

Journalism

Unions in Touch with the Future

A REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS

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INTRODUCTION

The challenges facing modern journalism will not be overcome without a bold prescription to cure the ills of an industry in crisis in many countries. At the same time journalists and their unions need fresh inspiration to rekindle the spirit of mission and solidarity in their work.

This report provides a bit of both. It was commissioned by the IFJ Executive Committee at its meeting in Paris in November 2008 as global economic recession added to the woes of a media industry already experiencing a market meltdown caused by technological convergence, falling circulation and the migration of profitable advertising to the Internet.

This report, prepared by a group of IFJ journalists and experts and supplemented by replies to a survey circulated among IFJ member organisations is underpinned by the conviction that journalism is a public good. It rejects the philosophy that only profit and the free market can guarantee freedom of media and it calls for a change of mindset inside journalism to embrace the potential offered by converging media to renew democratic life, restore public trust in media, and build a new partnership between journalism and its audience.

The report is emphatically concerned with changes that are overwhelming traditional journalism in the settled democracies of Europe, North America and parts of the Asia-Pacific. However, the march of technological change and the impact of the information revolution will eventually be felt everywhere.

The report focuses on how journalism and democracy are inextricably linked. It rejects the notion that the Internet destroys journalism, but that the worldwide web has given freedom a lift and opened the door to a new and prolific era of information and journalism that can inform, inspire, and educate new generations.

But what does that mean for journalists and their work? Today the information scene has many new players, often working in non-traditional areas of the media economy. This change over the past ten years raises serious new questions about who is a journalist and how we define journalistic work in the age of convergence and user-generated content.

Unions have different experiences, based upon customs and traditions of organisation that vary considerably around the globe. Sometimes there are legal definitions and rules about the need for educational qualification or work experience.

Often the environment is more open and journalists are categorised according to employment and work carried out in media houses. Some unions organise communicators, public relations people and others who work in the creative areas of all sectors of media activity, for instance book publishing. Others also organise the people who work alongside journalists, although they may not be entitled to a press card or formal accreditation as a journalist.

Until now, freelancers working as journalists are recognised providing the majority of their income comes from journalistic work, but is that sustainable in an age when many new media contributors may earn less than half of their money from journalism? How do these people come under the umbrella of union protection?

And what about the new information workers, those who do journalistic work but who don't recognise it as such and see themselves as 'content providers' or 'content managers'? How are they organised and how do we extend to them the rights and protections that other journalists enjoy?

These are tricky questions that must be answered if unions are to successfully organise the new information workforce.

Crucially, the report argues that the survival of journalism depends on how journalists and

their unions adapt to the changing information environment. They raise important questions on the future funding of media, on the need for journalists' unions to examine their strategies for organising the new workforce in journalism, and on ways of building new partnerships with citizens in defence of ethical and quality media.

Who Pays for the Future of Journalism?

The most pressing and urgent issue facing journalists is how to survive the current decline of traditional media markets and the models of funding that are broken beyond repair. Advertising is migrating to the Internet. Circulation and audience are falling as consumers increasingly choose online services instead of traditional press and broadcasting media to satisfy their basic information and communication needs.

Journalism is a public good, but this report poses a hard question – who will pay for it in the future?

In the past the media market has enjoyed both private and public funding, with private interests dominating the global space and most of the press interest at national level. But the days when owning a newspaper was a license to print money are gone forever. It seems that only targeted niche markets – such as science, business or sports – can deliver the profits media owners seek. Of course, sensationalist, populist and biased journalism makes money too, as the success of Fox News in the United States proves, but this is not recognisable as ethical or the kind of watchdog and pluralist journalism that serves democracy. New funding ideas are being explored, including special levies and models that direct new streams of public money towards keeping journalism alive. It is a debate that is controversial in much of the western world, but in many regions media already depend almost wholly upon public funds to survive.

If the global reality for the future of journalism is more public money what structures are

needed to ensure fairness and transparency in how that money is made available?

Most important of all, though, is the question of how to ensure journalism remains independent of political influence and government hands are kept off the controls of media?

Ethics, Solidarity and New Partnerships

This report highlights the key questions for debate and its conclusions provide a checklist for change in the priorities of the IFJ and national unions, arguing that new partnerships and visions are needed at national and international level. These will be discussed and debated at the 2010 IFJ Congress under the theme *Journalism: In Touch with the Future*.


There is little doubt, even in circles beyond the IFJ's network of unions, that much of the current crisis in journalism has its roots in the reduction of journalism to a corporate commodity. Notwithstanding the expansion of access to other kinds of information that model no longer delivers journalism in the quantity and quality required for democracy.

If the future is to be as bright as journalists want it to be, we shall have to revisit our relations with the state, demand that responsive democracies treat journalism as a public good, defend the ethical core of our professional work, and encourage citizens to support the transformative and democratic power of good journalism in the service of all.

But this will not happen automatically, which is why the report calls for fresh solidarity inside journalism, more support for journalists' unions and more activism from union members.

There is a long way to go, but this report provides a starting point and the IFJ is grateful to all those colleagues who have contributed their time and expertise in gathering the reflection, analysis, and sound conclusions that provide some clear signals of the tasks ahead for all journalists and their unions.

– Aidan White, IFJ General Secretary



Journalism does more than keep us informed, it enables us as citizens to have our voices heard in the chambers of power and allows us to monitor and moderate the sources of power that shape our lives.

— Bill Kovach, former curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University

CHAPTER 1: Journalism Matters

Our world is littered with fine examples of the contribution made by journalism. In the early 20th century U.S. “muckrakers” Upton Sinclair and Lincoln Steffens doggedly investigated the abuses of corporate and governmental power. In 1923, French “grand reporter” Albert Londres exposed the inhuman conditions in the French penal colony in Cayenne, capital of French Guiana. In 1974, US President Richard Nixon resigned following the Watergate investigations by journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in the *Washington Post*.

The importance of journalism is demonstrated by the media’s failings too. The 1994 Rwanda genocide might have been halted if the international media had assumed its full responsibility to report and if local media workers had refused to be part of the murder machine. If the US media had kept a critical distance from the White House and its powerful propaganda, the war in Iraq might never have been launched.

Despite the great challenges facing the media today, many in the press continue to show their commitment to publishing stories in the public interest. In 2008, *Las Vegas Sun* reporter Alexandra Berzon investigated labour exploitation, accidents and deaths in the building industry. A year later, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service and the government

brought in new laws to ensure better safety for building workers.

The *Daily Telegraph* in the UK revealed new and detailed information on the expenses of Members of Parliament, displaying a hard-hitting example of watchdog or accountability journalism. The National Union of Journalists’ own magazine *The Journalist* reported this work as “a shot in the arm for British democracy and for the press”. It observed that the work had “restored popular confidence in journalism”. It certainly ensured huge sales for the paper and can be used in the future as a byword for what we mean by journalism in the public interest.

Journalism matters when it exposes the reckless dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific or the illegal logging of the Amazon or Borneo forests. It matters when it reveals police abuse and torture. It matters when it tracks human or sexual trafficking over the U.S.-Mexico border or along the migration trails that lead from Sub-Saharan Africa or the Middle East to the European Union.

It matters too when it provides citizens with accurate relevant and balanced information on issues that directly affect them, from school board meetings to municipal regulations, from health alerts to price hikes of basic commodities. Journalism is a curator, a referee, a steward of information, a messenger, and a translator; all in the public interest.

In the last 20 years hundreds of journalists have been murdered, many of them have been targeted because their investigations defended the public interest and took the powers-that-be to account. Such violent attacks against journalists again demonstrate the importance of this work. Journalism mattered yesterday, it matters today and it will matter tomorrow.

A Complex Environment

And because it matters, the challenges facing journalism and journalists must be identified, debated and conquered. “No people can remain sovereign without a vigorous press that reports the news, examines critical issues, and encourages a robust exchange of ideas,” wrote journalists attending the 2002 Salzburg Seminar. “Over time, this ideal has become a bedrock of journalism, an enduring tradition by which a free press has been a powerful voice for progress and informed citizen participation in society.”

A much earlier comment by American political commentator Walter Lipmann went even further when he wrote: “If there is no steady supply of trustworthy and relevant news,

incompetence and aimlessness, corruption and disloyalty, panic and ultimate disaster must come to any people denied an assured access to the facts”.

The globalisation process has made the world more interconnected and complex and brought fresh challenges to journalism. Climate change, international migration, festering armed conflicts, economic crisis, religious and cultural “clashes” and more, all require a corps of journalists that are able to provide, with sufficient resources, what former CBS news anchor Edward Murrow would have called, information which “teaches, illuminates and inspires”.

The nature and strength of democracy itself are at stake and journalists are called upon to be part of the solution. “There are too many new ways that news is delivered and so much information being communicated,” says Carnegie Corporation President Vartan Gregorian “that there is an aching need for educated, knowledgeable, ethical and objective journalists”.

Journalists must take the lead in defining the parameters of the new news world while ensuring the continued protection of journalistic integrity and the public interest. They must be

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD JOURNALISM: South Africa

Forget the recession; it's time to “eat”. That's the indictment of South African politicians in 2009, revealed by dint of the country's press. Amongst the public, there were high expectations of a better life when the rule of President Thabo Mbeki came to an abrupt end in 2008. These crystallised in an alliance headed by Jacob Zuma winning the national election in April 2009, after campaigning on a pro-poor ticket and an “under new management” ethos. It didn't take long, however, for public expectations to turn to disappointment and outright anger – primarily as a result of journalism bringing to light a flurry of cases of inappropriate conduct by the new government.

In a rolling series of exposés, newspapers in South Africa showed up huge hypocrisy on the part of the new administration. Minister after minister was exposed during 2009 for flouting austerity concerns and acquiring official vehicles at the very top of the range. Others were outed for living the high life in hotels, and for having extensive business commitments which created potential conflicts of interest – let alone conflicts in regard to how much time they could devote to official duties. All this, while industrial retrenchments proceeded apace, and community protests over poor service delivery rocked the townships. The coverage eventually compelled the country's leadership to pledge curbs on the crass behaviour of their colleagues.

Journalists need to act as watchdogs. They need to be relevant and develop expertise, using technology to enhance their story telling.

responsible to give voice to the core values of journalism and to redefining them for a modern media. Journalists and their unions can help to frame the terms of the debate and influence the direction of change even though they themselves are not responsible for the sociological, technological and business changes which are reforming the media environment.

Journalists must also take on this role in the knowledge that the public often mistrusts them, often chooses to reject uncomfortable truths and sometimes confuses journalism with entertainment.

Winning public support can only be achieved if journalists behave ethically and produce quality work across all media and wherever the story takes them. Being a pillar of a strong democracy requires personal strength and integrity and the highest possible standards.

Journalists have to find a way to lead the debate about the future of journalism while learning to cope with the challenges that have forced this debate to occur.

The challenges include: Cutbacks in newsrooms, fewer news outlets, the pressure for profit, and the rise of spin doctors. Then there are also the challenges of the bloggers, the internet, think tanks, and critiques raised by academics. All these have changed and continue to change the way journalists do business. Today we are approaching that stage where journalists, sometimes rebranded as “content providers”, often appear to be the least important actors of the “media business”. That must change.

The Right Approach

Despite and because of these changes, journalists need to reinforce the message that journalism matters. Four priorities for journalists to take up this challenge are listed here:

- 1 Journalists should demonstrate their relevance by focusing on what matters. There should be a daily battle for what constitutes news. Former *International Herald Tribune* publisher Peter C Goldmark Jr said: “Relevance is the test of whether coverage turns out to be germane, important, focused on forces and trends that bear with consequence on the course of both daily and long-term events”. (See South Africa panel)
- 2 They should develop their own expertise in order to confront and confound the partisan experts of all sides. Expertise will help them to assure fairness and accuracy in reporting and commentary.
- 3 They should emphasise their role as watchdogs. “We journalists are of course obliged to cover the news,” wrote iconic public TV journalist Bill Moyers in 2008, “but our deeper mission is to uncover the news that powerful people would prefer to keep hidden”.
- 4 They should embrace new media technologies to enhance news coverage and story telling. “Part of the art of journalism is telling people what they need to know in such a way that they want to know it,” according to Goldmark Jr.



The debate about the future of journalism needs to be steered towards quality – not profit.

CHAPTER 2: The Big Changes

American author Neil Postman observed as long ago as 1997 that journalists needed to raise their ‘act’ above that of converting facts to information.

Journalism, he argued, needed to play more in the “knowledge business” – in other words, providing context, sense and relevance to information. Going further, he said there was a need to convert knowledge to wisdom – thereby raising the moral, psychological and social questions about knowledge, and helping people to make decisions about what to do with the knowledge being generated.

Postman’s challenge was a spirited one 13 years ago. Today, the relatively stable media system which then existed in many countries is under pressure. Globalisation has made media vulnerable. Public funding has diminished under the mantra of neo-liberalism and market fundamentalism. Many media institutions broadly, and even journalism within them, have reached the point where economic value and profit potential have become paramount. Social, democratic and cultural values count for less in an environment which now defines the purpose of publishing as making money, rather than making money in order to publish.

Media Owners Profit

This drive for profit has changed the language of publishers across the world. They blame the rise

of the Internet and the mobile telephone for the crisis facing newspapers. Their argument is used to justify a ‘slash and burn’ mentality that has cost thousands of editorial and other jobs, seen the closure of hundreds of titles, and allowed the outsourcing of work to low-wage countries or the use of non-union labour closer to home. Such cuts are rarely set against the massive winnings accrued during the boom years. Few companies acknowledge that profit margins imposed in the last 25 years were unreasonably high.

Publishers regularly spin their financial results to support the fragility of their situation and to justify pay cuts and job losses. In 2009, one newspaper holding company reported quarterly losses of \$211 million, but careful analysis of the figures revealed that the actual quarterly loss was \$1 million; most of the loss had resulted from an investment turned sour in a television company. Many newspaper closures are not of loss-making titles, they just don’t make as much money as before.

Falling circulation figures, changing habits of readers and viewers, and the migration of advertising to the worldwide web have taken their toll and are largely responsible for the break-up of traditional media revenue models. But owners, particularly publishers, rarely consider the impact their cuts have on the core business – journalism. No link is made between the fall in quality and the fall in readership. It is not all bad news, of course.

It is time for journalists to join the debate and to promote the counter argument, centred on the real opportunities which are developing and which can sustain and promote quality journalism.

In the emerging economies of South America, Asia and Africa, there are many instances where investment in journalism has held up, and newspaper circulation and profits are rising even as new media technology also takes root in these regions.

The World Association of Newspapers 2008 figures suggest that 1.9 billion people were reading a paid-for daily newspaper, a rise in circulation of 1.3%. This contrasts with the decline of readership in America where according to the US Audit Bureau of Circulation, the rate of decline increased in 2009 over 2008 while advertising revenue went down an estimated 23% in 2008 and again in 2009.

Publishers are contributing to the erosion of ethical, quality journalism. Some media are even cashing in on unethical journalism. Worryingly, Fox News, the money-spinning flagship of Rupert Murdoch's global empire was voted America's "most trusted" media outlet in a survey early in 2010. It is a brilliant commercial success, but it is openly partisan and thrives on bias and populism. In the process it is shredding the fabric of ethical journalism.

It is time for journalists to join the debate and to promote the counter argument, centred on the real opportunities which are developing and which can sustain and promote quality journalism. As the traditional ways of working are dismantled, they should not be replaced by watered-down or corrupted journalism.

The Detail of Change

Being able to see those opportunities requires a precise understanding of how the industry is changing in each of its phases.

NEWS GATHERING AND EDITING

- Information-gathering has not only opened up for "user generated content", but often entails hyperlinks and even directly established journalism that emanates from other sources – many of which are not traditionally in the media sector.
- Journalists need to be able to handle text, images, audio and video, sometimes working for companies which fail to provide adequate training.
- Assembling this volume of editorial content has become a far more complex task, with even junior journalists learning how to play a curatorship role.
- Web-first publishing has centred on the requirement for speed over accuracy and, given the lack of staffing resources in many newsrooms, there are concerns about the pressure on standards when journalists are made to supply instant coverage and to all platforms.
- There is serious concern about the ability to verify sources; news agendas are increasingly being driven by internet gossip or unchecked blog posts. The German-based IFJ affiliate DJU (dju.verdi.de) is concerned that despite the positives of Web 2.0, lowering the barrier to mass communication is causing journalism to be deskilled and journalists are being forced to be ever quicker, meaning "the danger is that you care less for checking facts and working seriously; at the same time there are rumours going round and you don't want to miss out if they happen to be true".

- Transparency and accountability, always important for journalism, have become even more important with the explosion of the number of sources. The DJU believes: “Transparency is the precondition for accountability and in all mass media content should be signed clearly as journalism, advertising and other content (e.g. from citizens). This also places a greater responsibility on journalists to provide verifiable sources for their material. While this has become a more difficult task, the advantage of being able to link directly to those sources can also help to enhance accountability”.
- The drive for more video content online is altering the news agenda with picture-led stories sometimes taking precedence over more newsworthy, but less visually-arresting stories.
- Some employers are now outsourcing editing to cheap-labour destinations, and many websites prioritise journalistic work not on the basis of an editor’s judgement, but in terms of what will attract audience. The notions of open-source journalism and wiki-journalism are part of this historical change over who controls reporting and editing.
- New editing systems or online content management systems where journalists write directly into templates allow companies to remove sub-editors. In some newspapers 80% of content is not subjected to additional checks. In the Netherlands, inexperienced journalism students have been brought in to carry out fact-checking at De Volkskrant. www.cjr.org/regret_the_error/meet_the_tilburg_checkers.php

THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN JOURNALISM

The media in Africa is growing in leaps and bounds – both in quantity and quality. Big broadcasters, sassy magazines, broadsheets and local FM radio stations are plying their wares in a new and exciting environment. Newspaper circulation is rising and, in turn, there is rapid development of multimedia communications and journalism.

That is the good news. But there are challenges and difficulties too. Multinationals operating in Africa are affected by the global slowdown; this affects their spending and their plans for Africa. Imported equipment, machinery, technologies and newsprint have all risen in price, affecting budgets for all media – big and small.

Local specialist media feel the pinch as subscriptions by large organisations are cut to control budgets and this leads media houses to freeze recruitment and cut costs. Technological change has led to job cuts, the replacement of senior journalists with cheaper younger staff and the sacrifice of news gathering and original research to cut and paste and copycat news.

Internet technology is finally improving with the arrival of fibre optic and internet penetration is growing all the time. Publishers are responding differently to the net; some provide full e-papers, some distinguish between their

print version and e-version. Still others are offering just story summaries for free while some are offering full free versions. The media market is growing and companies are crossing borders into regions where traditionally they did not operate. The Nation Media Group, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, for instance, is operating radio and TV in Uganda, has bought a publication in Tanzania and is looking to move into Rwanda. It is also setting up business in West Africa, in Ghana.

The big media players of Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria show how media can be a successful investment. Some publications may struggle to make profits but some in both radio and print are making money. In many of the French speaking countries in west and central Africa they are helped by a shared currency and a fixed exchange rate with the Euro, offering greater economic stability.

The problem for workers here is that some of these profitable companies are denying workers the rights of association and the right to join a union. It’s that challenge which is being taken up by the Federation of African Journalists, the IFJ regional group, which in early 2010 was formally recognised by the African Union.

– *Omar Faruk Osman*

- Where sub-editing still happens, it is increasingly centralised, reducing it to a production line, rather than building up knowledge of a particular subject or locale. The trend also reduces innovation and creativity as production line templates for pages become more common. In some cases sub-editing and other production tasks, have been outsourced completely.
- Large volumes of journalism are generated cheaply by remote communication rather than presence at an actual story; and much is re-worked from information already published on the internet and/or distributed by press release.
- Productivity increases are the order of the day, with journalists pressured to become multi-skilled and to work extra hours, saving media owners the costs of additional staff.
- Individualised and freelance reporting is growing, while team-work and collective newsroom experiences are diminishing. Stable employment is taking second place to the uncertainty of short-term contracts and piece-work.
- News agendas are being affected by sponsors, user statistics and market-driven imperatives, sometimes at the expense of the social role of journalism.
- Journalists are often under pressure to blur the lines between journalism and advertising. Public relations and commercial imperatives are ever more important to media organisations. Commercial organisations and public bodies increasingly produce video press releases which find their way directly onto news websites without further editing and sometimes without indicating their origins. The slick, high-end production of public relations material is proving irresistible to hungry website providers.
- Authors' rights are under pressure, with demands for unrestricted repackaging, repositioning and redistribution of their journalism.

ASSEMBLING AND SELLING

- Value is put on those journalists who are able to multi-skill and thereby service different platforms such as online and mobile, while accumulated experience and background is regarded as less significant – even redundant.
- Increasingly, news aggregators like Google put together an ensemble of journalism on an automated basis, even without the knowledge or permission of the original authors.
- The distribution of journalism used to be an activity targeted to intended destinations. Now, audiences themselves are activating distribution through features like RSS. Twitter links and social network recommendations also take the process out of the hands of the media, and these become important drivers of what journalism gets consumed.
- While distribution used to be in a linear order determined by the production process, today, much media consumption is distributed across numerous titles, as well as being shuffled, time-shifted and accessed via side-doors and back-doors.
- While journalists historically did not have to take much responsibility for distribution, this is not the case today. They now find themselves needing to understand meta-data if they want to ensure visibility of their work on a search engine.
- Real-time generation of news is replacing deadline-based publishing, with continuous streams (and even torrents in some cases) that draw from countless sources, and is replacing the traditional model of news and information released on the hour or via a clearly-defined edition.
- The commercialisation of news and the increasing dominance of news aggregators mean journalists are increasingly required to consider search engine optimisation to attract hits. For example, staff at the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* can be disciplined for failing to make the daily story count. Other

companies are basing staffing levels on ratios of stories to journalists, reducing journalism to a set of economic indicators.

THE AUDIENCE

- The static, predictable and local/national audience of old is today fragmented, often transient and often international.
- The economic value of journalism no longer ends when it reaches its first consumers; instead, many people are sampling, mixing, re-distributing, annotating and re-publishing journalism; even

GETTING IN ON THE ACT: Namibia's Citizen Voices

Since liberation leader Sam Nujoma (sort of) stepped down from the presidency in 2008, there's been a generally respectful attitude towards him by the editors of the country's vibrant newspapers. It turns out this is not an approach that is universally shared by some of their readers, especially when he went on a racist rant in mid-2009. As cellular telephony has spread through the country, so have members of the public taken up opportunities to have their say with gusto – particularly in the country's biggest daily, *The Namibian*. Although the paper does not publish abusive and racist SMS messages, it carries scores of others – including those which have not spared Nujoma. In response, and in the context of an up-coming election at the time, outraged government leaders threatened to ban the publication of SMSs. The underlying message seems to be that the rulers will tolerate professional journalism which informs the public about the ex-president, but when the public start to respond, a taboo gets broken. Caught in the middle of this, the press has decisively sided with the public. Independent, professional journalists in Namibia recognise that if citizen voices are silenced, the same could happen to them. The other side of the coin is a greater stake by citizens in the freedom of the press to publish their messages. Overall, new media possibilities have led to a stronger alliance for press freedom.

tweets are retweeted! Partly in this context, Professor Axel Bruns from Queensland University has suggested that the term “consumers” is replaced with “producers”.

These new dynamics challenge the old engine of media which sold content to audiences and audiences to advertisers. Citizens were informed and entertained, commerce was boosted by advertising, and democratic political systems accepted the need for journalists. The accepted harmony is altering and in its disruptive change lay not only threats, but also huge opportunities for journalism.

For a start, the change means that members of the audience have more power, in an environment of more choice – including the choice to use their voice. This generates new editorial content and can add value to existing journalism, but it can also lead to greater accountability for the practice.

More Journalism Please

Most of what comes out of the blogosphere does not count as journalism, but there is also a lot that does, much of it from former journalists having been cast out of a contracting industry. This new vigorous form of communication helps keep journalism on its professional toes in regard to truth-telling.

There is not only increased competition within journalism; there is discussion about what journalism is – which in turn can help secure the value and status of the practice. Further, the new entrants into journalism are not always simply rivals, they can also be allies – including allies for press freedom (see Namibia panel).

The decline in power of traditional advertising models provides an opportunity to assert the imperative of serving journalistic purposes and to argue for a better balance between editorial and business. Defining news as a service rather than a product, and customising it to meet the person's information needs, will help to draw a visible line between news and infotainment and restore the power and influence of journalism.

Although the problems afflicting journalism in many places relate to economics rather than

to journalism, the solutions are not exclusively economic. Precisely because there is not yet a clear business model in sight to secure the future of institutionally-based journalism, a strong case can be made that recharging journalism should be a major part of evolving a solution. Accordingly, putting emphasis on new ways of doing journalism is as important, if not more, than experiments like website pay-wall models. Investing in re-invigorated and expanded journalism that embraces the new opportunities, and which generates ever-more compelling editorial, could help shape a sustainable future. This scenario sees fulltime journalists continuing in their jobs and contributing to society on an even more impactful basis.

At the Typeface

Asking journalists to take part in this debate, to seize opportunities and to voice the need for ethical journalism is imperative. The call to action must be made in the context of how they view the changes in the media world and how they assess the impact of those changes on their working lives and their ability to deliver journalism of integrity.

Surveys conducted in the US, Canada, Australia, Germany, UK and many other countries show journalists facing:

- longer hours – In a survey www.alliance.org.au/documents/foj_report_final.pdf in Australia 69.7% said hours were up. The Bavarian Journalists Association reports members increasingly working up to 55 hours a week.
- increased workloads – In a UK survey <http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=605>, 64% shows that the pressure of work increased.
- greater stress – one respondent to the MEAA survey www.alliance.org.au/documents/foj_report_final.pdf in Australia said increased pressure would “push talented journalists away because they will simply get sick of having to do two jobs at once, and leave”.
- inadequate training – a lack of staff and more/continual deadlines which mean less time to research and check facts.

As a result the work-life balance among significant numbers of journalists is suffering and the pressure of having to serve more platforms with fewer staff is leading to a fall in quality. In the MEAA survey www.alliance.org.au/documents/foj_report_final.pdf, almost 40% said their work suffered due to increased hours and workloads. Only 30% of journalists thought their organisation’s online work was ‘professional’ as a result.

Although journalists are able to pinpoint the downsides of their changing environment, most journalists are keen to embrace the new technologies believing that journalism will be enhanced by:

- access to a greater number of sources/ more information
- more interaction with readers/viewers/ listeners
- greater use of social media/multimedia publishing
- ability to reach new and broader audiences

In response to the IFJ survey of its own unions on how they are managing change, one union said: “New technologies have opened up fantastic possibilities to gather, compare and draw conclusions from huge amounts of information, which was not possible before and cited examples of where new technology had allowed journalists through mediums like Facebook to be able to gain access to sources which were previously unavailable. However journalists are frustrated by the way in which some media companies are adapting and embracing the new technologies and in some cases, denying them sufficient resources to take full advantage of the changes”.

In a US survey, www.mediamanagement-center.org/research/lifebeyondprint.asp almost half of journalists think their newsroom’s transition from print to digital is moving too slowly.

Other surveys in the UK <http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=605> and Australia www.alliance.org.au/documents/foj_report_final.pdf paint a similar picture.

Journalists’ enthusiasm for change and new ways of working is not at the expense of the values of professional journalism, as illustrated

by a journalist in response to a survey who said: "The key difference between professional journalists and all the bloggers and all the amateur net journos is our credibility and our reputation to deliver properly researched news. If the lines become blurred through dumbing down or inadequate research we're on a road to ruin. Quality journalism is our salvation, now more than ever." www.alliance.org.au/documents/foj_report_final.pdf

Italian author and sociology lecturer at the University of Udine, Leopoldina Fortunati describes two inter-related trends to describe what underpins these changes: the "media-tisation" of the internet, and the "internet-isation" of the mass media. These terms draw attention to the way in which traditional media have colonised space on the internet, and the way in which the internet has also permeated the media system. Mobile telephones, too, are evolving into integrated media devices, contributing to an ever broader media environment which is increasingly porous.

With so many sources and so much information, Andrew Hayward, former CBS news president argues: there is an even bigger market

for editors and journalists who can make sense of it all and help you figure out at least some of what's going on. That's going to be an important role for journalists. And so it is proving. Twitter helped convey masses of information about the post-election violence in Iran. Yet, it was the professional news organisations who checked the facts and put it in context.

Because journalists themselves recognise the great benefits which new technologies can bring to journalism, they are at odds with owners and publishers who see technological change and the internationalisation of content production as an opportunity to cut jobs and boost profits, without worrying about the accompanying erosion of quality journalism.

The challenge is to create an effective way for these two views to find harmony – in the interests of maintaining quality journalism, creating jobs and producing profitable businesses. It is clear that although journalists are worried about their own jobs, they continue to recognise the need to protect and support quality journalism. They can do that best by taking up this challenge and joining the debate.

GETTING IN ON THE ACT: Social Media, Blogging and More

There are a number of examples of innovative new approaches encompassing social media, hyperlocal and making use of user generated content.


Demotix www.demotix.com/ is a new breed of newswire gathering content from citizen journalists and providing the mainstream media with photographs and videos from around the world. It insists it is not trying to replace mainstream journalism but to enhance it by providing raw footage from places media organisations don't properly cover.

Alan Rusbridger, editor of The Guardian has argued for a more collaborative journalism. As part of this vision for the future of journalism, the company is to launch community websites in 3 major cities run predominantly by bloggers and citizen journalists www.guardian.co.uk/media/pda/2009/oct/12/guardian-local-news-bloggers-emily-bell

Add to that Adrian Holovaty's EveryBlock project www.EveryBlock.com, and Jay Rosen's experiments in civic journalism <http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/>

The Daily Mail group has launched 50 hyperlocal community sites and MSN Local is using user-generated content from local 'citizen correspondents'. The New York Times has outsourced part of its news coverage to readers and a local blogging initiative called The Local <http://www.nytimes.com/marketing/thelocal/>

All of these initiatives seek to use new media and engage with readers, viewers and listeners. In some cases they enhance the work of professional journalists; in others they could, however, undermine it by offering cheap or free content that fails to meet quality standards.

A man with glasses and a plaid shirt is sitting at a desk, looking thoughtful with his hand on his chin. He is using a laptop. The background is a blurred office or meeting room with other people and papers.

There will likely be evolution of journalism, not extinction.

– Professor Brian McNair, Strathclyde University

CHAPTER 3: An Identity Crisis?

Journalism is undergoing something of an identity crisis. History shows that journalism has evolved and continued to change. Whether journalism will emerge stronger or weaker from its current phase is something that is not yet settled. Traditionally, most journalism took place on the basis of particular industry institutions. Now it is argued that these two can be – and need to be – separated and that this separation forces a quest for new institutional arrangements to sustain and develop quality journalism, a new phase in the evolution of journalism.

Early journalism in Europe and the United States was partisan, and it remains so in many parts of the world, but blander norms of news-reporting were introduced in order to appeal to wider markets – driven by publishers’ desires to deliver audiences to advertisers. The telegraph, first introduced in 1844, contributed to the “inverted” pyramid style of journalism. Likewise, the interview is a relatively recent journalistic invention as are the rise of radio fostered sound-bites and anchoring phone-in discussions as forms of journalism. Television brought into being a celebrity model of journalism, along with front-of-camera reporters as part of the story.

In general, market-driven news has fuelled the entertainment dimension of journalism. This has infected all areas of media, and has downgraded the status of purely informational

services, although the impact is felt less in public service broadcasting.

In many regions of the world – the Middle East, parts of Asia, for example – local cultural traditions and values, not to mention political and religious influences, provide a template for journalism to follow.

What is significant in all this is that we can still call these many forms valid expressions of ‘journalism’ – signalling that there’s a common meaning in them. Even if it is pretty general, it marks off this kind of communications from others – like producing novels, poems, plays or public relations. This point also applies to differences between continental traditions of journalism (e.g. European and Anglophone) – there’s still a common core.

Journalism has a fluid historical practice; changing forms and styles is part of its identity and it would be unrealistic to try to preserve some frozen form of journalism. The challenge is to understand and shape these changes – and to conserve what endures. In particular, this includes the journalistic ethics of truth-telling and fairness and the role they play in serving the public interest.

Dan Gillmor, American journalist and author of *We the Media*, about how bloggers are changing journalism, believes that the biggest change is a shift from ‘lecture’ to ‘conversation’. Readers, listeners and viewers are joining in to discuss



Opinions are not facts. What happened and how you feel about it are two different things... In an age where citizens are now able share their feelings and opinions readily and publicly, acknowledging this distinction is crucial.

stories and events using blogs and text messages to newspaper pages, TV and radio shows. While journalism has always stimulated discussion and reaction, the scale and public character of this contribution are new. More importantly, the comments and views are made in real time and often with no editorial filter.

This does not mean that journalism blurs into and becomes indistinguishable from conversation. Instead it continues to designate those acts focused on collecting, interpreting, assembling and delivering public interest information, even if nowadays in the context of this vastly increased conversation.

That conversation context includes the full range of user-generated content (UGC), from social networks, blogs and twittering. It is apparent that not all of this counts as journalistic, whatever else its value. Much of it is personal and lacks public-interest relevance. Even more, UGC is often uninformed opinion or poorly-crafted communication.

It should be self-evident that these expressions do not replace journalism, much as some media owners may misguidedly strive to make this the case. *The Guardian* makes clear the difference in the definition of its own role: opinions are not facts. What happened and how you feel about it are two different things. And people should know which is which. In an age where citizens are now able share their feelings and opinions readily and publicly, acknowledging this distinction is crucial.

Work with the Mob

Today there are more citizens' voices than ever and some of them deserve to be called citizen journalism, without abusing the term 'journalism'. Journalists today need to take seriously the people involved in this activity, and recognise them as emergent, even if only occasional, peers. In times of stress on investigative journalism, and with pressures on delivering both

hyperlocal and foreign coverage, citizens' contributions of this kind, especially if nurtured to meet professional standards and ethics, can be of real benefit to society.

Some interesting initiatives (see box page 15) are new breeds of newswire gathering content from citizen journalists, providing the mainstream media with photographs and videos from around the world. They can provide unique depth and breadth to stories in ways that were unforeseen five years ago.

All over the world, journalists are pro-actively exploiting communications technology to elicit broad-based source involvement long before they even finish and publish a story. In this way, a sector of journalism becomes both more transparent and more iterative – and not just in terms of story follow-up, but also in conception and generation.

A formalised part of this trend is when journalists lead processes known as 'pro-am' collaborations and 'crowd-sourcing'. One successful example was during the USA's election build-up in 2007 and 2008, when the Offthebus experiment by The Huffington Post and NewAssignment.net enlisted more than 12000 volunteers, including 1700 writers, to cover the campaign. In the well-known case of the Fort Myers News-Press (USA), some 6000 people volunteered information to the paper's probe into a new sewer system that was costing taxpayers a lot of money. More recently, the Guardian (UK) succeeded in enlisting volunteers to review 170,000 documents on MP's expenses in just 80 hours. A total of 20,440 participants were involved in processing 457,153 pages.

The collaborative journalism promoted by Alan Rusbridger, editor of The Guardian, with hyperlocal community sites and the outsourcing of news coverage to readers with The Local of the New York Times can enrich, rather than rival, the role of professional journalists. They can avoid reinforcing any employer (or society) illusions that unpaid citizens can substitute for fulltime and experienced employees. With these provisos, there is good reason why journalists and their unions should embrace collaborations.

The changed environment is also eliciting a host of other forms for journalism, many of which will excite public imagination and encourage a whole new audience to engage with journalistic

content, simply because it is now available in non-traditional ways. The Pulitzer Board has changed the rules to allow entries from web-only news outlets and in 2009, this produced 65 entries. The national reporting prize was awarded to the St Petersburg Times for its Politifact website. In 2010, Pulitzer changed the rules again so that entries could come from a news outlet that is 'a text-based United States newspaper or news site that publishes at least weekly during the calendar year and that adheres to the highest journalistic principles'. Pulitzer said this move allows promising bloggers, critics and columnists to compete.

It's Not Just the Words Anymore

VISUALISATION

Dynamic and animated info-graphics, with interactive capacity, are powerful ways to enrich storytelling. At their best, they help make meaningful the huge mass of data (in a context of an ever-growing overload). They can provide context and a highly accessible explanation of relationships. Great journalism is being done that draws on visuals generated at and via websites like IBM's Many Eyes, Google Maps, Dipity.com, Visualeditors.com, etc. If more journalists could improve their service to the public by exploiting these tools it would help unlock new appreciation for the profession. 'Augmented reality' is tomorrow's visualisation journalism. It involves layering deep and multimedia information onto images viewed through programmed lenses or cellphone cameras.

MAPPING

Correlating crime statistics with the whereabouts of street-lighting is an example of this kind of journalism. Another illustration is showing food prices layered on a map of poor neighbourhoods. Maps, and layers of meaning, make spatial sense in a way that is hard to perceive, let alone convey, through other methods. By exploiting this potential, the explanatory power and impact of journalism is deepened.

MOBILE TELEPHONES

Using mobile telephones for journalism enables real time and incremental investigations, as well as enabling crowd-sourcing. Stories can also



INNOVATE, EXPERIMENT, BE CREATIVE

be linked to geo-tags or telephone triangulation, yielding what Director of Digital Technology in Education at Northwestern University Rich Gordon calls ‘locative journalism’ – in which editorial content is made especially relevant to audiences based on their location. But connection to location-based advertising raises anew long-standing ethical issues which also need to be discussed.

However, journalists can help shape a culture that recognises mobile telephones as being media devices for receiving and contributing to editorial content with journalistic integrity. How to do this is a challenge. Of course, short form journalism, such as that tailored for cellphones, does not have to mean trivial or shallow reporting. Editorial material specifically customised for the mobile could be a marvellous way to expand the reach and richness of journalism.

EXTREME ANALYSIS

Databases now enable highly analytical journalism as clusters of numbers, words and phrases can be identified and made meaningful. Social network analysis – revealing the connections that constitute a power-elite – is one example. Journalists today can raise their game and show

that they continue to provide a special quality of information to society. With increasing data-availability in many countries, this is a form of journalism in which an intermediary role as explainer is invaluable. Information about this evolving subject can be found at: www.analytic-journalism.com

CONNECTING WITH CITIZENS

Journalism these days has the opportunity to be closer to citizens than ever before. Public journalism includes providing platforms for dialogue, and airing solutions to community problems. All this absorbs journalistic time and resources, but the returns can be higher than having isolated newsrooms that struggle to turn passive audiences into communities with which they can engage. After all, it’s more likely that communities will back new ways to support journalism if the practice is closer to their concerns.

NARRATIVE JOURNALISM

This long-standing form of journalism has a heightened significance these days. It refers to well-researched, detailed and dramatic renditions of journalism that tell stories from the viewpoint of the sources. It is complementary to the diet

of sound-bites, short forms of news. In an era of fast news which is often shallow in content and ideas, there is a difference to be had in taking time for more intensive and researched storytelling including scenes and dialogue. Unfolding a real-life tale in this manner underlines the value of what professional journalism can do when occasion demands it. As with public journalism, now is a good time to mainstream narrative journalism.

IMMERSION

This kind of journalism recreates an experience of such depth and detail that audiences can simulate moment and place. Using new technology, this boosts the impact of live reporting by journalists who place themselves as characters *mise-en-scène*. Nonny de la Pena (<http://www.NonnyDLP.com>) has done one of the most well known examples here with “Gone Gitmo”, a virtual Guantanamo Bay Prison within the Second Life virtual world. Although the experience is almost computer game-like, it is as accurate and informative as other expressions of journalism – and it contains layers that link to contextual information.

Recognising these changes is a first step, but journalists and their unions need to reflect on how these changes are redefining journalism so that we can identify what we want to preserve and enrich. As New York University Professor Clay Shirky writes: “What journalism needs now is not nostalgia but experimentation”. He continues: “There’s no guarantee that this kind of experimentation will give us something better than we have today. ... There is a guarantee, however, that if we don’t experiment with new forms of journalism like society depended on it, we will end up with something worse”.

Journalism does not need to be reinvented but it does need to be recharged. It needs to experiment by engaging with changes in technology, economics, audience relationships and the like. Unions which focus on preserving a fading past will miss an historical opportunity to serve the cause of journalism, and the reputation of its members. By leading the charge, they will do both and will also make it more difficult for other forces to fill the space, forces which are not always friends of journalism.



**The true journalist cares about ethics,
democracy and freedom of expression
for non-journalists.**

CHAPTER 4: Who Is a Journalist?

We can see how journalism is changing and we can argue and debate about how those changes must be absorbed and used to invigorate the profession. This cannot be done without also examining how journalists work, how they strive to maintain integrity and a dedication to the pursuit of news which is in the public interest and how they sometimes risk their lives for their commitment to the profession.

Countries vary in the way they treat journalists; some do not feel the need to define who is a journalist, others cannot do so and some have identified certain criteria by which a journalist should be defined. Many accredit journalists with a card, giving them access and affording them recognition by authorities and individuals and, in rare cases, special legal status has been assigned to them.

The labour definition offered by the framework of collective bargaining agreements defines journalists in some countries. This definition often requires a journalist to have specific qualifications and they may function at local, regional or national level. In June 2009, the Federal Supreme Court in Brazil ruled that the requirement for a journalist to have a diploma ran contrary to freedom of speech, recognised in the country's constitution. (See Brazil panel)

Accreditation

An accreditation system involves a union or professional organisation (often a joint body representing unions and media corporations) which issues a card to certify that the person carries out regular and professional journalism. The committee examines the applicant's experience which often includes some form of internal training in their own newsrooms. Once obtained, the card allows the journalist to invoke certain rights, such as the right to protect sources. The accreditation system assumes that the journalist is a member of an organisation which has ethical commitments to journalism. Accreditation may also be a condition for being hired as a reporter in those systems where there are professional categories. The accreditation system is widespread among the Latin countries of Europe.

Colegios

The professional 'colegios' or professional governing bodies, found in southern Europe and much of Latin America, require an academic degree and encourage members to comply with the ethical and educational standards of the profession. In principle, 'colegios' require only objective criteria, which do not have to involve political control.

Licensing

Licensing involves legal obligations in order to practice journalism. Without these requirements, those engaging in journalism face punishment, either administratively or criminally. The legal model can be achieved through compulsory membership of a professional body. In authoritarian regimes, the status of journalists can be conferred by a government body, subjecting journalists to strict political control. The dangers of official certification are that it can easily become a cover for political control. This is what happened recently in Kenya and Botswana.

Unions

Membership of a union of journalists is prima facie evidence of journalistic activity. Although legal regulation goes against the tradition of Anglo-Saxon countries, many of these countries have powerful unions, which for many years could impose a system of access to journalism which was almost exclusively for their members. Now however, legislation is undermining the role of unions in the workplace.

Many companies run extensive intern/trainee programmes which expect people to train without pay. The trend is toward deregulation of the profession and the downplaying of conditions accompanied by an increasing number of 'amateurs' and the weakening of the value of the press card. The very definition of a professional journalist is being undermined.

The growth of freelance work, much of it "forced" by changing employment policies, has undermined traditional loyalties to a single media outlet, created a precarious working environment, weakened authors' rights protection and made the ethical base of journalism ever more fragile.

Journalists' unions argue that media freedom – a version of free expression constrained by ethical values and responsibility – provides a basis for peoples' freedom of speech and expression of their ideas and opinions, by providing a professional, informed and independent community that can gather, interpret, comment and analyse news and events to satisfy citizens' right to be informed. In doing

THE BRAZILIAN DIPLOMA

In June 2009, Brazilian journalists lost what they considered a decisive battle. The Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the legal requirement of a university degree ("diploma") to work as a journalist. The majority of the Court considered this requirement (established by a decree-law in 1969 during the military dictatorship) as contrary to freedom of expression, free exercise of a job, trade or profession and as a restriction on these rights not set in the Constitution itself.

The ruling accepted the appeal of media entrepreneurs. Brazilian unions have argued over these 40 years that the diploma is essential to ensure quality information and to protect working conditions. They say the diploma provides basic protection of labour rights and without it; employers would deregulate the status of journalists across the country. However, lawyers invoked at a court hearing a classic argument: no one should be prevented from exercising freedom of expression or publication in a newspaper or appearing on radio or television. But the journalists' union FENAJ says there is no evidence of the diploma ever hindering the exercise of free and independent journalism or access to the profession.

In Brazil, the disappearance of the diploma is framed in a process of deregulation of the media. The journalists have responded by seeking to introduce constitutional changes that will restore the basic rights of journalists. They have had some initial success. They continue to fight for the reinstatement of the diploma requirement against a background of thousands of criminal and civil defamation lawsuits against Brazilian media outlets by politicians, businessmen and public officials in the last five years.



KENYA AND BOTSWANA CHANGE THE RULES

Statutory licensing of journalists was introduced in Kenya in 2007 and Botswana in 2008. What makes this particularly objectionable is the breadth of the definition of who is a journalist.

Kenya's Media Act 2007 set up a statutory Media Council and defined "journalist" as meaning "any person who holds a diploma or a degree in mass communication from a recognised institution of higher learning and is recognised as such by the Council, or any other person who was practicing as a journalist immediately before the commencement of this Act, or who holds such other qualifications as are recognized by the Council, and earns a living from the practice of journalism, or any person who habitually engages in the practice of journalism and is recognised as such by the Council" (Kenya, 2007).

The law's remit is very wide-ranging as it defines "journalism" as "the collecting, writing, editing and presenting of news or news articles in newspapers and magazines, radio and television broadcasts, and on the internet".

The Media Practitioners' Act was pushed through Botswana's parliament in December 2008, introducing statutory regulation for that country's media. It enforces a system of "accreditation" – in fact, licensing – for journalists. The definition covers any person who writes, edits or transmits news and information to the public.

Laws like these provide authorities with pretexts to deregister or exclude individuals from journalism. They also lump casual bloggers together with professional journalists. However, in so doing, this scope recognises the shared character of both constituencies as wielders of communications power. What it also does is suggest broad fronts of support for the freedom of journalism at large.

this work journalists enrich the functioning of democracy.

Regulating journalism is needed, but must be based upon principles of self-rule and should be developed according to a culture of journalism as a public good. Regulation cannot be controlled by public authorities, who themselves are subject to journalistic scrutiny, but it should have connections with the community that journalism serves.

IFJ supports an open profession, without prior restrictions which can be subject to political or economic manipulation. It regards journalists as qualified, competent professionals who do not need to hide behind any wall or professional closed-shop. IFJ highlights the place of professionalism, accountability and expertise, unlike for example citizens who communicate through new social media without having to stress these qualities.

On certain occasions, it is appropriate to maintain academic requirements for journalists, as in Brazil, for example, if it protects employment rights, but on no account should this be a barrier to access by those who for legitimate reasons are unable to fulfil formal obligations.

What Journalists Say Makes a Journalist

In 2009, the IFJ consulted its members about the nature of journalism and it revealed a wide variety of systems and traditions relating to the definition of journalism, including some countries which dispute the very rights of journalists. This makes clear how difficult it is to set defined prerequisites for the job.

However, broad agreement exists about many of the features that define a journalist:

- **Regular and professional activity:** professional dedication to the research and dissemination of information in the public interest. This is the person's main activity and from it the journalist obtains the substantial part of his or her income.
- **Ethical commitment:** the journalist publicly accepts professional principles and ethical codes through union or professional organisation membership.
- **Ethical exercise:** the journalist adjusts his/her professional conduct to the general ethical principles and standards of practice

of each medium or sector and accepts the decisions of ethics councils where they exist.

- **Skill:** training and acquiring skills are encouraged but insisting that a journalist has a degree as a pre-requisite to practising is contrary to fundamental rights. Equally, schools and colleges should not limit applications even though there are more graduates than there are jobs.
- **Membership of a formal or informal professional community:** it is hard to assume ethical practices outside of an organisation that defends and demands those ethical conducts. But according to freedom of association, no one can be forced to join, so this element should be understood as achieved when there is a formal (staff) or informal (freelancers) link to a professional community such as a media newsroom.

All responses to the IFJ consultation insisted that journalists are best identified and defined by their work and its place in a framework of commitment to ethical journalism and the public interest. When the IFJ and media organisations emphasise these qualities the public will better understand the role of journalists. Society needs to fight to keep journalists independent from political, social or economic powers. On their side, journalists must continue to create platforms for permanent learning and to encourage training for its own sake, and not simply to conform to a requirement to practise.

There was less agreement about the crossover between journalism and the public relations industry. In general, it is accepted that press officers, public relations or advertising people are not regarded as professional journalists; they are, after all, employed to promote the commercial or political interests of their paymasters. But they are engaged in the public information space and they do have a responsibility to be ethical in their treatment of information. That's how some unions, like the NUJ in Great Britain and Ireland, see it and who admit communications staff into their general membership.

In practice, the public relations industry creates more jobs than the media itself and many journalists are migrating to public

TO EARN YOUR LIVING; TO RISK YOUR LIFE

Many organisations believe that the best way to establish a habitual exercise of journalism is to consider whether this job provides the principal income and livelihood of the applicant. Strictly interpreted, this requirement would deny protection to persons who report regularly, but who need other jobs to earn a living. In Colombia it is common for journalists from local media to have other jobs to support themselves.

That they are part-time journalists does not make them immune to attack; they too have been targets of guerrillas, paramilitaries and local authorities. Logically, the Colombian Federation of Journalists recognises them as bona fide journalists and has defended and denounced the attacks against them.

relations as they are laid off from mainstream media jobs. Many of the jobs are held by professionals who have been career journalists. Do they cease to be journalists? Should they quit their journalistic organisations?

In the IFJ survey, members were asked whether journalists should have special rights and obligations. The Anglo-Saxon countries said no; the Latin countries answered that journalists have a social responsibility. In Belgium, the AJGPB said that social responsibility requires that journalists act according to the collective interest and assess the consequences of what they transmit. This responsibility is intrinsic to press freedom but not to freedom of speech which any citizen can exercise as responsibly or as irresponsibly as they want to.

The notion of "social responsibility" is equivalent to that of "accountability". All journalists like to think that they are accountable to their public. The duty to inform, to "tell the truth," which is the slogan of the IFJ for ethical journalism, is a moral obligation for anyone who aspires to be regarded as a journalist. That can apply, too, to people working in the broader field of communications. Although there may be different approaches on this question, one thing

AMERICA'S 'SHIELD LAW'

Who qualifies for legal or judicial protection where the right to protect sources is recognised? This was one of the key issues in the "Shield Law" (Free Flow Information Act), pending in Congress during the fall of 2009. Three criteria for the definition were handled in different texts proposed to establish the holder of that right ("covered person")

- a) A **functional definition**, meaning any person who, for the purpose of public dissemination through a variety of means, investigates and gathers information on public issues locally, nationally or internationally through typical acts like journalistic interviews, observation of events, collection and analysis of documents in various media.
- b) A definition based on the **dependence of a news organisation**.
- c) A definition based on their employment as a **way of earning their living**.

The definition based on the criteria b) and c) or a combination of both is restrictive and would exclude a group of people, worthy of protection, including bloggers devoted to information of public interest.

On October 30, 2009, senators promoting the law reached a compromise with the White House, under which the definition of "covered person" is made under a broad functional approach, but requiring that these activities be conducted on a regular basis. Analysts believe that freelancers, student journalists, book authors and bloggers are now all protected.

The enactment of this law reveals the importance of defining the modern journalist.

is certain – there is consensus that this morally responsible journalism cannot be legally required through rules imposed by governments.

Promoting Self-regulation

Unions should promote self-regulation mechanisms through which the journalist is accountable to society. This is ethical responsibility which should not be confused with the legal liability that follows if a journalist commits a crime. This is still not clear in many countries where the IFJ campaigns vigorously to make sure journalists do not face criminal charges for doing their job.

Self-regulation boards should be comprised of journalists and editors, not by the authorities. In the IFJ survey, several organisations stressed that it is not enough to require appropriate behaviour from reporters when publishers ignore ethics and/or require reporters to violate ethical rules – directly or indirectly. As the IFJ's Ethical Journalism Initiative states, "Ethical conduct is not just for journalists. If media are to be credible, there must be ethical management, too".

Despite different perceptions or interpretation in different countries, the fact remains that

journalists – at least in practice – have special rights that are not accorded to a common citizen exercising their right to free speech.

These rights may include free access to sources, physical protection during the course of their work, legal protection against external constraints, the conscience clause, professional secrecy to protect sources and copyright.

For example in the United States, Congress has approved the "Shield Law" to protect professional secrecy, but it is clear that organisations must strive to ensure that such powers are respected as a means to inform and tell the truth. (See Shield Law panel)

The important thing is that, in each place, those that disseminate information of public interest are adequately protected, including freelancers, students of journalism, writers and bloggers. Journalists' organisations can affiliate bloggers that blog regularly, while others may be protected by organisations defending human rights, without necessarily being called or considered as professional journalists.

Organisations must commit to defending the right to free expression and information beyond the protection of their affiliated professionals.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a stack of rolled-up newspapers or documents. The papers are stacked horizontally, with their edges creating a rhythmic pattern of light and dark lines. A semi-transparent teal rectangular box is centered over the middle of the stack, containing white text. The background is a solid red color at the top of the frame.

**Journalists need to build links to
many communities to succeed.**

CHAPTER 5: Defining the Role of Journalists

Ethical commitment is the cornerstone of any effort to define or redefine and strengthen the journalist's role. Defining 'quality information' and 'journalism of standards' is more difficult. What we mean is: research and contrasting sources, search for truth, verification of facts, balanced treatment of the various positions, appropriate use of language and strong storytelling.

Today, quality must also take account of the interactive possibilities offered by the new information ecosystem. Much professional journalism today could be redefined as 'civic journalism'; journalism that reconstructs the public sphere, linking and interacting with new social media.

The regular and ongoing dedication to public information is no longer the preserve of professional journalists. Many bloggers have a regular and permanent commitment to this activity but, in this case, it may not be their main activity or their main source of income. Loading a video to YouTube or sending a photo to a newspaper does not make one a journalist. Organisations or unions can take account of the part-time/full-time status of an applicant who wishes to join.

Respondents to the IFJ survey suggested that the unions could consider distinguishing professional journalistic internet sites using labels. Unions might also promote the adoption of particular codes of ethics to be voluntarily adopted by bloggers and citizen journalists and

even to consider the possibility of establishing partnerships with organisations that can arise between non professional journalists.

A New Creative Space

The internet has created an interactive space, supporting a whole new style of public communication, which now demands a capacity to distinguish between professional journalists, citizens' voices and those who provide information purely to entertain. The creation of this new communication space is a challenge to every aspect of journalism and especially to how student journalists now are educated for the future.

In 2009, Danish academics published the findings of their survey of a 'news week' – one week in November 2008 in which they counted and categorised all news items in media. When they compared it with the number of items for the same week in 1999, they found an increase of 134%. The figures showed 75,000 news items in 2008 and 32,000 news items in 1999 with 71% of stories originating in traditional newspapers. In the same period, the number of journalists increased by 8%. (Hvor kommer nyhederne fra?/Where does news come from? - Lund, Willig & Ørsten, Ajour, 2009).

Further analysis revealed that the number of 'original' stories rose from 18,000 units (1999) to 26,000 (2008) – 44%. So while the number of



Educational institutes have a strong role to play alongside unions. They must seek new ways of training journalists and fresh ways of strengthening public consciousness about the importance of journalism.

original stories rose, the amount of copying and “recycling” of original news stories produced by others had increased even more, driven by the expanded media platform. Professional journalists benefit from this additional space but it also provides opportunities for non-professionals with an interest in acting as one’s own publisher on the other. This situation is not peculiar to Denmark, it is a trend across all of the new information landscape.

Training Pays

Unions have a long and great tradition of helping working journalists to upgrade skills and this dedication is needed more than ever. Direct training courses should be offered alongside external training opportunities and should target all members, the veteran freelance, the university graduate, the foreign correspondent. New and valuable opportunities are now available online including the BBC Academy and the Poynter Institute’s News University (www.poynter.org).

Educational institutes have a strong role to play alongside unions. They must seek new ways of training journalists and fresh ways of strengthening public consciousness about the importance of journalism. They must bear market needs in mind, together with the needs of the future of the media to ensure that newly-trained journalists are not toothless lapdogs, serving media masters driven by profit rather than ethical journalism and quality information. Perhaps they could initiate debate as to whether the existing criteria for news gathering continue to be appropriate; significance, sensation, conflict, identification, actuality and immediacy. Notions such as collaborative journalism, constructive journalism, participation and utility should be discussed in this context.

Lund, Willig & Ørsten argue for such a discussion in their book *Hvor kommer nyhederne fra?* They propose that journalist schools, universities and other institutions providing journalistic education should discuss the following items:

- In general, a more elastic/differentiated understanding of news criteria
- Re-evaluation of journalistic ideals
- Adding democratic values and utility to journalistic values
- Empowering journalists to go beyond existing job specifications and to help shape the evolution of the media
- change, change of behaviours of consumers - readers)
- fundamentally understanding the business
- how to be innovative in journalism.

Shifting the Emphasis

There is also scope for unions and journalism training schools to co-operate to ensure that future journalists understand the changes to and challenges facing journalism, that they are prepared for the difficulties ahead in the journalistic workplace and that they understand that studying journalism is interplay between theory and practice. Examples of these are:

- working on different platforms (technological development)
- acknowledging the importance of authors' rights
- acknowledging the impact that structural change has especially in the newspaper industry (financial and technological

Understanding by students of the potential conflicts among the many stakeholders in the journalistic process would be enhanced by such co-operation. It would allow unions to pass their knowledge of the impact of change in the workplace to the educators. It would also influence the way in which student journalists are treated during work experience modules and reduce exploitation.

The Union Link

In Denmark the union has negotiated collective agreements especially for students in practice. This is made easier by the fact that the three journalism schools in Denmark are run by the state and the Danish Union of Journalists is represented in all of them, either as board members or as members of advisory boards.

These experiences suggest that unions can consider a pro-active strategy in building good relations with all those institutions where students are present. Dialogue with the institutions

PROMOTING NEWS LITERACY

Some years ago, Danish media companies, with European Union funding, ran a scheme to improve integration of immigrant communities into the media. The move came as a response to criticism of the media for excluding other ethnic groups. A number of young immigrants – typically second generation – were invited to take introduction courses in journalism, followed by practical experience with newspapers, radio and television. The initiative proved a break-through for motivating young immigrants to be interested in journalism and media.

Some from this group are now established journalists in Denmark. And some of them are the backbone of a group called the “Society for a Responsible Press”. The group’s aim is to extend media literacy especially among immigrant groups.

Similar programmes are being developed in other European countries. The IFJ Ethical Journalism Initiative is also promoting more engagement with citizens’ groups and encouraging the authorities to support programmes of media literacy which is particularly needed at a time when people struggle to navigate through the massive information overload generated by the Internet. All of this work needs to be co-ordinated with national journalists’ unions.



Dialogue with the institutions and the students, through formal representation, can ensure union influence on educational content and – as an important spin-off – contact with young future members at an early stage.

and the students, through formal representation, can ensure union influence on educational content and – as an important spin-off – contact with young future members at an early stage.

Unions should not limit their efforts to schools and education institutions. They must initiate campaigns and maintain continuous communication and explanation with schools, civil society, politicians, business sector and other stakeholders to widen the understanding of media and journalism, to stress the value of a free press and of quality journalism. This can be done with campaigns or by initiating conferences or festivals, where media-representatives invite people “inside” to see directly how journalists work and media functions.

Many unions organise special events for journalism students at their congresses and major events. Some hold more ambitious events. In Denmark, for instance, every second year since 1996, the Danish Union of Journalists hosts a media-festival. Over 1,500 people attended the last one in 2008.

Most participants were journalists or students, of course, but representatives from other parts of society attended. The Fagfestival raises issues such as politics, crime and women and includes debates about the internet, technology and the role of big business in journalism. Today it is considered as the biggest, the best known and the most important of its kind, nationally and internationally. The union also works with other groups to arrange events about press freedom, the relationship between politicians and media, and access to public information.

Another example of promoting public understanding is the campaign by the South African National Editors Forum (www.sanef.org.za) under the slogan “Media Freedom is Your Freedom”. This initiative has seen many media houses making space to publish or broadcast materials around this theme. The aim was to raise public awareness of the importance of journalism for protecting citizens’ rights and for providing early warnings.

Unions should cooperate with publishers, publishers' organisations or companies in campaigning for the extension of media literacy. In some countries, media companies try to target young people by integrating media literacy in the classes at school. Likewise unions and employers could consider targeting groups in civil society.

Encouraging and Organising New Voices

Unions have a special role to play in reaching out to the wider world to educate people about the value of journalism.

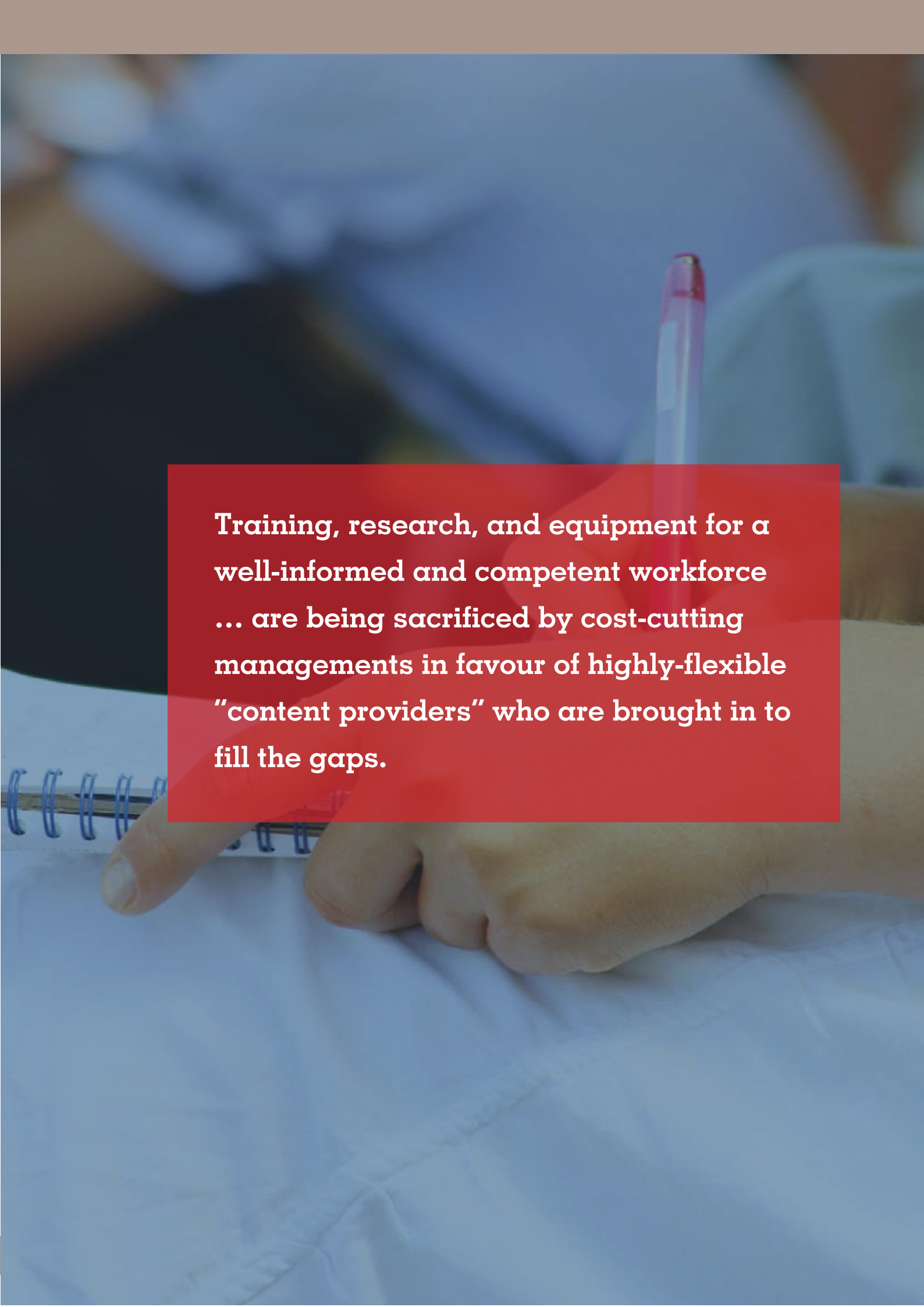
That must mean encouraging recruitment into journalism from across all social classes and insisting that there is diversity in the faces and voices seen and heard across the media scene. This work can only be done through dialogue with journalism teachers and educational institutions and in partnership with students.

However, it must take into account the fact that it is employers who decide who to employ

and what mix of talent and experience is appropriate for each task in media houses of the future. A traditional education in journalism may not always provide the right fit of skills for work to be done. Unions need to understand the scope and variety of the new jobs being created and how they can best be organised into trade unions.

The aim should be to ensure that all employees in journalism are able to enjoy union recognition and social protection. Unions may opt to protect and represent only those who fit into more narrow definitions of what is regarded as professional journalistic work. Journalists' unions tend to know their own conditions best.

They have the knowledge and experience of local traditions and know well what will work best in their own national neighbourhood. But there are choices to be made as the employment profile of the industry changes and as the jobs are reshaped to fit the new converged conditions in which media work. There are choices to be made here that can only be made after robust debate and a clear understanding of the priorities.

A person wearing a white lab coat is holding a pink pen over a spiral notebook. The background is a blurred white surface, possibly a table or desk. A semi-transparent red box is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

Training, research, and equipment for a well-informed and competent workforce ... are being sacrificed by cost-cutting managements in favour of highly-flexible "content providers" who are brought in to fill the gaps.

CHAPTER 6. Unions Matter Too

One reason why media people are feeling the pain of change is that journalism costs money. Training, research, and equipment for a well-informed and competent workforce are all part of the package in building a reliable editorial operation, but these are being sacrificed by cost-cutting managements in favour of highly-flexible “content providers” who are brought in to fill the gaps. They cost less money and they tolerate less favourable conditions. As a result there is a steady erosion of professionalism.

This change is ultimately where the unions must concentrate their efforts. The challenge is for unions to empower journalists and media professionals to shape their own future.

The growth of freelance and part-time work in journalism means unions are having to divide their efforts to focus attention on protecting conditions for permanent and temporary staff, a job made harder by falling numbers of members which reduces the unions’ capacity to campaign for that protection.

In America, more than 40,000 newspaper jobs were lost in 2009, according to the Federal Bureau of Labour Statistics. Newspapers closed or moved to online-only publications such as the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, with scores of jobs lost in the process.

In Australia, every major media organisation has cut staff numbers – 500 permanent journalist jobs have been lost since mid-2008. In the United Kingdom, dozens of newspapers have closed and thousands of journalists have lost their jobs. Freelance and contract jobs have significantly contracted, and rates of pay have declined in real terms for these workers. Broadcasters, including the BBC, have cut thousands of jobs.

Part of the cost-cutting agenda has seen a downgrade in quality of work, resulting from the smaller staff number coupled with the unchanged demands of the job, but also by the replacement of journalist-created content with other forms of content that are cheaper to produce. One example is in Australia, where Pagemasters, a company with a non-union collective agreement, performs sub-editing work for Australian and British newspapers.

In Germany, several newspaper organisations have been exposed to outsourcing of entire editorial offices. Employees were dismissed and the work outsourced to freelancers. In Denmark there were attempts to outsource special editorial areas. In the television industry there is a lot of outsourcing. Almost all suppliers of content to the broadcasters are covered by collective agreements for employers and freelancers. In Canada unions represent and have collective agreements



Members of unions are fighting short-term cost-cutting measures with industrial action, negotiations, political lobbying, and community campaigns. And they insist in being at the table when there are discussions about future strategies.

protecting freelancers at nearly all of the various federal and provincial public broadcasters.

Media organisations have made much smaller investments in new media as they experiment with business models that could support journalism. Job descriptions have also changed, a tactic that in part is designed to isolate new media workers from existing collective agreements. A ‘content producer’ may be performing essentially the same or very similar work to that of a journalist, but may be employed under individual contracts, which often have inferior pay and conditions to the collective agreement.

As cost-cutting becomes a reality across the industry, collective agreements have come under increased pressure, with concession bargaining put forward by companies as the reality workers must accept in order to protect the viability of companies and job security. Changes to conditions sought by companies include pay freezes

or real wage cuts, less training or sometimes none at all.

There are also continued strategies by some companies to aggressively de-unionise existing and emerging industry sectors.

Finding Ways to Fight Back

Members of unions are fighting short-term cost-cutting measures with industrial action, negotiations, political lobbying, and community campaigns. And they insist in being at the table when there are discussions about future strategies.

There has been an increasing number of attacks on media organisations with higher levels of membership. In some cases, staff have been prepared to accept wage cuts and removal of social benefits such as at the *New York Times* and at the *Boston Globe* where, under the threat of the newspaper being closed, the union agreed

to concessions of approximately \$10 million in wages, health benefits and other financial entitlements. The impact of the social benefit cuts makes these reductions even more dramatic. Staff and unions have made these difficult decisions in the face of threats by companies that more jobs will be lost or companies will falter if staff refuse the cuts.

Across Europe, in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, unions have responded to potential outsourcing of special editorial areas with demands of collective agreements with conditions that matched those at the newspapers that wished to outsource. In some cases the company recognised that this option was not cheaper and the idea died.

In the UK, unions have pursued extended negotiations to manage the challenges. An example is the 22-month long negotiation between the National Union of Journalists (UK) and *Guardian News and Media* to facilitate an integrated newsroom.

Intensive negotiations in Copenhagen with the biggest newspaper, *Berlingske Media*, owned by Mecom headed by British media magnate David Montgomery, centred on the transformation of the traditional newspaper business model to a multimedia organisation. *Berlingske Media* includes a great number of publications, and the company wanted increased sharing of information across the titles to drive efficiency and reduce costs.

Berlingske achieved some centralisation in the company with a view to providing internet content. For example: there were once sport departments at *Berlingske Tidende* (daily quality newspaper), *B.T.* (tabloid daily newspaper) and *Urban* (free sheet). Now they all are gathered in one sportsdesk called www.sporten.dk. Similar centralisation occurred in other areas but it was done with negotiation. The cost was redundancies but the unions forced better terms for those people than what was first offered.

Similar negotiations have taken place in Germany with the big newspaper group *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ) over centralising its editorial operations.

As this has continued, journalists' unions have launched at national and European level campaigning work to highlight the media crisis.

The Europe-wide "Stand up for Journalism" campaign originated in the UK, but is now active in most countries of the region and on 2 February 2010 a major conference on the future of journalism was held at the European Parliament to lobby for European-wide action to confront the media crisis.

Make the Changes Now

This environment presents challenges and opportunities to unions, some of which will require strong networks such as the IFJ to assist in resourcing and organising. The prize of union expansion built on strong issue-based campaigning is worth achieving because it will serve to increase union power and influence in the industry and to build public faith in the need for journalism as central to democracy.

Unions are well placed to shape the industry as it changes, based on core values of independence and respect for truth. In that role, unions need to engage with governments to help them to understand the challenges the industry faces and to accept responsibility for working with the industry to shape new media.

The changes are rapid so unions need to adapt quickly and to define the key values of the profession so that the battle to defend hard-won conditions, while accepting and incorporating changes, is fought with those principles and ethics right up front.

Part of that battle requires unions to ensure that current members with industry expertise are not left behind by technological changes. Simultaneously, unions must become relevant to new media workers, some of whom will have no union tradition and some with no newspaper experience. Unions will attract these people if they ensure they are listening and campaigning on issues that matter in this shifting, changing workplace. Indeed identifying these workers is itself a task as workplaces become more fragmented and the boundaries between visual, print and audio media are eroded.

Unions are the voice of journalism and, one by one, they must take responsibility for helping to shape their own future. It will not be done by media companies, governments or professional associations. Unions need to provide leadership



and fresh thinking which they need to share with the public and policymakers through vigorous campaigning work. That collective power can have an impact on the changing landscape.

Many employers expect working journalists to carry the load of change by working harder and doing more with less. It is not a workable or viable strategy for survival. Journalists and their unions are ready to embrace the opportunities of change, but they do not accept that sacrificing the mission of journalism and the professionalism of their work provides any solution to the crisis.

Campaigning for Old and New

It is fundamental to systematic, planned organising that unions map new media workers and use that information, where necessary, to reinterpret union rules to allow a broader potential membership of our organisations. Undoubtedly, new media should be integrated in existing collective agreements and unions should be prepared to bargain around the specific issues that change presents. Unions have to juggle the commitment to protect hard-won wages and conditions while adapting to the new media landscape.

Journalists' unions need to build partnerships with other unions to map the changes taking place in the industry and to identify strategies for recruitment and organisation of the new media workforce. There is a stimulating debate now emerging about how this is best done, but there is little disagreement that old divisions and prejudices do not provide an answer to the decline of union representation across the media scene.

Union campaigning power needs to be viewed, not only on a workplace by workplace

Union campaigning power needs to be viewed, not only on a workplace by workplace basis, but also across the industry at national and international level.

basis, but also across the industry at national and international level. This extends the organisational strength of unions which is vital for their members. Unions need to continually redefine the parameters of the emerging industry without compromising core journalistic skills. In this context, new players who enter journalism through the online and blogging spheres can be counted among the community of professionals.

It is one thing for unions to declare that they will recognise bloggers, but will bloggers and other new media employees recognise unions? Do they see themselves as sharing common ground with traditional newspaper workers? Do they regard themselves as journalists? Would they want to?

A key challenge to unions' efforts to organise a new generation of journalists engaged in new media is whether newer and/or potential members working in new media industries perceive themselves as journalists in a traditional sense.

It may be too early to answer this question but a number of unions have begun large-scale research projects to determine precisely who the workers of the 'new journalism' environment are. This work of mapping the process of change is vital to identifying where creative journalistic work is being carried out. As the boundaries blur between graphic design, information technology, data analysis and marketing/public relations, the need to follow the work, identify the people doing it and develop strategic programmes for union organisation becomes more urgent.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the working environment influences a worker's own identity. The level of union activity and the journalistic culture may also define their own response.

Workplaces with higher levels of union membership that have new media staff working alongside print-based journalists often consider themselves to be journalists. However, workers at start-ups who are performing largely the same tasks as their counterparts are more likely to consider themselves as “content providers”, analysts, designers and the like. Workers will be more open to joining unions if unions identify with their needs and their problems.

WHEN THE *TORONTO STAR* WANTED TO “FARM OUT” NEWSDESKS

On 3 November 2009, Canada’s largest newspaper *Toronto Star* told its employees that it would cut up to 100 editing jobs, almost a third of its 380 newsroom staff. This reduction was due to take place through a combination of voluntary buyouts, outsourcing, and layoffs. Outsourcing as such was not new at the Star since circulation jobs were already proceeded in India and classified call centre jobs externalised to Buffalo, US. However the importance of the editing job and the proportion of outsourcing came as a shock to unions, staff and readers. “Star readers will be shocked to hear that core aspects of its daily journalism, that vital role in our society, are now to be farmed out, likely to foreign interests” said the union leader Maureen Dawson.

The union contract with the Star allows the union to match any offer concerning the outsourcing of work. Therefore, negotiations were held between management and the union and the creation of a new page production desk was agreed to by both sides and 35 union members were transferred to this operation. Sixty people left through voluntary buyouts and the deal included some job losses, but it also saved the jobs of many page editors who would have been laid off and provided for additional page editor positions to be filled.

Target the Needs of Citizens and Workers

The Communications Workers of America “Speed Matters” campaign for affordable high-speed Internet for Americans is one example of a successful push to reposition the union as a tough leader on an issue that connects with technology and new media workers. Campaigns like this require dedicated and trained union organisers who can support strong workplace organisation and who recognise where resources need to be targeted, regionally and nationally. Resources must be targeted beyond the needs of existing members to avoid inevitable decline.

Unions cannot ignore the voice of the employer. They need to stand in the shoes of companies hamstrung by debt and structural change and provide a rational, commonsense voice able to consider the consequences of change, embrace the potential for innovation and all the while retaining the core values of journalism.

Unions will rightly demand that media workers have access to the training they need to take on new forms of work. They will emphasise to employers the value of a highly skilled and up-to-date workforce. Unions should demand that employers provide adequate and appropriate training, and develop and implement the training working journalists need. The National Union of Journalists in the UK has a broad training programme, and the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (Australia) is working to establish a similar programme.

In Denmark, the union and publishers run a company for further education. As a part of collective agreements the companies pay an annual fee to a fund for further education for journalists. With money from the fund (DK 9/10million or €1.2/1.3million per annum) the company runs a wide range of courses. The union has influence in the board of the fund and the institute so that the institute courses are rooted in live industry experience. Danish collective agreements ensure that Danish journalists receive further education annually.

Unite Staff and Freelance Workers

The proud tradition of freelance journalism has been with us for generations, but recession

and editorial cutbacks have led to a dramatic increase in the “flexible” workforce over the past few years. Thousands of journalists have been forced out of stable employment into precarious freelance and part-time activities. The freelance, contract or contingent workers are a particular challenge to unions because they have unstable income, are dispersed and have lower collective bargaining power.

Freelancers aspire to and are expected to maintain the same professional ethical standards as colleagues in full-time employment. However, in some regions and in some companies, freelance journalists often have more dangerous jobs, lower rates of pay and no health insurance.

In many regions of the world financial corruption – “brown-envelope” journalism – has been a scourge of journalistic work for generations. That is made worse in an age when journalists are increasingly expected to make themselves available as cheap labour, and often having to take responsibility for their own social welfare, pension and taxation arrangements. Never has the IFJ motto, “**there can be no press freedom when journalists exist in conditions of corruption, poverty and fear**” seemed more appropriate for the state of journalism in the world.

Even in the most developed countries the pressure on freelance workers is intense. Media organisations in Australia are withholding payment unless freelance workers sign draconian contracts that remove the author’s copyright and moral rights. In Denmark, freelancers are black-listed if they do not sign contracts that hand over all rights to the publisher. In some cases freelancers are being asked to hold professional indemnity insurance.

Many unions are now organising freelance workers within their own structures and with positive results. Most major unions in Europe now have freelance sections, all of them dedicated to helping this distinct group of workers build a strong collective voice. In the UK, Germany Denmark and elsewhere there are collective agreements, covering minimum conditions for freelancers. In Britain the union has also set up a section for online or “new media” journalists and in Australia, the Media Alliance is considering establishing a new section within the union

for visual journalists. The aim in all of this is to shape union organisation to meet new employment conditions – and build a single united voice to speak for all. In Canada, unions represent freelancers in a number of broadcasters and newspapers and are now undertaking campaigns to extend their reach to freelancers in other traditional and new media areas.

Social Media Works – Time to Use It

Some unions have already embraced web-based tools for organising, including using social networks, like Facebook and MySpace. They are using social media to reach out to new members and to keep in touch with existing members. Now they can consider easier and more direct ways of reaching journalists across borders and for organising activities.

One example is the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) which used new technologies successfully for a signature campaign against a libel filing spree by Mike Arroyo, husband of the Philippine President (he filed 12 libel suits against 46 journalists over three years). Journalists that the union was previously unable to connect with emailed and called the union for the first time to express outrage and join the campaign. Disengaged members were also activated. In every major campaign being organised at national, regional and international level, the power of social media can be mobilised.

Of course, social media is no replacement for face-to-face organising but is a great tool in a communications strategy. It allows campaigns to build a presence, attract media attention, reach out to people in far-flung locations, target potential members and appeal to the many already using social media.

Unions should provide training for those likely to use social media and to resource its use properly. Interestingly, email remains the most effective application for reaching your audience, so building and maintaining an email list should be a priority for all unions.

Research on the 2008 Obama for America (OBA) campaign, notes that social media applications helped to consolidate the campaign’s “brand”, but direct email appeals generated far

EDUCATE, CAMPAIGN AND MOBILISE

more donations than social media. The OBA field organising operation revealed that one-on-one conversations on the telephone or face-to-face, were integral to the campaign's success.

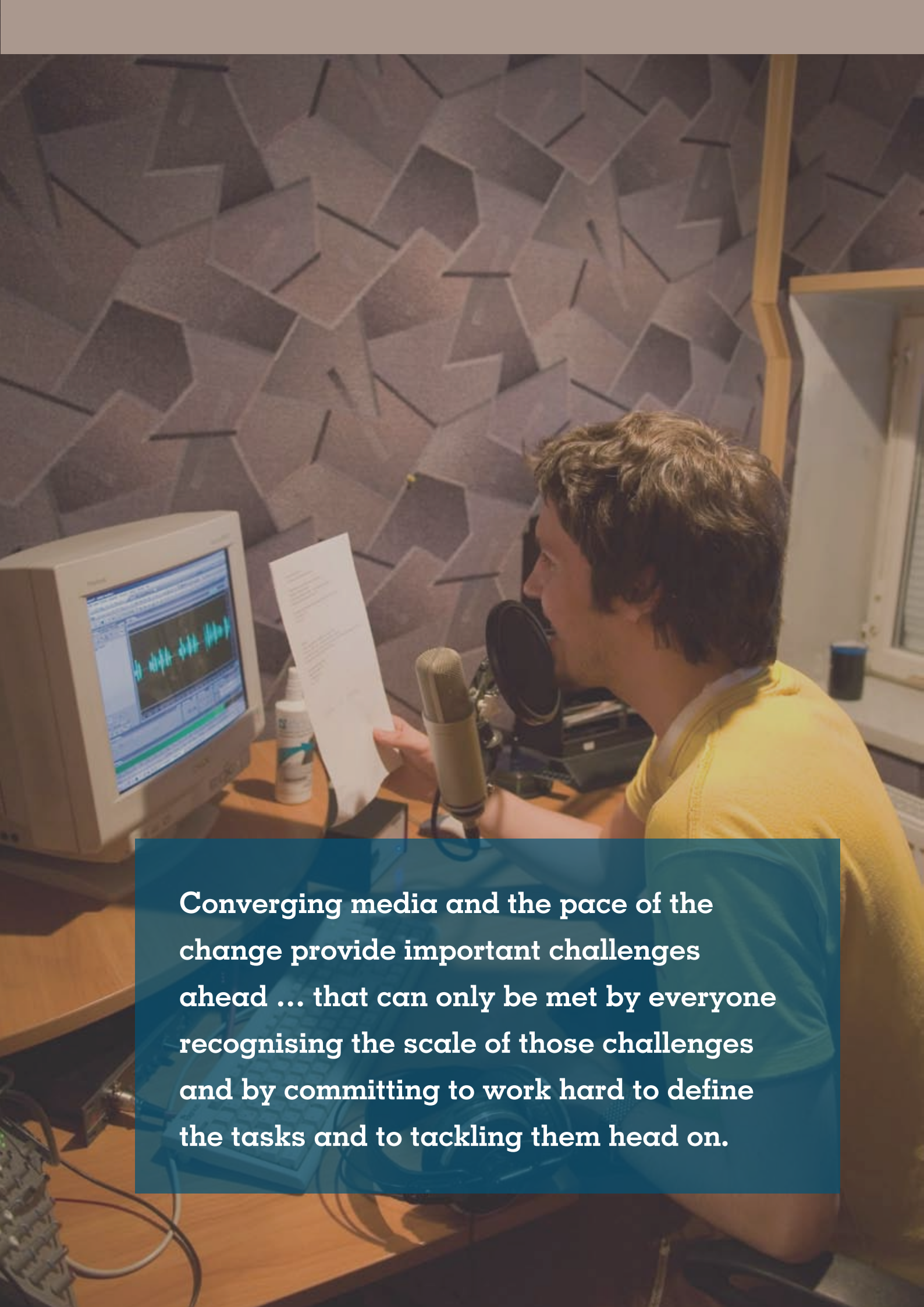
The message is clear – as a generation of the Internet emerges, journalists' unions need to be alongside them, engaging with them and inspiring them to embrace the values that make unionism and solidarity an integral part of the traditions of journalism. That solidarity, virtual and real, will be at the heart of strategies to make the most of the opportunities available to journalists and their union in the future.

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A man with brown hair, wearing a yellow t-shirt, is seated at a desk in a recording studio. He is looking at a piece of paper he is holding in his left hand while speaking into a professional microphone with a pop filter. To his left, a computer monitor displays audio editing software with a waveform. The background wall is covered in grey acoustic foam panels. A window is visible on the right side of the frame.

Converging media and the pace of the change provide important challenges ahead ... that can only be met by everyone recognising the scale of those challenges and by committing to work hard to define the tasks and to tackling them head on.

CHAPTER 7: Looking Forward – Recommendations

Converging media and the pace of the change provide important challenges ahead for the IFJ, for national unions and for individual journalists; challenges that can only be met by everyone recognising the scale of those challenges and by committing to work hard to define the tasks and to tackling them head on.

Here we outline some proposals and recommendations that we hope will contribute to building strong unions of journalists and, at the same time, reinforce the values of journalism, workers' rights, democracy and equality.

Recommendations

A) To the IFJ

The IFJ must make the challenges set out in this report the main focus of its work in the coming years with sufficient funding and resources.

The IFJ must campaign vigorously for public policy positions that will reinforce the imperatives of independent journalism as a public good.

The IFJ must lobby governments, and work with civil society NGOs, community organisations and media support networks to develop public campaigns on the need to nourish and develop journalistic work.

The IFJ must develop and support actions aimed to increase funding of media and journalism by supporting innovation in the private sector and more public funding under strict conditions of editorial independence.

The IFJ must provide resolute leadership to national unions and to individual journalists on the importance of defending the role and work of journalists.

The IFJ must strengthen and continue to promote editorial independence and ethical conduct in all media across all platforms.

In Particular, the IFJ Action Programme must:

Provide a toolkit to all members to protect members during a crisis, specifically where companies are facing bankruptcy or threatening closure.

Develop a 'periodic' trends evaluation report covering all regions of the world and building on the Monitoring Change Report.

Use the Monitoring Change website to highlight impact, good and bad, of changes on working practice and this reporting should be reinforced and established in all regional web-sites.

Prepare a survey, mapping exercise and audit of the current situation of media employment, based on the MEAA/NUJ model, and in co-operation

with the international trade union movement and relevant Global Union Federations.

Promote greater exchange of information between national unions.

Develop a 'good practice' guide for media integration.

Organise seminars on recruitment in new media, share successes where they have occurred and provide a 'how to' guide for recruiters.

Provide an online discussion forum for new media members to share experiences.

Lobby for integrated multimedia training.

Investigate the potential for innovation and new forms of ownership and funding of media and provide, with co-operation from others, a guide on potential alternative ownership structures including trusts, funding by government, foundations, philanthropies and shared ownership between the public and unions.

Develop new guidelines for media accountability that take account of the changed media environment and support independent journalism, and

Promote awareness within all areas of journalism of the need for professional standards, ethical guidelines and the need to respect the public interest obligations of journalists.

B) To Unions of Journalists

National unions must take up these challenges with urgency and enthusiasm and must, in particular,

Ensure a real commitment to ethics and good practice on behalf of existing and new members and in new arenas of communication (including blogs, and telecommunications).

Resist all forms of prior requirement to licensing to exercise journalism where this places journalism and journalists under the control of governments or other powers.

Fight for legal recognition of the professional rights of journalists including professional secrecy, free access to sources, recognition of a conscience clause, authors' rights and the right

to form unions and professional associations.

Strive to create alliances with other creators and communicators and relevant trade unions to promote a freer and more accountable public communication.

Reinforce campaigns and work to underline demand for decent working conditions, respect for international labour standards, editorial independence and a culture of safety in media.

In their **national action programmes**, unions should give priority to the following:

- To raise awareness within the membership on the real and important shifts occurring in the industry and to anticipate the stresses which are occurring for many workers because of these changes.
- To recruit and organise workers in new media and to make the structural and cultural changes to accommodate this change.
- To provide training and education for union members to develop their unionist skills.
- To examine union structures to facilitate the involvement of staff, freelance, photojournalists and new media workers across the various categories and to consider the introduction of different membership categories if appropriate.
- To encourage new members to be allies for press freedom in the widening tent of journalistic practitioners.
- To reach out to freelancers by providing targeted professional services such as health services, legal advice, training and to encourage greater support, specifically in relation to collective bargaining agreements for freelancers.
- To establish new systems of self-regulation that reflects the changing media environment either with journalists or in partnership with editors or media owners.
- To support demands from the IFJ and others that all journalists, editors and media owners respect ethical principles.

- To encourage members to use new technology and new forms of journalism and to investigate the potential for skills training in this area.
- To use social media to foster new online communities, especially among freelancers.
- To provide leadership in the debates about sustainable solutions for industry, and ensure that government, media owners and the public understand the serious challenges facing journalism and their role in its defence.
- To strengthen social dialogue with publishers, media organisations and press agencies.
- To campaign vigorously on well-defined issues and with strong messages.

C) To the Community of Journalists

Journalists must make themselves aware of the changes facing the profession and must ensure that they play their part in facing the future by supporting professional solidarity and, in particular they should:

Commit to the continued protection of and requirement for journalistic ethics.

Become active and support unions as they face up to the challenges of new media.

Embrace the best of the changing environment and make it work to sustain the best of journalism and in doing so grasp the real potential of journalists as a collective force in a rapidly dispersing market.

This entails engaging with the changing milieu of journalism, such as conversation, pro-am collaborations, new platforms like cellphones, and new tools for story-telling, while at the same time upholding ethical standards and the agenda-setting role of journalism.

Become involved in vigorous campaigning nationally and internationally.

Reach out to new media workers as colleagues.

Encourage union recruitment in the workplace.

Create clear, strong messages that underline the value of journalism in democracy and that reinforce the importance of quality and standards in journalism.



The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that promotes coordinated international action to defend press freedom and social justice through the development of strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. The IFJ mandate covers both professional and industrial interests of journalists.