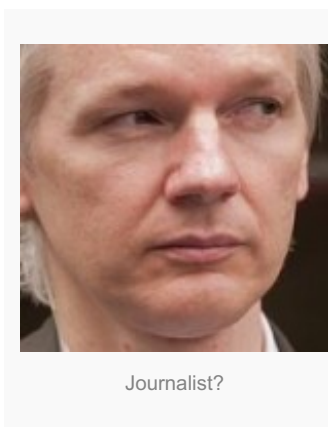


WikiLeaks As Journalism

lse blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2011/06/25/wikileaks-as-journalism-2/

2011-6-25



This is [another small clip from an early draft of a book](#) I am writing about the significance of WikiLeaks. To be published by Polity in the autumn:

In this early phase we see how WikiLeaks is constantly evolving away from its pure 'Wiki' format in the direction of 'traditional' newsroom practice. This is at a time coincidentally, when mainstream media newsrooms themselves were shifting towards more networked forms of journalism involving crowd-sourcing, blogging, and public participation.

Just like any mainstream mass media organization WikiLeaks clearly wanted a wide audience and to have an impact on society. It did not see itself as a niche or personal project. They believed passionately that they were revealing hidden facts that the public needed to be aware of and even act upon. All these are familiar elements of certain kinds of traditional journalism.

In this sense the argument about whether WikiLeaks should be defined as journalism is cyclical. Those that argue that WikiLeaks is not 'journalism' are defining the term to exclude forms of news mediation that they do not wish to give an official stamp. Those that argue that WikiLeaks easily fits into their definition of journalism are in danger of ignoring how it challenges the validity of those categories.

The debate about 'WikiLeaks as Journalism' is really a debate about what journalism is or is becoming. Instead of asking whether WikiLeaks is journalism or not, we should ask 'what kind of journalism is WikiLeaks creating?' The challenge to the rest of journalism is to come up with something as good if not better.

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