

Journalism is NOT in crisis – it's official! (Oxford says so)

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2008/09/27/journalism-is-not-in-crisis-its-official-oxford-says-so/

2008-9-27

Journalism is not in crisis according to a dramatic vote after a passionate Moral Maze-style [debate](#) at [Oxford University](#) to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Reuters Fellowships (I was there in 1998).

We overturned a pre-debate vote of 46-27 to win by virtually the same margin the other way. This was of the same seminal historical significance as the 1933 Oxford Union [King and Country](#) Debate (although the wrong side won back then). OK, it was just fun.

I think that journalism is at a critical point but I was arguing against the motion because I think that journalism has never been better and I believe that the opportunities to improve it are larger than the threats.

Luckily I was supported by [Zoe Smith \(ITN\)](#), [Mehdi Hasan \(Channel 4\)](#) and [Bill Dutton \(OII\)](#). They all lent much-needed youth, vitality and facts to the case that I make in [SuperMedia](#). We were also helped by the fact that at least one of our opponents ([former LA Times editor Michael Parks from USC](#)) seemed to swap sides at the end and joined the positive camp.

I think the case being made for a decline in journalism by [Nick Davies \(Guardian\)](#), [John Ware \(BBC\)](#), David Ure (Reuters) and Michael Parks was not helped by some dinosaur-like interrogation by [Peter Jay](#) on the investigating panel. That was a shame because in his time Jay was himself a broadcast innovator.

We were also helped by a brilliant lecture the night before by [Arthur Sulzberger](#), the owner of the New York Times. He made the journalistic and business case for taking a great newspaper like the Times online. He used the Titanic metaphor. The 'Titanic's real problem was not the iceberg or a useless captain. It's real problem was the airplane. Eventually all steamships lost their business to airlines. But we didn't stop travelling. In fact we travel more. Journalism is like travel. It will change modes, but the need and demand for the product will not decline. Our job is to build flying machines.

With a bit of luck my chums at the Oxford Reuters Institute for Journalism should have recordings and transcripts of the event up soon on their [website](#).

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science