

Jeecamp part 2: making money out of online journalism: community

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The [unconference](#) now breaks into unworkshops. In the Community discussion, a host of local paper online journalists seek ways of engaging their readers. Here's their thoughts...

It emerges that there are lots of people going on to newspapers' blogs and websites to make comments, post photos and react to news. But they aren't sticking around and they are sporadic in their involvement. The solution can be better software management systems that monitor traffic and nudge users to come back. One obstacle is technical incompetence on the part of the public. Most people are still intimidated by the idea of posting etc. But there is also a problem on the other side of the conversation. Journalists are still reluctant to go online and join the public in the conversation. Why? arrogance, some suggest. Apparently the young new media savvy hacks go for it, and so do the much older experienced journos who have real knowledge to impart. It is the ones in the middle who struggle. Journalists seem reluctant to adopt a less 'objective' style. Even op ed writers don't like it because they give an opinion and don't expect a response.

Online journalism is all about making links, but the online editors at Jeecamp say their journalists find it difficult to visit other sites, make comments or connect with other communities. Everyone has a Facebook page now but journalists are curiously reluctant to socially network with their news. This might be because journalists still think in terms of individual blogs rather than online networks.

There are still technological barriers. Digital teams separate from editorial. PCs that don't have Flash. Journalists who don't know what an RSS feed is. Job titles still have 'online' in them which just emphasises differences. And the technology investment is still inadequate – one paper can't publish football match reports at the weekends until 12 hours after the game simply because sports reporters are missing a bit of kit. It's amazing how many news flow issues there still are at a time when amateur websites are incredibly flexible and up to the minute.

Could you relax editorial controls to increase speed of publication? (look away at this point Nick 'Flat Earth' Davies) Does a half-time football report need heavy subbing? Does it matter if there is a typo? Why not encourage the public to help add to or edit your articles? As long as mistakes are corrected or updated. Better that than Old Media which happily lied, got things wrong or ignored stuff without any chance of public correction.

Newsgathering: crowd-sourcing ideas: Manchester Evening News online does a Google Map where readers put up traffic or transport problems. [Twitter](#) networks: one journalist used it for an investigation. All journalists will have to become brands that foster networks of contacts and involve them in newsgathering. Broadcasters recognised years ago that the on-screen face was the brand – now print has to do the same.

[dailypost.gif](#)

[Liverpool Daily Post](#) has tried a lot of crowd-sourcing and it works in a patchy way. If nothing else it encourages journalists to seek a wider range of sources and contacts by going to other websites, for example. The Post uses everything from Facebook to [Survey Monkey](#). The result has been better engagement but also better editorial product. They are getting information but they are also getting a better sense of what interests their readers. This is [Networked Journalism](#) in action (cue plug for forthcoming book: [SuperMedia](#)).

Read more reaction [here](#) on Rick Waghorn's latest online contemplation forum where he explains his diagram about online publishing that will make someone very rich if they can ever decipher his child-like scrawling....

Full report on the days proceedings with lots of links [here](#).

