

Changing the Culture of Journalism Inside-Out

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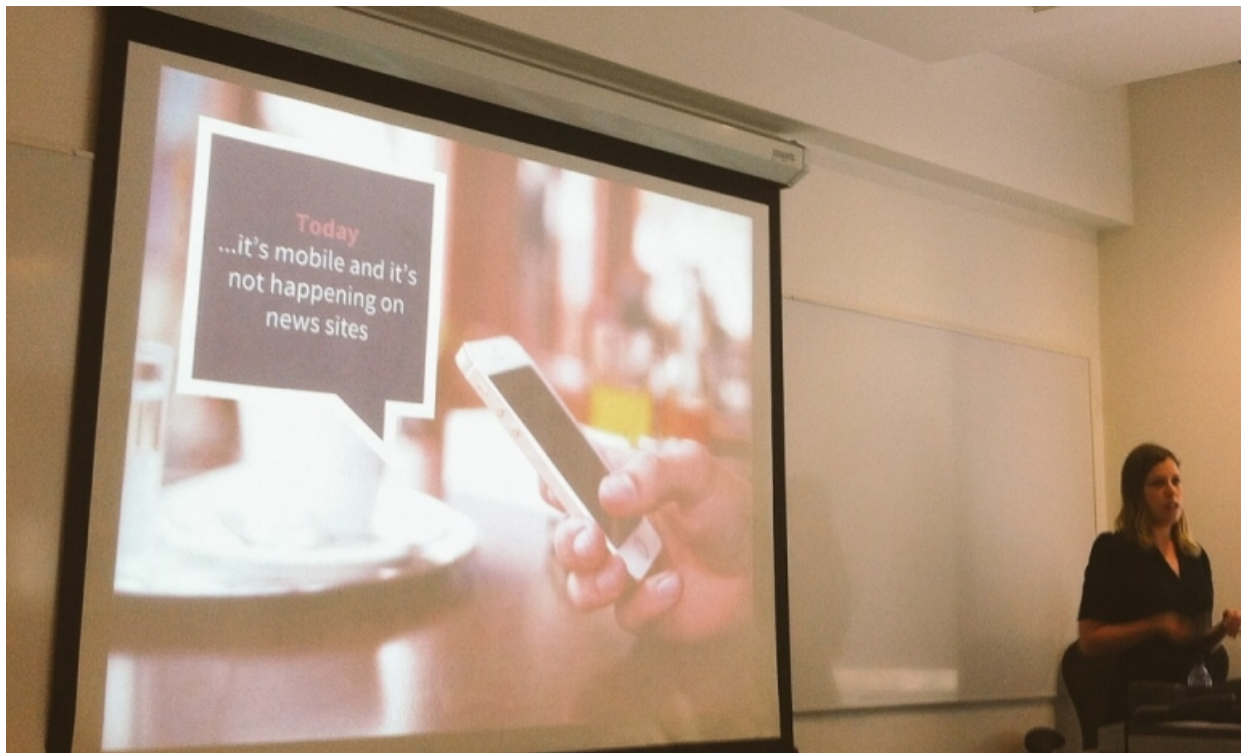
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This article is by Summer School student Soo Jung 'Kristy' Kwon on a talk given by Alana Coates, Engagement Editor at The Financial Times

"Adopt. Implement. Reform!" From the advent of social media, news organizations have faced the need to adapt to the social shifts facilitated by technology.

Indeed, many experts, professionals, and academics have advocated for journalists to integrate digital media into the publication process while extensively reaching their message out to others.

However, one might ask: *how?*



In the face of increasing access and use of social media, how can news companies sustain long-term interaction with the public, while maintaining their business? What are the mechanisms and incentives that help these groups to truly shape an enlightening and dynamic news experience?

According to Alana Coates from *The Financial Times*, the newsroom itself needs to change. Rather than simply utilizing a digital platform, media organizations must encourage their internal departments to collaborate closely with each other.

In other words, in order to fully take advantage of the research and writing capabilities that technology offers, every press correspondent must share technical expertise, data analysis, and relevant resources to shape and improve the overall development process.

In Coates' words, journalists need to "interact with the various teams," particularly with the IT specialists, because "they are building the platform" for networked news. These inputs will unify media organizations from within, and will help to refine their services.

But what mechanisms and incentives will prompt journalists to switch their behaviour? The answer is simple. By realizing that the audience lies at the heart of journalism, and the core of a well-functioning society, news producers can concentrate on providing what the people most demand.

Such an approach implies greater inclusion of ideas and multiple modes of engagement with the public. The people essentially play the role of editor, facilitator, representative, and decision-maker. In exchange, the journalists can incorporate unique perspectives, which helps to enhance the depth and meaning of their work.

By providing the public with a point of involvement and contribution in news production, the journalists not only become more accountable in the eyes of the citizens, but also obtain a sense of responsibility and importance in media production. Thus, there will be an environment for journalism to exist and thrive, in the long-term, and retain a fundamental value.



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To make an impact on society, journalists must alter their own actions. Media companies that are internally collaborative have the capacity to initiate dialogue and forge connections with the outside world. And indeed, journalism that operates in the name of advancing the collective interests of the citizens and empowering the people is truly the finest form. Ultimately, it can be sustained, and significantly impact the landscape of society.

By Kristy Kwon

The below article is by Summer School student Megha Chauhan

At the Financial Times, 'Audience First' is their response to the technological changes sweeping through journalism. But Alana Coates says that the FT is trying to get the right audience not just a large audience. As journalism goes mobile and live on news websites or through online videos, former print media must try harder to reach people today. Journalism has changed from being a monologue to a dialogue with a whole new interactive relationship between online platforms and people. This has changed the way traditional newspaper brands work.

As a member of the 'Engagement Team', she says that it is important for journalists to know who their audience is and what they need. It is equally important to use that relationship to plan out their marketing strategy. Data on audiences helps us understand what they are interested in. And often the FT readers' expertise can become part of the story through their interaction with the stories.

In this way, social media helps build loyal audiences as journalists talk to people directly. To make this process even more interactive and alive, journalists can reply to the comments posted by the audience.

Coates pointed out that the Financial Times still has 200,000 print buyers, mainly in the UK, but the online global audience is much larger. Ultimately for the Financial Times, the editorial essentials don't change. They still follows the rules of "traditional" journalism: accuracy, authority, insight. She proudly says that FT is 'data informed and not data led' and that their priority would always be to provide quality content to its demanding audience, not just chasing the "clicks".

By Megha Chauhan

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