

EDITORIAL

Media in Crisis

This edition of the journal is being published when media is faced with a crisis.

What is this crisis?

Is it the falling newspaper sales and the cord-cutting in a world where the internet has broken old business models and the public is no longer willing to pay for subscription? Is the youth, conspicuously absent from major sports events and choosing instead to spend their time on social media, a symptom of this crisis? Or, is the crisis encompassed in the major cuts in journalistic staff and the abolishing of editorial positions.

No.

Alarm bells should ring now because fake news has become culturally acceptable. In this scenario, the plague of the fake news has permeated society at all levels. We have unceremoniously entered the 'Post-Fact' era of fake news and filter bubbles, in which corporations and other private entities push those information and those sources that match their own interest. It is just as Noam Chomsky had predicted: "Crisis in the media is not a result of its declining revenues as much as its intellectual dishonesty".¹

Unfortunately, the old media no longer seems to have the power to shape public opinion. The governance model with media as the fifth pillar has been relegated to the archives of modernity. Journalists, who once sounded the clarion call for an independent media and unbiased journalism, have moved in droves to PR firms. New entrants in media are exploring all technological possibilities, opening up new avenues to reach those parts of our collective psyche that had hitherto remained untouched.

The old media had been charged with manufacturing consent. With its decline, the strong tentacles of invisible and private interests manufacture discord, foster outrage, instigate conflict and promote chaos. And, do so much more effectively.

The circumstances surrounding functions such as producing, reporting and distributing have changed so completely that we cannot continue repeating and reproducing past actions. In fact, this moment requires a serious reconsideration of what we do and why we do it. In the words of Guardian Editor-in-Chief Katharine Viner, "In a turbulent era, the media must define its values and principles".² Thus, the very nature of our times demands that we do more than adapt to new technologies.

That is not to say that the current media scenario has nothing positive that can be salvaged from the widespread destruction of values and principles. There is a liberatory potential, however transient and illusory. That the boundaries of public discourse are defined by algorithms and not a few men and women, and that these algorithms

¹Raman, Anuradha, and Ajaz Ashraf. "Media Subdues The Public. It's So In India, Certainly." *Outlook India*, 1 Nov. 2010.

²Viner, Katharine. "A mission for journalism in a time of crisis." *The Guardian*, 16 Nov. 2017, www.theguardian.com/news/2017/nov/16/a-mission-for-journalism-in-a-time-of-crisis.

are, in turn, based on the actions of the public heralds, finally, governance for and by the people. Old and new media entities, both, have prioritized listening to and responding to their audiences. Is this situation not a harbinger of good news?

Perhaps, then, it is not completely uncalled for to imagine ways in which the new media with all its peculiarities can be harnessed to the service of timeworn ideals and principles.

In this issue we have Examination of Crisis Response in Professional Athlete Scandals from the fan's perspective. How did media respond on climate change issues during recent Hurricanes in US. Truth, Al Jazeera, and Crisis Journalism raises very important questions and retribution of Muslim Comedians in America on Islamophobia.

I hope these articles will be cited well in academic community as well as practitioners. Readers response is always welcome.

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