GLOBAL REPORTING ROOM

JOURNALISM AND THE FUTURE OF MEDIA

BY CLAUDINE BOEGLIN & PAUL PANGARO

JOURNALISM AND THE FUTURE OF MEDIA

What roles are left to professional media in news coverage, field reporting, criticism, and analysis? What is journalism in the age of citizen journalism? Discussions of these issues and speculation about solutions abound. But there is currently no democratic form of active reflection about the fundamentals of journalism and, by extension, what defines citizen journalism.

IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL MEDIA, HOW DO WE PRESERVE / SAVE / REVIVE JOURNALISM BY DESIGN?

BY CLAUDINE BOEGLIN & PAUL PANGARO

BACKGROUND

In the short history of the Internet, digital media have affected the revenue models of many major business sectors. Fundamentals of marketing and advertising have shifted without concern to anyone outside those industries, but there is deep fear that journalism itself is threatened.

While "a free press is a condition of a free society"*, how does journalism survive when newspapers can no longer afford to pay reporters out of dwindling advertising revenues?

User-generated content provides a deluge of zero-cost content, but of what quality?

* [Justice Hugo Black, Associated Press v. United States, 326 U.S. 1, 20 (1945)]

GLOBAL REPORTING ROOM

The **Global Reporting Room** project is engaging experts in old and new media to articulate the value of journalism to the individual, region, state, society, and culture. We are creating resources to access this value in the form of:

1.**Conversations**, already captured, those taking place in corridors as well as those to be recorded, that push the problematique layers deeper, with the clear goal to find a vehicle for the future of journalism.

2.**Video recording** of this moment of transition in media making, distribution, display, and financial viability.

3.**Visualization** of the ecosystem of journalism in the form of a concept-map, that will serve as:

TOOLS FOR ACTION

A poster for curriculum programmers expressing the fundamentals of journalism, to be used by schools, foundations, and international organisations focused on training in independent media.

A template for media programmers reflecting the history, rules, and obligations of journalism, such as seeking truth, fact checking and independent thinking, with an awareness of the strengths and limits of new as well as mainstream media.

A blueprint for software programmers defining journalistic processes such as fact checking, fact relevance and compilation of existing sources, as design guidelines within fundamental limits of computational tools and not to the replacement of human judgement.

JOURNALISM AND THE FUTURE OF MEDIA

By capturing the evolution of journalism in the age of new media and citizen journalists, we will develop a foundation for conserving the value of journalistic process while adapting to the inevitable social change enabled by technology.

Digital media have weakened the power and expertise that traditional media brands garnered from their print publications. Google News has changed the habits of web users as online audiences no longer consult the homepage of media brands.
More and more in-depth reporting from the field is delivered by non-profits such as Human Rights Watch, with wide and well-implanted networks of researchers working directly in the countries.

The 2008 U.S. election has been covered by bloggers such as Politico or The Huffington Post to great and positive response. Citizen journalists help raise awareness about hidden agendas by using their still or digital video cameras, competing with professional photojournalism. Community platforms have created and answered the need for interaction and ongoing conversations, and have captured a considerable audience.

What roles are left to professional media in news coverage, field reporting, criticism, and analysis?

Will their pool of authors (columnists, reporters, writers, and others) be enough to preserve and anchor an audience? Should professional media become supra-curators instead, editing and packaging content produced by external sources? If so, what would be the resulting form of citizen journalism in exchange for content (credit, visibility, compensation)?

No organization currently integrates and rewards corporate media have opted for brand protectionism rather than accepting new forms of information-creating and information-seeking. Some corporate media have opted for brand protectionism rather than accepting new forms of journalism, with small channels for people to post content on breaking news. How realistic would it be to embrace citizen journalism as an enhanced ecosystem in order to complement and extend their existing assets with quality reporting?

Discussions of the issues and speculation around solutions abound, both in print and online.

Aside from vague optimism and calls to experiment, no plan or convergent process has emerged. We believe this is because there is no clear foundation of shared understanding—that is, no clear map or model of the actors, events, interactions, objects, and payments that operate in the ecosystem in which journalism is embedded. Another possible reason no plan has emerged is that conversations have largely been segregated—"old media" publishing is talking to itself with old language and old models, while "new media" congratulates itself as being the new world solution but without demonstrating the discipline and quality expected of true journalistic processes.congratulates itself as being the new world solution but without demonstrating the discipline and quality expected of true journalistic processes.

There is currently no democratic form of active reflection about the fundamentals of journalism and, by extension, what defines citizen journalism.

We believe that by bringing together experts in concept visualization and web strategy, with visionaries in media and advertising, with engineers of databases that aggregate content, and finally with interaction designers building content display for non-linear storyboards, we could create that place, where experts can collaborate and the audience can question them.

That ecosystem-building and media-tion will become a medium in itself. Taking the form of a concept map (information visualization), where short edited texts will be built into info-graphics for navigation and comprehension, the platform will be a lively organism with modules that allow the user/participant to interact by posing questions and offering viewpoints. With digital technology forever embedded in the social fabric, we must answer the question:

What are the rights and obligations, and the core mission, of digital media?

Our platform could become the template for citizen journalism to flourish anywhere, using any capture and distribution medium, based on vetted charters and methodologies.

Our site aims to become a media reference itself, with quality, verified content, a dynamic database, user-friendly navigation, and deep engagement for participating users.

The project will be directed by a small group of complementary experts, known as the Core Group, supported by educational non-profits and private entities.

Journalism is said to be truth, loyalty, verification, independence, and as a result of its independence, a monitor of power; its content will be significant, comprehensive and proportional. Journalism is public criticism. It enhances personal conscience and defends citizen's rights and responsibilities.

If that is journalism, how do we get it? How do journalists learn to get better at it? And, what else is journalism, particularly in our local/global times? How does journalism change when citizens participate in it? What is conserved? What could we aim for?

What are the rights and obligations of the media when opening up to citizen journalism for content? What guidance, briefs, reimbursement, and copyright are offered? What leverage does the citizen–journalist have in the valuation of the content publication and its display on multiple content platforms? Is there a charter for the citizen journalist to sign, prior to content publication?

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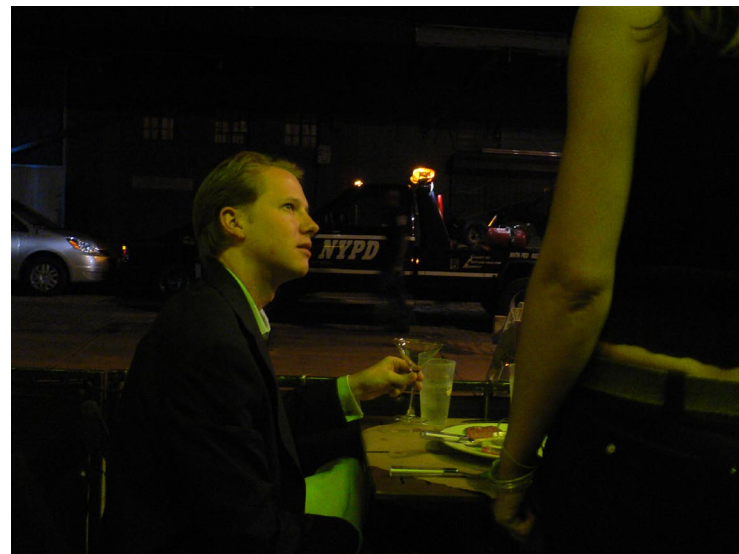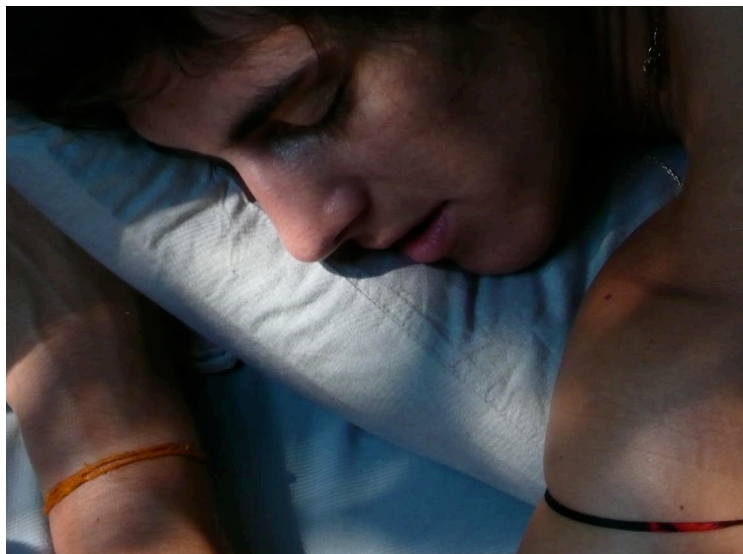
Why do we need journalism? What changes if we don't have it?

What is the role of journalism vs. non-profit reporting from the field? What is the relation between media and non-profit organizations providing content?

We may help to answer questions that point to a viable future: How can journalism survive in an age of digital media? Must journalism be led by the news, or can it lead? In what proportions should the news dictate the topics of journalism? What is the ratio between cold and hot news? What preparation do the media give to the treatment of predictable topics?

What editorial forms can place in perspective certain geographical zones showing similarities, social phenomena, the relation between industrial worlds and ecological damage, and the dramatic contrast between cities facing radical poverty and "ivory towers"? How should media cover global trade with more transparency? In other words, what should cohabit next to the news coverage?

In the past, the brand recognition and value garnered by old-line media and newspaper properties carried implicit messages about point of view and quality.

Is it necessary to reproduce this in digital media? If so, how could that be achieved? If not, what will replace it?

The strength of a media brand is said to depend on its capacity to monitor power. The Internet has changed that dynamic, disseminating information directly to the audience through the open use of search engines. The difficulty today comes in defining who maintains quality content (is the information checked and factual)? When researching Lou Reed's date of birth, for example, the result generates a long series of differing answers. What reference sources should be double-checked?
The other risk is becoming unable to find valuable and complete data (non-partisan, checked, and updated) on political, social, and cultural issues.

Is there a need for media to feed, check, and regularly update encyclopedic knowledge to serve two requirements of the web, the need for in-depth content (hyperlinks) and the need for current news to support current actions? Or is Wikipedia, as a growing database of information by citizen journalists, the solution—even if it is subject to mistakes or allows contributors to engage in mere self-promotion?

Can constellations of reporters provide flexibility, economy, and integrity in their work?

Does journalism have the vocation to educate and guide an audience in complex social, cultural, and political issues? If so, what is the business model for that form of independence, which has disappeared as a source of profit for much of media?
Who reads papers and where (countries, subways)? Is there a correlation between government support of sources and needs of the citizens in democracies?

ISSUES TO ADDRESS/
Today's news dictates attention. Being in the media = news [Cf. Chomsky].
Disaster gets more attention than slow-acting but bigger-impact maladies (cancer from smoking, pollution, etc.) What is happening as digital media takes away mindshare? What are the alternatives?

When liberated from the diktat of the news, is it still the responsibility of the media to cover the entire world in equal proportion? Or is that purely utopian? Is there an imperialist form of news treatment? Is there a fashion to define its importance? How can people be moved by floods in Haiti after they've been inundated by coverage of Hurricane Katrina? What are the positive and negative reasons that a country suddenly reaches the news spotlight?

If there's a niche audience for each type of news, what is the future of online media to specialize, the way the magazine culture in the '70s became an alternative to generalist media? Does the '90s magazine culture of computer-based design efficiencies afford a parallel to explore? When that happened and photographers stopped being paid to publish by the trendy glossy magazines, did it force them to work for free to build their portfolio and gain visibility?

Can content be syndicated across many sites instead of held captive by one major media property?
Can this be done while protecting the provenance, integrity, and intellectual property of its originators, while allowing rich commentary and dialectical conversation?

TARGET AUDIENCE/
Individuals and organizations concerned about the future of journalism in our digital age, and future generations of citizen journalists.

OBJECTIVE/ Articulate the value of effective journalism for an individual, a region, a state, a society, and a culture.

Individual/ Who still buys a paper every day? What for? How often? How do we search online? What for? How often? How much are users willing to just listen passively, rather than to converse and enter a debate?

Region/ What can be achieved by a journalistic process that is rooted in the values and history of a geographical locale? Who would find value in this, whether living/doing business in the region or participating from afar? How can the economics of local news operate if state and international news is affordable only by other organizations?

State/ What are the benefits of journalism to a democratic state? What are the pitfalls of being without journalism? What are examples of success and failure? What will be China's future as the country with the largest online audience and the most controlled Internet access, compared with democratic countries?

Society and Culture/ What synergistic energies does journalism offer a society or culture? What are the pitfalls of a society without a vibrant,

"It's not only journalism that is now struggling to plot a path to survival. But, with all due respect to show business, it's only journalism that's essential to a functioning democracy."

FRANK RICH/ The New York Times

broad, and deep journalistic presence? What are examples of success and failure?

OBJECTIVE/ Create a conversation by which citizens—current and future generations—learn the role and processes of journalistic practice. Include "old media" experts—constructive, experienced ones—and "new media" pioneers, as well as critical thinkers in a range of fields.

Seed a repository (and/or cross-link to existing repositories) that capture and give access to values for, and processes that enable, the general consciousness that great journalism comprises: integrity, commitment, fact-checking…

DELIVERABLES/
1/ An ecosystem model in the form of a poster-sized "concept map" [see http://www.dubberly.com/concept-maps/innovation.html for examples]. Good or Wired Magazines could provide their talents for the design.

2/ An ecosystem model transposed into a lively online organism with the capacity to update content and for an audience to interact with it.

3/ A series of video-recorded debates to be recorded in different places (New York – London – Paris – San Francisco) via online conference tools. Experts will be taken from the different fields included, and among the very best in each field in each city.

The ecosystem model we propose must support the following instances or snapshots:
1_ when the system worked, e.g., 20th-century newspaper advertising supporting distribution and reporting
2_ current state, showing failure of prior business models
3_ desired state(s), with variations
4_ transition from current to desired

It may be necessary to trace the evolution of prior economic models: Why did they work? How did they come about?
It may be necessary to trace the evolution of prior economic models: Why did they work? How did they come about? It will certainly be necessary to embed a model of journalistic process, including values associated with reporting and "objectivity," reference point, point of view and attitude, commentary, and opposing opinions. This will require understanding the relationships among trust, authority, reputation,

quality, influence, consistency, and connectedness.

Video sequences of conversations and process show the evolution of the map, with small sequences, self-contained conversations, and threaded narratives.

PROCESS/
Our process is a series of conversations with high-profile representatives in online media as well as founders of community platforms, with a few "global nomads" to help the debate fly above any corporate interests and stay broader than any narrow national interests.

Each conversation will advance our models by allowing us to collect and refine the components of our model, while at the same time proposing new participants for the subsequent conversations.
We envision a core group, perhaps as many as four to lend continuity, and always one or two additional guests, conversing in a hotel or club atmosphere, loose and joyful, filmed by a small crew. This will provide a setting of energy, immediacy, and focus to help motivate participants to accept challenges for stretching into new realms. The video products could

become a web series, a screening in media centres and schools, and ultimately an anthropological document of an era.

While we don't know the full range of participants needed in advance, we expect to include experts in journalism, publishing, digital media, culture, design, and economic theory. We will balance "names" with individuals in pivotal roles in important new domains that lie outside current language and business models. We will continue to add participants until we have the requisite variety to fulfill the goals of the model.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET/
In addition to four to six recorded debates taking place in New York, London or Paris, and San Francisco, an online blogging site will report the conversations and give access such that: worldwide media, advertising and web experts may intervene, comment, and annotate the content of the debates.

After a lapse of two months, the content will be processed into a printed concept map and a web-guidance for citizen journalists. A production calendar and budget will be delivered on request.

FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP/
This project will be supported by multiple areas for funding, resources, and promotion. We intend to approach foundations and non-profits such as: the Knight Foundation, the Annenberg Foundation, the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard, the Poynter Institute, Soros Open Society Institute, the Ford Foundation, the McCormick Foundation, the Google foundation, and the New York Public Library; marketing strategy and advertising firms; media and design firms; and potential founding sponsors in the hi-tech industry related to digital media such as Amazon, Microsoft, Dell, Lenovo, Verizon, Apple, Nokia, Nikon, SanDisk, IBM, HP, etc.

CORE GROUP AND GUESTS/
Experts may be drawn from, but not limited to these broad areas and the following list.

Journalism
Media & Business
User Experience/ Web Design
Gamers and Virtual Worlds
Social Media
Psychology of Individuality
Systems and Cybernetics

BACKGROUND/

*All conversations begin
with common background available to all
participants.*

History and Context/
 newspapers in the 1900s
 development of journalist practice
 quotes

Digital Media/
 advent of Internet
 low cost of content creation
 and delivery

Business Models/
 destruction of "news on paper"
 business models

CASCADE/

*The sequence of conversations is carefully
considered.*

**After each conversation, review of video and
critical assessment is made as to what was
learned, and what is expected in the next
conversation.**

Each successive conversation is designed: what
variety is to be included, what participants will
represent that variety, what new knowledge will be
carried from the prior conversations, and what is
the expected scope of the next conversation.

SCOPE/

*The first conversation will have a number of
participants from the areas of journalism and
publishing. While multiple perspectives will be
represented, they are all from "inside" the two
domains.*

**In successive conversations, some continuity
will be important. This can be maintained
by [1] the same moderator, [2] possibly
the same participants for a given expertise
area, travel and schedules permitting, but
[3] always by carrying forward summaries,
conclusions, visual captures of prior
conversations.**

In successive conversations, fewer individuals
in a given area are required. For example, the
first conversation may have 2 or 3 experts in
journalism; by the last conversation, only 1 is
needed.

JOURNALISM
AND THE FUTURE
OF MEDIA

CONVERSATION #1/ — focuses on the core

Expertise/

journalism
publishing
digital
culture
design
business

Questions/

what is journalism?
history / process / discipline

why do we need it?
what changes if we don't have it?
value to individual / region / state / society / culture

**what has changed in the domain of journalism?
why?**

what has been gained? for whom? why?

what has been lost? for whom? why?

why should we care? who are we?
consequences / forecasts

what should we do? who are we?
where does "citizen journalism" go?

CONVERSATION #2/ — expands scope to digital and examines changes and benefits

Expertise/

journalism
publishing
digital
culture
design
business

Questions/

why do we need it?
what changes if we don't have it?
value to individual / region / state / society / culture

**what has changed in the domain of journalism?
why?**

what has been gained? for whom? why?

what has been lost? for whom? why?

why should we care? who are we?
consequences / forecasts

what should we do? who are we?
where does "citizen journalism" go?

CONVERSATION #3/ — considers culture impact, design input, and downsides to the change

Expertise/

journalism
publishing
digital
culture
design
business

Questions/

**what has changed in the domain of journalism?
why?**

what has been gained? for whom? why?

what has been lost? for whom? why?

why should we care? who are we?
consequences / forecasts

what should we do? who are we?
where does "citizen journalism" go?

CONVERSATION #4-5-6/ — cut across all domains of expertise and point to solutions

Expertise/

journalism
publishing
digital
culture
design
business

Questions/

**in the age of new media, what has been gained?
for whom? why?**

what has been lost? for whom? why?

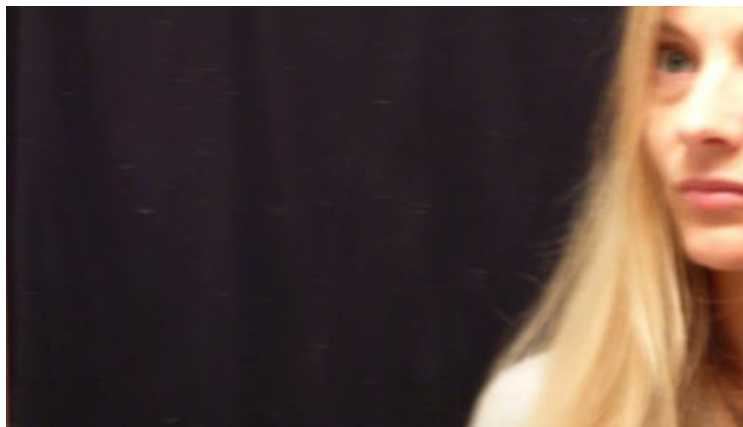**why should we care? who are we?**
consequences / forecasts

what should we do? who are we?
where does "citizen journalism" go?

BIOGRAPHIES/
Ten years of not standing still at the crossroads

PAUL PANGARO/
is a technology executive, conversation theorist, entrepreneur, and performer.

CLAUDINE BOEGLIN/
is a creative director in digital and print media, working with international brands and teams.

Paul combines technical depth, marketing and business acumen, and passion for designing products and services that serve the cognitive and social needs of human beings. He has worked as CTO for startups such as Idealab's Snap.com, developed product roadmaps for consumer Internet companies, and managed developer outreach and web properties for Sun Microsystems, where he held the position of Senior Director / Distinguished Market Strategist and published a short book on transforming an existing business into new viability. From his background in the cybernetics of language, Paul has developed a methodology for modeling the conversations users need in order to understand how services can achieve their goals, and that brands need to convery value to and connect with their customers. He has collaborated closely with designers in creating high-traffic web sites and models of gnarly concepts such as innovation, play, and the creative process. From 2001 through 2007 he taught a course at Stanford University on the cybernetics of design. He has collaborated to create methodologies for understanding and cultivating innovation strategies that he has presented in Brazil and Austria. Paul was awarded a B.S. from MIT in Computer Science and Humanities, and a Ph.D. from Brunel University, where Gordon Pask was his thesis advisor. He is currently founder and CTO of Cybernetic Lifestyles.com, a strategic marketing and product innovation consulting firm in New York City, with clients including Poetry Foundation, Intellectual Ventures, and Citigroup. He serves on the board of Artship San Francisco, and is a Fellow and Trustee of the American Society for Cybernetics.

Special thanks to **KIM RUNCIMAN**, Freelance Editor, Night Vision Editing, for the copy edit.

CB combines solid experience in print and online media with a background in visual language and a creative network. She has an ability to conceive and develop creative media concepts. Her focus on independent journalism and what Colors coined as "anthro-pop-journalism" has brought her deep collaborations with humanists, visionaries, and iconoclasts. Her expertise in building content and process workflows ensures quality and consistency to in-depth storytelling, along with her sharp appreciation for timing and creative management in high-speed environments.

CB debuted as a photo producer for French ELLE. In 1995, she became managing editor of COLORS Magazine. In 1999, she joined the launch team of Lemonde.fr, where she defined its visual language, managed the editorial team, and conceived the first multimedia prototypes. In 2002, she moved to Kabul to design and develop a magazine for Afghan children with NGO Aina, a non-profit for "independent media" founded by photojournalist Reza Deghati. In 2003, for non-profit EMDH, she co-edited the book Afghan Children Bear Witness, a collection of 37 interviews of children, telling of their life under Taliban rule. In 2004, she joined Magnum Photos in New York, as the creative director. She is the co-founder of Magnum In Motion, Magnum's multimedia digital studio. A successful business model with partnerships with Slate, Nokia, Nikon and HP, the site currently counts more than 150 web documentaries available for syndication and HD screenings. In 2008, she directed the multimedia campaign Access To Life, commissioned to Magnum by The Global Fund. She currently develops new media projects under her own brand: Dandy Vagabonds LLC.