Journalism as an Entrepreneurial Enterprise:
Normative Boundaries, Economic Imperatives, and Journalistic Roles
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As digital forms of journalism have inexorably grown to prominence over the past two decades, journalism studies scholars have deployed many innovative strategies in seeking to understand the dramatic transformations of legacy newsrooms.

But within these newsrooms is no longer the only place we need to look.

The term "entrepreneurial journalism" (Briggs 2012) has been stretched to encompass almost any innovation involving information delivery. However, in contrast to "intrapreneurialism," the creative initiatives that push existing organizations in new directions (Baruah and Ward 2014; Boyles 2015), it pertains particularly to stand-alone enterprises dissociated from legacy media yet with some sort of journalistic mission. Journalism produced outside the traditional newsroom is growing rapidly in quantity and quality, from investigative journalism consortia to hyperlocal websites to niche offerings of all sorts.

For news organizations and their employees, the launch of new journalistic enterprises extends challenges over jurisdictional turf that became evident more than a decade ago with the rise of independent bloggers (Lowrey 2006) – prototypical information entrepreneurs. This chapter considers three overlapping issues that are especially disruptive – to journalists, news organizations, or both – and ripe for scholarly investigation in a context that explicitly engages

entrepreneurial enterprises rather than the legacy ones that dominate digital-age scholarship to date. The issues involve normative boundaries, economic imperatives, and journalistic roles.

Normative Boundaries

In some ways, entrepreneurial journalism can be seen as among the latest in a series of disruptions to 20th century practices, from the emergence of the Web in the mid-1990s through the rise of multimedia, blogs, "user-generated content," social media, and more. Journalists' first response to each of these digital-era changes has been characterized largely by resistance on normative grounds. Repeatedly over the past two decades, journalists evoked professional ethics as identity markers ("Who I am") and boundary markers ("Who I am not") in an effort to assert their own continuing centrality in a rapidly changing information universe. Eventually, that contestation gave way to accommodation, as journalists folded the once-new thing into their own work (Singer 2015).

But while the normative challenges raised by these earlier changes have largely been ones of degree – the extent to which creation of multimedia content takes time away from a reporter's pursuit of the full story (Singer 2006), for instance, or to which social media affect verification processes (Hermida 2012) – entrepreneurial journalism raises issues that go to the core of journalists' self-perception. These issues relate particularly to autonomy or professional independence, encompassing such interrelated matters as objectivity, conflicts of interest, and interactions with audiences and advertisers.

Western journalists, particularly in the United States, have fiercely articulated a need for near-absolute autonomy in their pursuit of information they deem to be in the public interest. Over a period stretching back 100 years and more, they have positioned independence as a

requisite condition to their ability to carry out that job in the face of the multi-level influences

under which they work (Shoemaker and Reese 2014). Although historically rooted in the First

Amendment safeguard against government infringement on press freedom, the norm has been

widely invoked by U.S. journalists defending the need for autonomy from two other influences

more central to a consideration of entrepreneurial journalism: commercial entities and audiences.

The former have drawn more attention. Advertisers' real or potential influence on

newsroom output and the decisions made in creating it, along with the fear that audiences may

not distinguish between commercial and editorial content, has been of significant concern for

decades (Eckman and Lindlof 2003; Soley and Craig 1992; Upshaw, Chernov, and Koranda

2007) and remains salient today, reflected in controversy over such contemporary permutations

as native advertising (Carlson 2015; Coddington 2015; Howe and Teufel 2014). Relationships

with other revenue sources also have drawn critical attention, from the intricacies of sponsorship

arrangements (Foreman 2016) to the interconnections between philanthropic organizations and

the non-profit journalism they back (Ward 2014).

Historically, the interaction between journalists and news audiences has drawn less

attention, perhaps because there was relatively little of it. Virtually all a journalist's relationships

were with sources and colleagues; the newsroom walls and switchboard (not to mention the

security guard in the lobby) created nearly impenetrable boundaries around the workspace. As

the effective squashing of fledgling "civic journalism" initiatives in the 1990s suggested

(McDevitt 2003), journalists rather liked maintaining a safe distance from any actual reader or

viewer. Many were discomfited a decade later when the rise of user comments, followed by the

explosion in social media, eradicated such distance (Hermida and Thurman 2008; Lewis 2012;

Gulyas 2013). Increasing reliance on web analytics – instantly available, excruciatingly detailed

usage data – also has put audience reading patterns front and center in newsroom decisions about what deserves good play or even coverage at all (Anderson 2011; Tandoc and Thomas 2015).

Clearly, journalistic autonomy from the influence of advertisers and audiences has served an important purpose in providing the freedom to report and write "without fear or favor," in the famous phrasing of founding *New York Times* publisher Adolph Ochs. But the nature of boundaries is to fence certain people (journalists, say) in, as well as to keep others out. As discussed further below, maintaining autonomy from audiences has meant journalists know little about them – their interests, their media habits, what angers them, what they appreciate. For a journalist turned entrepreneur, however, such ignorance is untenable. No business can survive long without in-depth and nuanced understanding of the people it hopes to serve.

Advertisers or other financial sources also are key constituents. Open and frequent communication with them is vital for content creation, marketing, and revenue generation – three interconnected areas integral to any start-up but separately ring-fenced by traditional practitioner ethics. In a traditional media world, maintaining autonomy from commercial entities became a rationale for journalists to remain disconnected from, even ignorant about, the economics of the business that employed them, a stance not uncommonly intertwined with general concerns about the negative impact of a profit motive on the quality of journalism (Beam 2006).

But for an entrepreneurial journalist whose enterprise relies in whole or in part on an ad-based revenue model, as most do (Sirkkunen and Cook 2012), pursuing and securing advertisers is at least as important as pursuing and securing audiences. Some journalistic start-ups are large enough for that job to be delegated to someone not directly involved in content production, but many are not, at least in their crucial early stages. Many also rely on crowdfunding, which seeks money from audiences for often quite specific purposes (Hunter 2015).

Moreover, regardless of the organizational structure or funding model, audiences and

revenue sources typically are interchangeable in a start-up environment, particularly for niche

sites covering a narrow geographical or topical area. Relationships can become very tangled very

fast; conflicts of interest for journalists who double as fund-raisers have been labelled "the

looming ethical problems of an entrepreneurial age" (Ward 2009, para. 19).

Key Issues for Scholars: Normative Boundaries

The transformation of journalism in the digital era has opened up many opportunities to

examine, critique, and apply existing normative principles and theories (McBride and Rosenstiel

2014; Zion and Craig 2015). But most such explorations continue to posit the newsroom as the

primary base from which journalism operates: The emphasis has been of how changes associated

with the transition to a digital environment have affected the people performing traditional

journalistic tasks within traditional news organizations.

How entrepreneurial journalists are navigating the dramatically different waters described

above, particularly in light of their historically passionate demand for radical autonomy, begs for

exploration. Involvement in a start-up almost invariably means a shrinking of distance between

the journalist and a range of actors who once were the concerns of someone else in the news

organization, with a concomitant challenge to the normatively grounded professional boundaries

that journalists have drawn around themselves.

Of particular interest are intertwined issues related to separation of "church and state," or

commercial and editorial activities; distance from audiences, which is being compressed across

the journalistic spectrum but perhaps especially in small start-up environments, as discussed

further below; and objectivity, particularly the ability to fairly cover people and issues despite a

vested interest in them. Do the principles that have undergirded journalism within the newsroom for a century and more hold when journalism is practiced in non-newsroom locations? Do entrepreneurial journalists reify existing norms, modify them, or adopt new ones? To take just one example: If, as some believe, transparency is replacing (or should replace) objectivity as a core journalistic norm (Hellmueller, Vos, and Poepsel 2013; Karlsson 2011), what can enterprises that rely on crowd-funding for their revenue and thus are explicitly answerable to their backers tell us about how transparency might be operationalized?

Options for the development and application of expanded theoretical frameworks also merit consideration. An obvious one is a normative approach that builds on our extensive understanding of both idealized journalistic behavior and real-world influences on actual behavior (Shoemaker and Reese 2014). Recent advances in our exploration of journalistic boundary work (Carlson and Lewis 2015; Lewis 2012) are likely to be invaluable in these considerations. Useful as well would be deeper interrogation of the intended purposes behind normative prescriptions and proscriptions. To what extent do they serve the professed goal of safeguarding independent investigation of important issues in the public interest, in contrast to serving the rather less noble goal of enabling journalists to ward off uncomfortable questions about their activities and even their claim to a special place in society?

Economic Imperatives

Entrepreneurialism gave birth to American journalism, from the colonial printers to the 19th century publishers who turned fledgling news initiatives into empires. But 20th century expansion followed a different story line. Socially, the paradigmatic "power of the press" has been a collective force, wielded by institutions capable of conveying information to large

numbers of people and therefore commanding the attention of those whose attention mattered. Gaining and retaining that power required securing reliable and steadily rising profits. Indeed, profit levels became truly remarkable, particularly in the latter part of the century as dozens of news-producing enterprises consolidated under corporate ownership – mostly in publicly held companies with boards answerable to their stockholders (Bagdikian 2000).

But such organization structures were more likely to encourage conservative practices than risk-taking. When the Internet emerged as a force to be reckoned with, many of the executives who had led the media for decades were unable to respond quickly or creatively (Anderson 2013). Few had an entrepreneurial mind set – build fast, fail, learn, repeat until you get it right (Babineaux and Krumboltz 2013; Polgreen 2014) – and most additionally were bound by corporate mandates that forbid knowingly risking failure. In the recent past, then, "entrepreneurship of any sort is not a concept that has been closely identified with the media industry" (Compaine and Hoag 2012, 30). Yet the ongoing viability of the news media in a digital age arguably rests on multi-faceted innovation (Pavlik 2013).

Many factors made the U.S. media so extraordinarily prominent and profitable, including demographic trends, favourable regulatory structures, technological innovation in content production and distribution. But what stands out in retrospect is the near-monopoly that media institutions collectively held on the supply of something for which there was a high demand: information. That monopoly obviously no longer exists in an Internet age (Chyi 2009), and the resulting challenges to the media have been described as systemic, structural, and likely irreversible (Communications Management 2011). Indeed, their business models rest on "technical, economic, political and information environments that no longer exist" (Picard 2011, 8). The exponential increase in the number of entities providing something identifiable as "news"

– from individual observers with a video-streaming app on their phones, to substantive businesses with hundreds of employees – has eradicated that highly profitable lock on the information market.

Legacy media outlets whose power rests on the attention of large numbers of readers, viewers, and listeners are losing them in a digital environment that invites entry and facilitates experimentation (Briggs 2012). Larger newcomers are challenging legacy outlets for the mass, general-interest audience at home and abroad, through rapid expansion into under-served markets such as India, Nigeria, and the Arab world. A few large start-ups and countless smaller ones also are luring niche audiences, from hyperlocal enterprises seeking to fill the coverage gap left by a steep decline in staffing and thus reporting at local legacy outlets (Anderson 2013; Enda, Matsa, and Boyles 2014) to topically focused sites covering every special interest imaginable. Such entrepreneurial endeavors can leave legacy outlets bleeding from a thousand pinpricks, each a tiny hole left by a user who is spending time elsewhere in the online universe.

Nor do the audiences of tomorrow offer much hope of regeneration. Millennial consumption of legacy products is minimal and likely to decline further as mobile devices continue their predicted march toward news dominance (Fidler 2013; Newman 2015; Westlund 2013). Legacy outlets already are falling behind nimble, digital-only competitors – with their significantly smaller investment in infrastructure, significantly less embedded production routines, and significantly more nuanced insights about their audiences – in developing an appealing mobile product. The parallel trend toward personalization of online information (Newman and Levy 2014), which enables individuals to modify the content, delivery, and arrangement of messages to their own "explicitly registered and/or implicitly determined

preferences" (Thurman and Schifferes 2012, 776), adds to the challenge for traditional outlets. Few have gotten much beyond creating simple quizzes or interactive infographics.

Of course, start-ups face significant challenges of their own, not least their need to compete with entrenched, widely recognized, and relatively well-resourced companies. Start-ups inherently operate in highly uncertain circumstances, dependent on fickle users and investor whims; indeed, the elusiveness of sustainability for new media enterprises suggests that "survival in itself must be recognised as a form of success" (Bruno and Nielsen 2012, 102). But two related points stand out. One is that those that do succeed, even temporarily, are inherently disruptive to their legacy brethren. They are disruptive in terms of the information needs they fill, the audience attention they attract, and the money that flows to them one way or another. They are disruptive, as well, in the human resources they command: the reporters, editors, designers, and other journalists who provide them with creative energy and talent, plus the programmers, marketing experts, and support staff who fill additional roles vital to any media enterprise. The people who might be helping move traditional media in new directions are helping someone else instead.

The second overall point is that amid the challenges, entrepreneurial enterprises offer a valuable lesson for legacy media: Diversification of revenue models is all but vital for sustainability (Kurpius, Metzgar, and Rowley 2010; Sirkkunen and Cook 2012). In a 20th century world, media organizations thrived by maximizing profits from two key sources, in varying combinations: audiences and advertisers. Most carried a version of that model into the digital era. Indeed, the all-but-universal early decision to give away content for free rested on the notion that the value of news audiences is primarily their ability to attract advertisers; hence the bigger the audience, the better.

In hindsight, charging nothing for something that is very expensive to produce in order to artificially inflate the audience may seem foolish. But that is only because in hindsight, we know more about what works online, as well as what does not work and what works differently. Legacy outlets that now are erecting "paywalls," charging users a fee to read any, a few, or a lot of their stories (Pickard and Williams 2014), may in fact have learned precisely the wrong lesson; essentially, paywalls are the old model in new clothes that are especially ill-fitting in a digital environment where so much is free. Moreover, a paywall model does not represent a diversification of revenue sources beyond audiences and advertisers. News start-ups offer insights into more creative solutions, from event hosting to crowdfunding to consultant services.

Key Issues for Scholars: Economic Imperatives

With notable exceptions, few journalism studies scholars are well-grounded in either economic theory or in the narrower field of management studies that forms the context for much of the entrepreneurial scholarship to date. Historically, literature about economically driven impact on the news industry has been either descriptive (Bagdikian 2000; Compaine and Gomery 2000) or critical (McChesney 2015), and has focused on legacy outlets; little attention has been paid to the economics of media start-ups. That said, Robert Picard (2002; 2005; 2012; Naldi and Picard 2012) has long been a leader in applying the tenets of capitalism across the news industry, which has not generally fared well in such an analysis, and recently, a small but growing number of scholars have extended his work into the digital realm. Several key studies have been published under the auspices of research institutes housed at leading universities such as Oxford University and Columbia University, respectively including Levy and Nielsen's (2010) Reuters Institute volume analysing the changing business of journalism and the implications for

democracy, and work for the Tow Center on the business of digital journalism (Grueskin, Seave, and Graves 2011).

Interest also is growing in exploring alternative revenue models for media enterprises; some of it is focused on entrepreneurial initiatives (Sirkkunen and Cook 2012), while other work has encompassed innovation within existing organizations (Boyles 2015; Kaye and Quinn 2010; Nel 2010). More theoretically grounded considerations of new revenue models such as crowdfunding (Carvajal, García-Avilés and González 2012), native advertising (Carlson 2015), and non-profit journalism (Nee 2013) also are emerging. More broadly, there have been calls for a change in emphasis from a production to a consumption economy, one that acknowledges ongoing shifts in the nature of information supply and demand (Colapinto and Porlezza 2012).

Also relevant is the rich body of work from the field of management studies, where scholars have been studying entrepreneurialism at least since Peter Drucker published *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* in 1985. Innumerable books, journals, academic conferences, and business school programs are now devoted to the topic (Kuratko 2005), creating a sizable body of knowledge. But within journalism studies, although some work is beginning to incorporate concepts related to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship (Hollifield et al. 2015), the focus has again been on legacy media and on the management of changing but still institutionally housed newsrooms (for examples, see Ekdale et al. 2015; Gade 2004; Sylvie and Gade 2009). For the most part, application of management principles to entrepreneurial journalism continues to rest on anecdotal evidence (Briggs 2012) and trade press coverage, much of it vaguely positive (Vos and Singer, forthcoming) but virtually none of it theoretically conceptualized or empirically scrutinized.

Economic theory – from basic supply and demand concerns (Naldi and Picard 2012) to innovative applications of rational choice theory (Fengler and Russ-Mohl 2008) or of concepts related to organizational ecology (Lowrey 2012) – and management theory, including concepts tailored to managing uncertainty, change, and creativity (Küng 2011; Lowrey and Gade 2011), would likely be fruitful in understanding entrepreneurial journalism initiatives. Additional insights may come through drawing on Bourdieu's (2005) connection of journalism with notions about economic and cultural capital (Vos and Singer, forthcoming).

In general, the journalistic enterprise has been described as "a contested practice embedded in larger political, economic, and cultural struggles" (Carlson 2009, 273), and perhaps nowhere is that struggle clearer than in entrepreneurial initiatives. Indeed, entrepreneurial journalism is an exemplar of the interplay between economic resources and other social entities and structures.

Journalistic Roles

Countless academic studies and trade press reports have documented the impact of change on news practitioners who have had to modify their storytelling tools, skills sets, work practices, and relationships with audiences in a digital age. Here, too, virtually all the work has focused on journalists employed in traditional newsrooms. Tens of thousands no longer are or indeed never were, as journalistic work has become precarious and piecemeal. Many frankly find it less than enjoyable (Willnat and Weaver 2014), and hitching their wagon to a journalism start-up – or launching their own media enterprise – has become an increasingly viable and appealing alternative, particularly for journalists motivated by a desire for independence or self-realization (Block and Landgraf 2014).

For legacy journalists who leave a traditional newsroom to join or create their own news enterprise, perhaps the most jarring change they encounter is the dramatic narrowing of the distance between themselves and two key (and overlapping) constituencies: those who consume their product and those who finance it. That change was suggested above and is explored in more detail here because it is central to the shifting roles evidenced in entrepreneurial journalism.

As indicated in the discussion of normative boundaries, the traditional relationship between journalists and their readers, viewers, or listeners is a one-directional one: It consists primarily of journalists producing and disseminating information in the public interest, a term defined broadly, often vaguely, and almost entirely by journalists themselves. Despite the overarching goal of service to society, journalists only rarely have seen the need to engage directly with audiences to fulfill that role or even to identify what it should entail. The result has been a growing gap between audience interests and legacy media content (Boczkowski and Mitchelstein 2013) – a gap that seems unlikely to close as long as news consumers are seen as a "mass" audience, a faceless aggregation presumed to share a concern with matters judged (again, mostly by the journalist) to be of civic importance or general interest. To journalists working at news outlets larger than the tiniest community-based ones, readers, viewers, or listeners generally remain an undifferentiated and amorphous blob.

Entrepreneurs, in contrast, need a great deal of concrete and detailed knowledge about their audience. A vague conception of undifferentiated people in need of something broadly defined as in their own interest is not nearly good enough. No new business gets off the ground without extensive research that yields a precise understanding of audience desires, interests, habits, and willingness to pay, not least because financial backers – from investors to advertisers to donors, and many start-ups rely on all three (Sirkkunen and Cook 2012) – will inevitably

demand such information. And the best way to obtain it is through personal communication. The entrepreneurial journalist has no newsroom walls, no marketing or circulation departments, to act as an audience interface – or buffer.

Because the people interested in a topic are apt to already know a bit about it, start-ups that rarely are flush with the resources needed to create and sustain a steady supply of content often solicit contributions as well as suggestions from readers. Journalists who become entrepreneurs unavoidably need to find, engage with, and nurture "outsiders" who can contribute reliably, cogently, credibly, and regularly. Meeting these needs demands relationship skills well beyond what journalists may have developed with traditional sources, whose only role was to provide information that was then routed through, and vetted by, the newsroom. Legacy journalists have few partners in their core content production tasks and role. Entrepreneurial journalists must work collaboratively to survive. The few that succeed do so in no small part through personal connections, interactions, and information sharing, all of which remain difficult for larger outlets that historically have distanced themselves from their audience (Rosen 2014).

Even more challenging, as indicated in the earlier discussion of economic imperatives, that collaboration must also involve funding sources. Traditional journalists certainly have an investment in their careers, as well as a general interest in seeing an employer prosper, but those are relatively attenuated concerns. And while legacy journalists are well aware that the content they produce is for sale, their involvement in the transaction is quite deliberately nil. Figuring out where the money to support the journalism comes from and how to get more of it are roles filled by the publisher or owner or board of directors, not the journalist.

The learning curve for journalists starting their own business is therefore steep and sharp. An entrepreneur needs to think hard about every cost: how big it is, what value it adds, how

essential it is to success – and then whether to support it and how. The scant research to date on

entrepreneurial journalism suggests that a common mistake made by founders of news start-ups

has been to put too much money into what they know best and love most: the journalism. Many

have hired sizable news staffs before securing their financial underpinnings or attending to other

aspects of a successful enterprise, such as creating effective marketing channels and forging key

partnerships (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010). Naldi and Picard (2012) labelled such misplaced

priorities "formational myopia," or unrealistic expectations about the demand for, and the

economic value of, journalistic work. Journalists without practical business skills or experience

not infrequently make dubious fiscal and management decisions in negotiating the transition

from employee to owner of a news operation (Bruno and Nielsen 2013).

These new sorts of relationships also raise broader questions about the extent to which

entrepreneurial journalism veers away from the conception of journalism as a public service that

enables an informed electorate to make sound choices and toward something more explicitly

rooted in marketing concerns. Hanitzsch (2007), for example, distinguished a market orientation,

associated with giving audiences what they want to know "at the expense of what they should

know" (375), from the conceptualization of journalism as independent watchdog. Market-driven

journalism (McManus 1997) addresses audiences as clients and consumers rather than citizens,

and the digital environment that hosts most entrepreneurial efforts has long been portrayed as an

arena where journalistic practices are notably vulnerable to market influence (Cohen 2002).

Yet entrepreneurial journalists, despite the enormous potential for role conflict, do still

have to maintain what in business-school jargon is termed their "value proposition" (Osterwalder

and Pigneur 2010, 22). Here, too, a start-up environment changes the game. The value of

individual journalists within a news organization rests on their professional expertise, defined

through contributions to that overall mission of informing the public. Again, of crucial importance (notorious newsroom scandals notwithstanding) are the normative principles exercised in maintaining credibility and in fostering trust that, in theory, attracts and retains audiences. Importantly, that individual value is connected to an institutionally held value that incorporates brand reputation, reach, and long-term patterns of stakeholder interactions dating back decades if not centuries. At both the individual and institutional levels, then, the value proposition for legacy journalism rests on delivery, over time, of an appealing information product to audiences, in turn creating an appealing proposition to advertisers seeking to reach them – a value deeply challenged in a networked digital environment.

Many of the information start-ups that have enjoyed big success thus far are less about serious reporting and fulfillment of civic roles than they are about edginess and trend-riding and visuals and speed (and, not atypically, kittens). Creation and delivery of credible information is surely valuable to democracy. But democracy is a big concept, while audiences consist of individuals, seeking individual gratification – and, thanks to the accessibility, openness, and unrivalled diversity of the digital world, finding it far more easily and cheaply than at any time in history. Personalization, and personal connections, can seem more gratifying than the "spinach" of news that's good for society writ large. Journalists both individually and institutionally have little experience in and often little appetite for relating to audiences at that level.

As journalists have sought to turn what they know and love into a going business enterprise, then, many have applied traditional views of what news is or should be, often along with misperceptions of the market for it. Most really do believe in the power of a free press and in the value of a well-informed public to civic and community life. And they believe that they know – know best – how to provide that value. Yet life as an entrepreneur raises many

intertwined questions familiar from other fundamental shocks to journalism as those over age 20 knew it. What is my role as a journalist? What value do I offer – to whom, how, and how much? What is my place in society, and how can I secure it? What hats can I not live without? What new ones do I need, and how do I get them to fit without chafing? Which relationships are the ones that matter? How can I nurture them and safeguard them from corruption in various guises? If success isn't leading the newscast, and maybe not even serving that nebulous thing called democratic society … then what exactly is it, and how do I attain it?

Key Issues for Scholars: Journalistic Roles

Clearly, entrepreneurial journalists do more, and different, things than a traditional journalist does. Some of the resulting pressures, including normative ones, are comparable but need to be considered in a dramatically changed context. Others are new, requiring the journalist to adopt uncomfortable and ill-fitting roles. How are we to understand these things in relation to the place of the practitioner and the practice in democratic society?

Scholars have recognized that the occupational field is "losing its traditional bearings and casting its practitioners in a new entrepreneurial ideal of being free agents" (Deuze and Marjoribanks 2009, 558). But although good work is under way, the publication of theory-driven empirical work to explore the meanings of these and associated changes has been scanty. In addition to the economics work of Picard and his colleagues already highlighted, probably the most extensive look at entrepreneurial journalists published so far has been a descriptive study entailing exploratory interviews with 30 U.S. media entrepreneurs – defined as founders of an independent content business with a clear revenue model – by Compaine and Hoag (2012). Their assessment was generally positive; they noted an environment hospitable to media start-ups, as

"technology and economics have conspired to undercut many of the barriers that had existed to would-be media entrepreneurs" (43).

Perhaps the best way is to continue, and to expand beyond the traditional newsroom, the ongoing scholarly exploration of cultural changes in the practice of journalism (Deuze 2005; Lewis 2012; Witschge 2013). Those relate to the norms and the economic pressures already described but go deeper to consider fundamental issues at the core of questions about who a journalist is and what such a person does. They relate as well to examinations of journalists' "rediscovery" of the audience (Loosen and Schmidt 2012) and of new forms of interaction with people as participants in the co-creation of information (Heinrich 2013; Robinson 2011; Singer et al. 2011).

How do these new or renewed or reconfigured relationships affect journalists' view of their own role in the information environment? How do they affect the process not only of making news but also of thinking about what news is? Is the entrepreneurial journalist still a gatekeeper? An agenda-setter? Where does agency lie and how is it shared around the relevant information network? For example, a number of journalism scholars (Couldry 2008; Domingo, Masip, and Meijer 2015; Primo and Zago 2015) have highlighted the utility of actor network theory in understanding 21st century journalism. The theory treats objects, including technological ones, as actors within social networks. Given the centrality of digital platforms to most entrepreneurial journalism enterprises, as well as the interrelationships among many kinds of actors, the theory could be productively applied to our understanding of start-up culture.

One additional place outside the traditional newsroom to look for exploration of cultural change stemming from the move toward entrepreneurialism deserves mention: the classroom, where crucial early socialization of future journalists occurs (Mensing 2010). Scholars already

have begun to examine the disconnect between industry disruption and journalism education, which does not typically offer the skills, knowledge, and qualities needed to take advantage of entrepreneurial options (Baines and Kennedy 2010). Several of these have documented efforts to bring entrepreneurial concepts into the curriculum. A small-scale study by Ferrier (2013), for example, found that instructors cited changes in the nature of media industry work – short-term contracts, self-employment, temporary group work on specific projects – among their prime motivation for creating classes that introduced journalism students to business concepts and market research; they sought to "empower students with the knowledge and skill sets to create their own jobs" (229). In the UK, university workshops have encouraged students to recognize synergies between the seemingly disparate fields of business and creative industries, and to "consider themselves not only within a framework of business and entrepreneurship but also as creative, imaginative individuals with a unique contribution to make to a sector that is in need of rejuvenation" (Hunter and Nel 2011, 15).

Yet the sledding is tough. Surveys in the United States (Blom and Davenport 2012) and Europe (Drok 2013) found that at least as of a few years ago, journalism educators and administrators placed entrepreneurial journalism classes relatively low on their list of curricular priorities; respondents in the European study said they preferred to emphasize doing journalistic work "without interference from market forces or the public" (Drok 2013, 156). More work is needed not only to document what exists but also to bring concepts into the classroom, methodically measure and assess their utility and impact, and share the lessons learned.

In considering where scholars might devote their energies in seeking to understand entrepreneurial journalism, this chapter has focused mostly on concepts and theories with little attention paid to methodology. The reason is that existing methods widely used by journalism

studies scholars should serve us well in these explorations. Qualitative methods are likely to be

especially useful. Although more quantitative approaches present challenges related to

definitional and sampling issues, qualitative ones are ideally suited to the diversity of

contemporary journalism and can facilitate a focus on crucial questions about how and why

journalists are reconstructing themselves as entrepreneurs.

As suggested already, there is a significant need and opportunity for more research within

entrepreneurial journalism settings. Ethnographic work is ideally suited to obtaining a rich

understanding of how, exactly, journalists are dealing with the issues outlined above. Other

methodological options likely to prove fruitful include discourse analysis – how do journalists

talk about the many issues surrounding entrepreneurialism? – and the more quantifiably oriented

approach of network analysis, which can yield insights into the interactions of entrepreneurs with

their multiple stakeholders, as well as the support structures they form when they no longer have

the bonds provided by newsroom work. In-depth interviews also would be invaluable in probing

topics that may be sensitive. For instance, we know little about what lessons entrepreneurial

journalists might be taking away from failure. What do they believe went wrong, why, and what

was learned from the experience? What comes next for journalists whose attempts at

entrepreneurialism have proved unsustainable?

In summary, this chapter has highlighted three areas of particular interest in the

exploration of a growing industry phenomenon, entrepreneurial journalism. In all three of these

areas – the norms, financial underpinnings, and societal role of journalism and journalists in a

digital age – work to date has been overwhelmingly about journalism in a place recognizable as a

newsroom, housed within a news organization whose shape and structure have been familiar for

a century and more. But unlike the previous transformations of the digital era, which can be seen

as changes contained and accommodated more or less adroitly within a traditional work environment, entrepreneurial journalism invites us to reconceptualise how and where news work is done and news is made. To date, we understand very little indeed about this subject. This chapter has suggested places where we might begin.

However we go about it, the need to more fully understand entrepreneurial journalism as an inherently disruptive response to industry disruption is only going to grow. As mobile and wearable technologies, along with drones and virtual reality and a host of affordances we cannot yet even envision, open up fresh new opportunities for entrepreneurial initiatives, more journalists will seize the chance to prosper outside the newsroom. They will be shaping the ways our society understands itself, and we must do our best to understand them in turn.

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