

Is New Media Killing Journalism? Do you care?

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2008/05/02/is-new-media-killing-journalism-do-you-care/

2008-5-2

A packed room at the [Frontline Club](#) and a panel of passionate speakers made me feel that people do actually care about journalism. The debate was framed around a question that everyone felt was a bit crude: “Is New Media Killing Journalism?”

It was in celebration of [UNESCO World Press Freedom Day](#) and it became clear that what was at stake was what we mean by journalism.

Speaking for the motion [Andrew Keen](#) was clear that he wants authoritative professional journalism – not amateurish “we-media”. Veteran newspaper editor and analyst [Kim Fletcher](#) agreed with Andrew that he is not against the Internet but he is deeply fearful that we will lose our esteemed mainstream professional news media through a thousand job cuts. Quality is dying as New Media is born.

Funnily enough, super-clever BBC presenter [Robin Lustig](#) agreed that the professional must be valued above the amateur, but he welcomed all the paraphernalia of New Media and said that it is up to the journalists to adapt. Robin’s enthusiasm for New Media was given a global perspective by [Nazenin Ansari](#) who pointed out the value of the blogosphere in preserving communications in and out of her native Iran.

The speakers from the floor were over-whelmingly in favour of New Media. Even the [NUJ](#)’s Jeremy Dear now realises that you can fight job losses but you can’t stop change when it offers to so many opportunities for new forms of journalism.

But what struck me is how much in common both sides had. Both Robin and Nazenin, for example, were clearly resistant to sharing too much of their media space with the public. Robin said that only about 1% of the audience ever interacted. It felt like he was comfortable with that degree of involvement.

In other words, put a bunch of journalists in a room and they will disagree about the role of New Media in their industry but they will agree about keeping the public at arm’s length. I think that is unsustainable.

Kim Fletcher rightly pointed out that the old business model for journalism is in rapid decay. I can’t understand why he is not more enthusiastic about engaging with the public to create a new way of supporting journalism – as opposed to the old monopoly that sustained a clique of journalists. The public are so enthusiastic about journalism that they even do it themselves – for free. Doesn’t it make sense to harness that through New Media technology?

For me the real question is not Is New Media Killing Journalism? but How Can We Use New Media To Make Better Journalism? Some answers [here](#).

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science