

Two years of carnage: Emily Bell on the Great Crash and the Media

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It was Apocalypse Now at Polis as the [Guardian](#)'s digital content director [Emily Bell](#) warned of extinction for swathes of UK media in the wake of the Great Crash:

"We are on the brink of two years of carnage for Western media. In the UK five nationals could go out of business and we could be left with no UK owned broadcaster outside of the BBC. We are facing complete market failure in local papers and regional radio. This is systematic collapse not just a cyclical downturn. Even the surviving brands will have to go through a period of unprofitability."

Of course, [The Guardian](#) is in a special position, cushioned by its other media interests and by the liberal ethos of the Scott Trust. As it becomes more convergent it has an interest in talking down organisations like Channel 4 and the BBC which have become its rivals. But she's right.

Bell recognises that this is more than a down-turn in the economy. This is bigger than a shift in advertising. This all co-incides with mainstream media losing the attention of the public. In summary, "We are moving from an age of representation to the age of participation."

The question is how do media organisations move into that space and how do they make money out of it? Well, Emily's short answer is that many won't.

[Here's](#) the Guardian's own report of the talk.

[Here](#) is Emily's column on the issue.

[Here's](#) a slightly more optimistic analysis of the US newspaper situation.

Next up in the [Polis Media Leadership Dialogues](#) at 5pm on Tuesday 21st is Peter Bazelgette who will unveil some radical ideas on copyright.

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