

Is Innovation Hurting “Good” Journalism? (Summer School guest blog)

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Jasper Jackson, assistant editor for *The Guardian's* media section, was the first guest speaker at Polis/LSE's journalism Summer School with a talk about the driving force of innovation in journalism. Polis Summer School student Valerie Spina reports.

With the innovations of technology over the last 10 years, journalism has seen many changes: first a move to web based media, then on to social media networks and mobile platforms. But today, Jackson argues, the biggest problem is the huge pressure to be fast.

Jackson cited the number of people buying print as having greatly decrease, leaving advertisers to take their money elsewhere and some newspapers facing a 16% drop in advertising revenue in one year alone. Yet online *The Guardian* is one of the largest news sites in the world, racking in 9 million viewers a day. But though audience numbers online are increasing, print still brings in much more per display advert than a website view. The thought was that big advertisers online would solve this problem of revenue, but this has not been the case, leaving news outlets struggling to find what will work to keep themselves afloat.



Alongside the economic problems news media faces, companies like Facebook have put even larger strains on journalists. Firstly because of the way Facebook posts are designed, readers don't always realize who made the content. Plus Facebook has also created “instant articles” designed to update content “10 times faster than the mobile web” but giving journalists less control.

Secondly, Facebook's new live video, while successfully innovative, is an unregulated new feature waiting for something bad to happen. Jackson says that while it could "the next big thing," it also poses an interesting question to journalists – often newspaper journalists not used to broadcasting – as they will have to consider that live video is not filtered or edited in the same way and so journalists will have to think about their responsibilities.

So what can journalists do to keep up with the constantly changing arena of online media? Be fast. "Google is nicer to you if you're fast," Jackson said. But with the pressure to be fast, some news outlets have taken a relaxed approach to hard facts. And because revenue is brought in through views of an article, some are just competing for clicks, leaving the credibility, ethics, and professionalism of journalism all on the line. Jackson argues that fact checking cannot take a back-seat role if the profession wants to keep its trustworthy status with the public.

Regardless of the huge advances in the field of journalism, many of these innovations have led to financial strains, and advertising may not be a viable option for revenue anymore. "[It's] going to be reduced in the future, it's just too insecure," stated Jackson. Now, Jackson says journalists at *The Guardian* [are working ever harder to understand what readers truly want, and to allow them to contribute to the journalism themselves](#). This approach creates a direct relationship (and ideally leads to more revenue) through the incorporation of 'democratic' ideals and by taking a stance as a positive force in people's lives.

This blog by Polis Summer School student Valerie Spina

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