



University of Quantum Dynamics Foundation

Courses

Department: Journalism
Code: Journ-201
Teacher: Brennan Purtzer
Cost: €200

Protecting your truth in an era of over editing:

The 21st century of media has been a turbulent time, with powerful new vehicles arriving on scene to interact with readers in entirely new ways, at alarming speeds. Most of the change is good for readers, though much of it has been bad for the strength of traditional industry players as a whole. While access to news has increased for most readers, the quality of that news has, in many cases declined. The decline in print media in the United States has been well described, but the biggest cost has been at the local level, where small town newspapers have lost their independence with increasing frequency - and the local level is often where the most important stories have been generated through traditional shoe-leather reporting.

Instead, the past 10 years in media have shown a trend toward consolidation, with fewer and fewer media companies owning larger shares of the industry. While this may increase "efficiency" and save margins for these companies and their corporate owners, little has trickled down to the journalists who are responsible for the content itself. With more journalists competing for fewer positions, corporations have felt justified in offering weak compensation packages.

With more decisions being made purely from financial considerations, media companies have leaned further toward avoiding the publishing of content that is displeasing to the advertisers who sponsor programs. It has become commonplace to censor content that may be dispelling to advertisers or else sister brands owned by the the media conglomerate itself.

In one extreme example, the television network MSNBC "disinvited" Democratic Presidential Candidate, Congressman Dennis Kucinich from appearing in a primary debate after he successfully met their debate criteria. Kucinich went on to publicly point to the fact that his policies to end both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars would have a direct negative impact on the earnings of MSNBC's parent company, General Electric, as GE had military contracts with the United States Government in excess of \$1 Billion. In circumstances such as this, the profits earned by the defense contracting arm of GE far outweighed the benefits of perceived unobjectivity in their news division.

Therefore, the most realistic conclusion is that new journalists entering the industry today will likely find themselves working within a corporate structure, and deal with attempts at censorship of their work. Subtle and not-so-subtle editorial controls will be an environmental hurdle that must be overcome.

The aim of this course is to equip you with strong knowledge of the corporate environmental experience you are likely to encounter, so that you may understand the pressures you will be facing, so that you may compensate for them in your work.



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As you read the designated course texts, take special note of the following themes:

- 1) Changes in media over time, projections for future changes.
- 2) Business model evolution, where is the MONEY in media? Where is the profit center?
- 3) What qualities differentiate independent media from corporate media?

When you have completed the following texts, you will be asked to choose one of the following prompts to write your 3,000-word essay. Answer by telling a fictitious story, explaining your understanding of the textbooks and the concerns of this course.

1) Imagine you work for a corporate media conglomerate, and you get the inside scoop on the largest story of the year - but it involves a scandalous revelation about one of the corporation's sister companies. How will you convince your editors to allow you to publish the expose? (Tell the story using your imagination, told in hindsight of a fantasy example, and how you convinced your editor)

or

2) Describe an enterprising media model that could be financially sustainable and independent, including a profit strategy to circumvent traditional sources and preserve editorial credibility. Who would your target audience be? What would your editorial mission be? How would you create and maintain your market share?

E-textbooks for this course:

Re: Understanding the ethic of editors:

The Art of Editing in the Age of Convergence, Brian S. Brooks, 432 pages

http://www.amazon.com/Art-Editing-Age-Convergence/dp/0205569641/ref=sr_1_7?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1356888546&sr=1-7&keywords=Journalism+-+Editing

Re: Understanding the corporate media culture:

The Craft of Corporate Journalism:

<http://www.chegg.com/textbooks/the-craft-of-corporate-journalism-1st-edition-9781449551643-1449551645?trackid=14434ccc&ij=2>

Gatekeepers of Knowledge, Stephen McGinty, 160 pages

http://www.amazon.com/Gatekeepers-Knowledge-Journal-Sciences-ebook/dp/B000PY3FC6/ref=sr_1_28?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1356889189&sr=1-28&keywords=journalism+editing