

After the Golden Age: Vienna Part IV

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2010-11-20



Chaos is coming?

“It’s very hard not to feel that something precious is slipping away – but that’s a feeling I want to resist. The Golden Age was pretty brief and to some extent we haven’t lost it entirely”

[Michael Schudson](#) is a traditional quality American journalist who is now looking for a new way for the media to promote democracy.

[His report calling for increased subsidy for news](#) [putting it crudely] was a brave attempt to reconfigure the debate in America, where the mainstream media was largely hostile to his ideas.

[At our debate in Vienna](#) he was frank in his desire to move on from the past, though he made no claim to a solution. ‘It’s simply too early to judge what will work’ he said.

He sees how the very ethical foundations of journalism may be changing along with the business model. Is it right to move from the classic idea of objectivity to transparency? Is it enough to say, I am a Conservative, now I am going to right something partial?

Of course, not. Declaration of a simple political affiliation does not tell us everything we need to know. Transparency has to be more than that to match our expectation for honesty and fairness in reporting (as opposed to comment).

So what are the affordances of the new technologies? Schudson warns against technological determinism and instead asks what the new media makes more or less possible?

Archiving and displaying information is one example, he says, of how the Internet can enable a new kind of journalism to enhance democracy.

But he says, there’s a difference between data and stories. Are we leaving the era of narrative and entering into new ways of understanding information?

It might actually be both. It’s certainly changing journalism, and with it, democracy.

Read [the other posts about this conference starting here](#)

[These blogs were all in effect written live so I welcome any corrections – they do not pretend to be anything like a full record of the debates which were long and complex]

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