

Editor's Introduction to 4.2 Issue

Charles M. Ess

Welcome to the eighth issue of *The Journal of Media Innovations*!

Nearly four years after our inaugural issue, this issue marks an important milestone in the history and development of the *Journal*. To begin with, I am stepping down as the inaugural editor of the *Journal*. Secondly, I'm very pleased and proud to announce our new editor, Dr. Marika Lüders. Marika is an Associate Professor of Media Innovations in the Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo. As her title suggests, Marika brings a critical expertise and range of experience that will be invaluable in moving the *Journal* onward and upward in terms of quality, scope, and readership.

I very much look forward to seeing how the *Journal* unfolds under Marika's editorship. At the same time, here is the place for me to express great gratitude to everyone who has made the first four years of the *Journal* so interesting and productive. A com-

plete list is simply not possible, but it begins with the many scholars and researchers who agreed to join the Editorial Board of our fledgling project and thereby helped provide much needed advice and direction – along with the essential but difficult and demanding work of reviewing submissions – especially in the early months of the *Journal's* development. Our first Editorial Assistant, Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk, and the local editorial team – Niamh Ní Bhroin, Terje Colbjørnsen, and Bente Kalsnes – were particularly critical to the work of developing the first issues. Especial thanks and kudos go to Anders Fagerjord, our founding and continuing Layout Editor: Anders has made numerous contributions and changes, large and small, to the content, shape, design, and aesthetics of the *Journal*. The result is a far more readable and enjoyable presentation of our important texts than was made available to us at the beginning.

In short, it is no small thing to start up a new academic journal, and we would not have achieved the exceptional quality of the *Journal* so quickly without all of these many hands and heads on deck working so smoothly and productively together.

CURRENT ISSUE

The articles, research brief, and book review making up the current issue constitute new and fruitful contributions to the field of media innovations – especially with a view towards their shared focus on *journalistic values and practices*, *innovation via new technologies*, and *the role of markets in innovation processes*.

We begin with two articles that take a more general, partly theoretical approach. **Lars Nyre**, **Joao Ribeiro**, and **Bjørnar Tessem's** "Business Models for Academic Prototypes: A New Approach to Media Innovation" develops a sophisticated model for

media design as initially rooted in the academy, and thereby buffered from the often more constraining demands and requirements of design within corporate contexts. A key feature of this approach is that it is partly anchored in specific ideals and values – most broadly, to do good, and more specifically, such basic journalistic values as truthfulness and autonomy. At the same time, Nyre et al. conjoin what they define as academic prototypes with clearly business-oriented approaches, i.e., ones that aim to generate much-needed revenue and face the ultimate empirical test: Will the design survive, perhaps thrive, or simply crash when introduced into the market? The empirical emphasis of the article is further fleshed out with a real-world example that helps illustrate the application of the model in the Norwegian context.

Our second article, **Karen E. McIntyre** and **Cathrine Gyldensted**’s “Constructive Journalism: An Introduction and Practical Guide for Applying Positive Psychology Techniques to News Production,” likewise offers new directions that will help journalism survive and thrive in the contemporary contexts while sustaining what the authors identify as the core functions of journalism, namely “serving as a watchdog, disseminating important information to the public and accurately portraying the world.” McIntyre and Gyldensted define and develop four kinds of constructive journalism, and then take up lessons from positive psychology that promise to bolster the

effectiveness and thus the success of such journalism. The models offered here are quite new – as befits media innovation, of course – and require further empirical testing and verification. Nonetheless, and to state the obvious, in an era now marked by a preponderance of journalism all but inevitably trapped in algorithmically constituted filter bubbles, fragmentation, and “fake news,” these first two contributions help mark out positive and constructive approaches that may prove vital to preserving the best values and functions of journalism.

Our next two contributions likewise complement and reinforce one another while sustaining the shared focus in this issue on the realities and demands of markets. **Christoph Sommer**’s “Market Orientation of News Startups” begins with a rich literature review on market orientation and summarizes its importance for innovation. Sommer then examines four cases of how early news startups sought to understand and orient themselves to the interests and demands of their markets, uncovering importantly different approaches to doing so. In the cases he analyzes, Sommer finds that careful attention to potential markets and customers tends to foster startups’ survival, yet without leading to duplication of competitors’ products. This market-oriented approach, he writes, can in fact foster more innovation. But the devil is in the details, as Sommer’s carefully documented cases show.

Mark A. Poepel’s “Mutual Shaping of a CMS for Social Journalism in a Hierarchical News Organization” then gives us a fine-grained analysis of how the effort to develop a specific media innovation – namely, a content management system (CMS) – interacted with prevailing practices and attitudes at work in a real-world news organization. Many of Poepel’s findings reinforce and flesh out Sommer’s specific discoveries and broader patterns. To begin with, both empirically verify what should be obvious, and yet appears not to be in at least some instances: startups and organizations that fail to pay close attention to what users and “the market” want will fail. Poepel further attends to the role of additional institutional factors such as prevailing work practices, attitudes, and value commitments among the multiple actors involved, including system designers and working journalists, as well as the affordances and possibilities of social media as such – all part of his mutual shaping of technology (MST) analytical framework. In principle, the new CMS could and should have been shaped by the prevailing values and norms of the professional journalists. Despite their familiarity with and openness to the new approaches facilitated by the CMS, however, too many of those involved experienced the new system as a disruption – one that inspired reactive efforts to manage the “incursion.”

And so we come full circle, arriving at the challenge of how far core journalistic values can be sus-

tained, if not enhanced, in an era of rapid technological development and media innovation.

From here, we turn to a more specific case of media innovation – namely, online video as produced and distributed via newspapers’ websites as the focus of **Niclas Hallgren** and **Mats Nylund**’s literature review, “Online Videos at Newspaper Websites.” The review continues our opening attention to business models and foregrounds several characteristic problems and issues, including the interactions posed by advertising. Finally, our book review by **Päivi Maijanen** provides a careful look at Lucy Küng’s second edition of *Strategic Management in the Media* (Sage, 2016). As Maijanen’s detailed review makes clear, Küng’s second edition is of critical interest as it updates her original, path-breaking look into strategic media management as practiced in both legacy and “born-digital” media organizations.

In closing, on behalf of our contributors, reviewers, Editorial Assistant Jessica Yarin Robinson, and Layout Editor Anders Fagerjord – we are confident that you will find these contributions to be important and most rewarding reading. Enjoy!