweets” posted per quarter in 2007. Today the volume is estimated at more than 300 million tweets *per day*⁴. That dynamic, like so many technological advances before it, has had a profound impact on the news industry both at home and, perhaps most spectacularly, abroad.

This chapter has already noted how traditional media organisations have been anxious to embrace mobile phone footage and blogs at a time of crisis such as the 2004 Asian tsunami or 2005 London bombings. But Twitter has catapulted this onto another scale as its role in the Arab Spring has shown. Twitter has become both an organising tool for protestors (whether on the streets of Cairo, Tehran or London) and a reporting tool for citizens frustrated by what abroad has often been state controlled media. As such, Twitter has blurred boundaries still further as “Twitter streams” related to a single topic combine seamlessly information from citizens and reporting from mainstream media organisations; fact and opinion; objective and subjective viewpoints; news and entertainment. In a fashion far more extreme than imagined by Blair, Twitter has produced “hybrid and networked publics of journalists and citizens working concurrently” (Papacharissi & Oliveira 2011: 13). Even news organisations have contributed to the blurring of boundaries through their own “tweets”, partly in the form of traditional breaking news and partly in the form of comments from individual correspondents. So just what is this stream of information? Does it stack up when judged by traditional news values of being fair, objective and free from bias? Does this

user generated content stand alone or is it, at best, complementary to a traditional feed of news about a specific subject?

Papacharissi and Oliveira, in their study of the coverage of the Egyptian uprising, found that this particular Twitter stream reflected “a mix of traditional news values and values specific to the platform of Twitter” (2011: 14). Information that was not deemed by participants in the stream to be relevant was not re-tweeted and so tended to lose significance (much in a way less important information is relegated to the bottom of a traditional news story or is cut out altogether). But other features were not necessarily compatible with normative news values. The instantaneous nature of communication may mimic breaking news but also militates against fact checking and is often very subjective. Many tweets expressed solidarity with the uprising, making it difficult to separate fact from expressions of camaraderie. Above all, tweets blended “emotion with opinion and drama with fact” reflecting deeply subjective accounts and interpretations of events (2011: 21). While this study focused on one of the top foreign stories of 2011, the Twitter streams that captured the same year’s London riots displayed a similar mix of fact and fiction, rumour mongering, scare mongering and – in cases – incitement to violence.

Twitter has one other blurring feature – it deeply divides practising journalists. *The Guardian* Editor-in Chief Alan Rusbridger has said that anyone who believes that Twitter has nothing to do with the news business is misguided. It is, he said, a highly effective way of spreading ideas, information and content and where things happen first:

“News organisations still break lots of news. But, increasingly, news happens first on Twitter. If you’re a regular Twitter user, even if you’re in the news business and have access to wires, the chances are that you’ll check out many rumours of breaking news on Twitter first. There are millions of human monitors out there who will pick up on the smallest things and who have the same instincts as the agencies — to be the first with the news. As more people join, the better it will get.”¹⁵

Love it or hate it, Twitter has become a major new factor in shifting the power relationship between the news industry and the public. Instead of waiting to be told what is news by the

experts, journalists, the playing field has been levelled in what is essentially a peer-to-peer model (as opposed to a traditional one-to-many model).

Change is here to stay

The combination therefore of technological and economic change has thrown the news industry into flux. The ravages of cost cutting as newspaper advertising and circulation figures drop have led to journalist job losses, fewer regional titles and a shrinking volume of traditional news gathering. As the Leveson Inquiry has shown, the intense pressure to sell newspapers has forced some tabloid journalists to cut corners and jettison the most basic code of ethics in their quest for scoops. Cast adrift in this storm, mainstream news organisations are caught between the fear of the Internet and the hopes that they can navigate their way to safety by embracing it. It is this uneasy relationship between the straitjacket of traditional reporting and liberating potential of user generated content that characterises today's news environment. On the one hand, the Internet opens up new ways of presenting content in multi-media formats, new ways of generating stories, of accessing sources and of contacting a global audience. It would not be the first time that newspapers have adapted to ensure their survival faced, as they have been, with challenges throughout the 20th century from newsreels, radio and television. On the other hand, the drive for instant communications can lead to less fact checking, more errors, "churnalism", a heavy reliance on news agencies and press releases and an increasingly homogenised news offering. In such an environment, journalists become packagers of content rather than investigators of stories.

This messy combination of opportunities and threats (when viewed from the traditional values of western journalism) is still being played out. As Davies points out (2009: 395), bloggers and citizen journalists do uncover untold stories. But against that, he counters: "The Internet is also functioning as a kind of information madhouse, frantically repeating whatever fragments of 'news' happen to make it into the blogosphere, much of it nonsense..." This dynamic has almost certainly already changed forever the privileged, once omnipotent position of journalists. News is no longer the preserve of a chosen elite

and the nature of news gathering is exposed like never before, “placing notions of journalistic objectivity and impartiality, the holy grail of professional journalism, under scrutiny” (Fenton: 2010). But however much they might be on the defensive, established news organisations still cling to these normalised news values. Mainstream news organisations “for the most part, decline to surrender their traditional editorial control, agenda-setting functions or gatekeeper authority when deciding who is permitted to enter ‘their’ news domain, under what conditions, when and how” (Cottle 2009: xi).

This chapter started out by outlining the main challenges facing journalism today – the collapse of public trust, the way in which new technology and cost cutting are combining to reduce the volume of original news gathering and the tortured relationship with social media and citizen journalism. It is true to say that the history of Anglo-American media over the past 150 years shows that every generation of journalists has tended to view technological advances or structural shifts in the industry as a threat to their profession and values. In America, the “penny press” newspapers of the 19th Century were accused of vulgarity and sensationalism by the establishment press, in the 1950s newspapers and radio joined ranks against the new force of television, and in the 1990s the advent of the Internet in its first incarnation caused TV presenters such as CBS’s Dan Rather to rail against the “Hollywood-isation of news” (Mindich 1998).

It may be tempting fate to argue that this latest wave of changes is any different from those in the past but it seems safe to say that this time the role of the journalist has been changed for good. Whether trust can be re-established lies, in the case of the UK, in the hands of journalists themselves and their capacity to build a credible regime of self-regulation in the wake of the hacking scandal. Only sustained investment by media organisations and imaginative new economic models will be able to safeguard the future of traditional news gathering. As for social media, the blurred boundaries between fact and fiction, objectivity and subjectivity, together with the inherent challenge to the established media, bring a diversity of view that deserves to be valued in its own right. This duality is set to continue as the digital revolution calls into question our established concept of news and makes the “Internet boom” of the

late 1990s look positively Victorian by comparison.

Notes

1. For example, media commentator Steve Hewlett wrote: “The Leveson Inquiry, set up in the midst of quite possibly the worst crisis ever to engulf the press (and journalism) in modern times, has on the face of it a truly monumental task.” Hewlett, S., 2011. PCC2 can learn a lot about privacy from TV. *British Journalism Review*, 22 (4), 23.
2. Blagging is the practice of obtaining under false pretences private information such as health and phone records.
3. I have used this term to refer to news gathering by journalists employed on or working for mainstream news organisations. It stands in contrast to “citizen journalism” which tends to be used in reference to members of the public. In an age of blurring boundaries, many definitions have been attempted. According to Stuart Allan (2006), writing about the history of citizen journalism in *Citizen Journalism – Global Perspectives*, it is “more often that not associated with a particular crisis event... it is described variously as grassroots journalism, open source journalism, participatory journalism, hyperlocal journalism, distributed journalism or networked journalism, as well as user generated content...”
4. The Prime Minister David Cameron announced a two-part inquiry investigating the role of the press and police in the phone-hacking scandal on 13 July 2011. The inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press and has been chaired by Lord Justice Leveson.
5. News International’s News of the World, Britain’s best selling Sunday newspaper with a circulation of 2.8 million, was closed on 10 July 2011.
6. The concept of the public sphere is most closely associated with Jürgen Habermas and his influential work first published in 1962 *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. It is for Habermas instrumental in the constitution of a liberal democratic society.
7. Tarde, writing in *L’Opinion et La Foule*, translated as *The Public and the Crowd*, originally published in 1901. A compilation of his works can be found in Clarke, N., 1969. *Gabriel Tarde on Communication and Social Influence – Selected Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
8. Rupert Murdoch, Speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), 13 April 2005. www.newscorp.com/news/news_247.html
9. Evidence to the Leveson Inquiry 16 January 2012. Transcript p.81 <http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/evidence/?witness=sly-bailey>
10. Sly Bailey, quoted in *The Guardian*, 4 March 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/mar/04/sly-bailey-trinity-mirror-paywalls>

11. See NUJ campaign “mash-up”: <http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?hl=en&safe=off&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=116069118730922972880.00045d5ef442b3823ae51&ll=54.316523,-3.55957&spn=8.980297,18.676758&z=5&source=embed>
12. Enders Analysis, 2011. Regional Press left behind in Media Bounceback <http://www.endersanalysis.com/content/publication/regional-press-left-behind-media-bounceback>
13. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair speech on public life, 12 June 2007. Full text: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6744581.stm
14. According to TechCrunch, 30 June 2011, <http://techcrunch.com/2011/06/30/twitter-3200-million-tweets/>
15. Alan Rusbridger, Andrew Olle lecture 2010 given in Sydney, Australia on 19 November 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/nov/19/open-collaborative-future-journalism>

Challenging Questions

- One of the traditional roles of the media is considered to be the ability to hold authority to account. Does the advent of social media make this task easier or more difficult?
- Governments and corporations are often accused of using “spin” to manipulate public opinion through the media. Have the changes in today’s media landscape made this easier or more difficult for those wishing to “manage” a message?
- Should we see the rise of “citizen journalism” as a threat to journalism and traditional news values of objectivity, impartiality and freedom from bias?

Recommended reading

- Allan, S. (2006) *Online News: Journalism and the Internet*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Currah, A. (2009) *What’s Happening to our News: an Investigation into the likely Impact of the Digital Revolution on*

the Economics of News Publishing in the UK, Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Davies, N., 2009. *Flat Earth News*. London: Vintage.

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The Leveson Inquiry: <http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/>

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