

Luckhurst, Tim (2011) *Dr Hack, I presume? Liberal journalism in the multimedia age*. In: Mair, John and Keeble, Richard Lance, eds. *Face the Future: Tools for the Modern Media Age*. Abramis, Bury St Edmunds, pp. 317-333. ISBN 978-1-84549-483-4.

## Downloaded from

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/34492/> The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

## The version of record is available from

[http://www.abramis.co.uk/books/details/book\\_184549483](http://www.abramis.co.uk/books/details/book_184549483)

## This document version

Publisher pdf

## DOI for this version

## Licence for this version

CC BY (Attribution)

## Additional information

## Versions of research works

### Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

### Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal*, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

## Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact [ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk](mailto:ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk). Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our [Take Down policy](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies) (available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies>).

Sanbrook, R. (2006) Guest blog at cybersoc.com, 20 March.

Available online at

[http://www.cybersoc.com/2006/03/guest\\_blogger\\_r.html](http://www.cybersoc.com/2006/03/guest_blogger_r.html) 17/1,

accessed on 17 January 2011

Trippi, J. (2004) *The revolution will not be televised: Democracy, the internet and the overthrow of everything*. New York, Regan Books

#### Note on the author

Kevin Marsh is Executive Editor at the BBC College of Journalism. He is a former Editor of the *Today* programme and also edited *The World at One*, *PM* and *Broadcasting House* on BBC Radio 4. He writes a regular column in *Press Gazette* and blogs at <http://storycurve.blogspot.com/>.

## Dr Hack, I presume? Liberal journalism in the multimedia age

Tim Luckhurst

Amid the familiar misery of ailing newspapers, impoverished broadcasters and a worldwide web that prefers not to remunerate professional journalists, one thing at least is clear. The future of journalism lies on a different planet. They will do things differently there.

Several thinkers believe they know what conditions will be like. Seth Lewis imagines a hospitable environment in which there will exist "vast new opportunities for the formerly atomised audience to participate on their terms, connect and coordinate horizontally with each other, and do so in a way that creates value through collective intelligence and contributions" (Lewis 2010).

Stephen Moss and Joris Luyendijk are optimistic for similar reasons. They envisage a journalism of multiple online "agoras" (an agora was a place for assembly and debate in ancient Greece), where web users will congregate to produce organic, non-linear story-telling informed by the

wisdom of crowds (Moss and Luyendijk 2010). Jay Rosen argues a similar case and, in common with others who share his perspective, appears pleased that the internet may weaken the authority of large-scale professional media organisations (Rosen 2009).

Such enthusiasm for citizen journalism – an oxymoron so hoary it should be abandoned – often starts from the assertion that professional journalism in representative democracies restricts debate to perspectives that are acceptable to governing and financial elites. It is rooted in a belief that top-down journalism privileges the views of the powerful and that it excludes popular opinion. Such arguments assume that millions of free citizens are routinely duped or seduced by big media reporting. They encompass a version of Friedrich Engels' thesis of false consciousness (Engels [1893] 1968). They predict the death of big media because it serves the interests of liberal, capitalist democracy. Many of their proponents would like that to die too.

This chapter challenges theories of change that foresee the relocation of media power in the hands of consumers. It foresees, instead, an age of partnership between representative journalism and participatory journalism, a future in which privately-owned, independent media will continue to play the role of an estate, not just an industry.

### “Greater need for traditional journalistic skills”

Newman suggests that, as the pace of the news cycle accelerates, “it can be argued that there is an even greater need for traditional journalistic skills of sorting fact from fiction; selecting the key facts for a mass audience”. He cites as evidence of partnership the uploading of user-generated pictures and videos to Persian TV and CNN by Iranian citizens during the protests that followed that country's election in 2009 (Newman 2009: 50-51).

These protesters understood that only professionally edited, mass media outlets have the power and authority to influence opinion widely and fast. Newman notes that most of the information and links shared via social networks during the Iranian protests following the disputed election of President Ahmadinejad in 2009 “came from, or pushed people to, the work of the mainstream media itself” (ibid).

Charlie Beckett notes that mainstream journalists are beginning to regain some of their lost confidence: “They look at big stories like Iran and they see the value of what they do magnified, amplified and not contradicted by new media” (cited in ibid). Alan Rusbridger, editor of the *Guardian*, glimpsed the same possibility in his January 2010 Hugh Cudlipp Lecture: “Journalists may remain one source of authority, but people may also be less interested to receive journalism in an inert context – i.e. which can't be responded to, challenged, or knitted in with other sources” (Busfield 2010).

Belief that large-scale, mass-audience media may remain healthy and influential does not rely on panglossianism. Freedman notes that the BBC news website remains Britain's most popular source of news online (Freedman 2010). Other news sites produced by mainstream, private media companies also attract huge audiences. Leading examples include Mail Online, Guardian Unlimited and Sky.Com.

### Growing partnerships between professional journalists and their audiences

Small wonder, then, that journalists in big media institutions including the BBC, Sky News, *The New York Times* and the *Guardian* are learning to think in terms of active partnerships in which professional journalists and their audiences report events together, the former responding to the latter's requests, suggestions and demands and filtering information to privilege fact over rumour and objectivity over ideology.

A consensus is beginning to emerge among professional journalists that Dutton's fifth estate of networked individuals and groups really can live and work alongside traditional media instead of replacing it (Dutton 2007). The fifth estate will help the fourth estate to curate news in the multimedia environment. It will help the professionals to do a better job of keeping the powerful honest and accountable to the people they serve.

This consensus raises a question that is absent from much ideologically predisposed debate about the future of journalism: what intellectual skills will the professional journalist of the future require to fulfil their duties to their fellow citizen and to representative democracy? How will these watchdogs be equipped to offer, in Eric Hobsbawm's words, the engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century democracies “an explanatory narrative adequate to its complexities”? (see Holden 2002).

To attempt an answer it is necessary first to contest an orthodoxy that, while useful to the study of journalism, does not merit the level of acceptance it has achieved in the decades since the academy encouraged such study to drift apart from the established disciplines in which it was born.

#### Fourth estate "myth" – an impoverished, ideological stance

Thirty-two years have passed since the fourth estate theory was described as "a political myth" (Boyce, Curran and Wingate 1978). Since then, this view has come to be treated as fact by some academic analysts of professional journalism and, through their agency, by their students. But to accord it such status is to embrace an impoverished ideological stance not conducive to understanding journalism's social purpose.

When Mark Thompson, Director General of the BBC, signed a letter to the Secretary of State for Business warning that a buyout of BSkyB by News Corporation "could have serious consequences for media plurality" (BBC News 2010a), his objection relied on the classic fourth estate argument that plurality of media ownership and diversity of media content are crucial to the health of liberal democracy.

According to liberal theory, plurality and diversity promote competition, which allows good to drive out bad in the market for ideas. In this Darwinian struggle towards light, the truth – or its near equivalent – emerges triumphant and allows informed citizens to hold power to account within the rules and systems of representative democracy. It encourages reform, not revolutionary change.

Julian Assange, editor of Wikileaks, appears committed to these ideals. He says: "The truth must come first. First the truth, because without the truth no public policy is coherent" (Assange 2010). It is hard to imagine a more emphatic statement of the fourth estate doctrine that journalism functions as a watchdog on the activities of government.

Assange's version of journalism's social purpose is not very different from the one described in 1852 by Henry Reeve, leader writer for *The Times*, who wrote that it exists "to find out the true state of facts, to report them with fidelity, to apply to them strict and fixed principles of justice, humanity and law, to inform as far as possible, the very

conscience of nations and to call down the judgement of the world on what is false, or base, or tyrannical" (*The Times* 1939: 149).

Despite a revolution in media technology, that argument has barely changed since. The 1947-1949 Royal Commission observed: "The number and variety of newspapers should be such that the press as a whole gives an opportunity for all important points of view to be effectively presented in terms of the varying standards of taste, political opinion, and education among the principal groups of the population" (Royal Commission on the Press 1949: 1).

#### Liberal faith in the social and moral purpose of the media

Furthermore, the liberal faith that professional journalism exists to serve social and moral purposes unites editors with wildly different editorial policies. It is present in the speech by Paul Dacre, editor of the *Daily Mail*, to the Society of Editors in which he promoted journalism's duty to expose "the crooks, the liars, the cheats, the rich and the corrupt [who shelter] behind a law of privacy being created by an unaccountable judge" (Dacre 2008).

It explains better than profit-motive alone the pride expressed by Bob Bird, Scottish editor of the *News of the World*, when Tommy Sheridan, the Scottish Socialist Party politician, was found guilty at the High Court in Glasgow on 23 December 2010, of perjury during his successful defamation case against the *News of the World* in 2006 (BBC 2010).

It underpins Alan Rusbridger's account of what C. P. Scott, the *Guardian's* creator, might have thought of its online reach: "Scott would, I think, have been intensely intrigued to know that the paper he edited for so long...was so openly available and read around the world...that its reporting could change the minds of governments, inspire thinking, defy censorship, give a voice to the powerless and previously voice-less" (Rusbridger 2010).

James Murdoch professed similar confidence in journalism's capacity to serve liberal purposes in his 2009 MacTaggart Lecture to the Edinburgh International Television Festival. He said "the provision of independent news" and "investment in professional journalism" were "important spheres of human enterprise and endeavour" that might be harmed by excessive state regulation of the media industries (Murdoch 2009).

Of course, the endurance of a myth does not mean that it is not a myth, nor does continuing support for it by professional journalists. To paraphrase Mandy Rice-Davis, they would support it, wouldn't they? But this myth is not just resilient. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, liberal fourth estate theory has the support of vast audiences who, despite decades of trenchant criticism, consume the journalism it inspires online, in print and via broadcast transmission in unprecedented volume.

Myths are not lies. One of their foremost functions is to promote models for social behaviour. Within professions or social groups they may validate certain values and practices. There is, however, a chasm separating the plain truth that myths may be used to promote virtuous professional conduct and the contention that they are merely sentimental devices by which groups promote unjustified self-regard.

Liberal press theory does not endure because it makes journalists feel good about themselves by depicting their profession as more than a commercial activity designed to make profits by selling news. It endures because it describes more accurately than the profession's most entrenched critics are happy to acknowledge what public service journalism does and what its consumers want it to do.

**Journalism's ability to expose wrongdoing**

Since the emergence of representative democracy in economically liberal nation states, liberal press theory has promoted journalism as a servant of the public sphere, the realm in which citizens engage in critical debate about the practices of government and state. It has promoted journalism's ability to expose wrongdoing, to keep power honest and to advance the cause of reform. It has pledged to defend democracy and civil rights by deploying the sword of truth and the shield of fairness.

Liberal fourth estate theory was invented to describe journalism's role within representative democracy. Liberals who believed in that system's virtue and in its ability to evolve and reform in the public interest devised it. People who share their faith support it now. That it is opposed by thinkers who would prefer journalism to advocate the replacement of representative democracy in its present form is unremarkable. But it is important to recognise that their analyses are intended to promote change in the media and in society, not simply to describe it.

Among influential thinkers about journalism, the best acknowledge this candidly. Richard Keeble does so with admirable clarity: "It is clearly important to work for radical, progressive change to the corporate media from within. The closeness of the mainstream to dominant economic, cultural and ideological forces means that the mainstream largely functions to promote the interests of the military/industrial/political complex" (Keeble 2010).

Liberal theory has become a more accurate guide to journalism's social purpose as time has passed. The intense scepticism of 1978 looks jaded today. Boyce was right to pour scorn on editors who, like H. A. Gwynne of the *Morning Post*, derived influence "not from any aloof, distinct posture, but from his contacts and friendships with people at the very centre of power" (Boyce 1978: 31). But liberal journalists have learned not to be friends with politicians. Today, the evidence suggests that those who exercise media power have embraced H. I. Mencken's advice that "the proper relationship between a journalist and a politician should be akin to that between a dog and a lamp-post" (see BBC 1999).

That politicians also understand this is illustrated by the frequency with which they piss back. For much of her time in office Mrs. Thatcher enjoyed a mutually supportive relationship with important national newspapers. Her gripe was with broadcast journalists, particularly those working for the BBC. Following a series of *Panorama* documentaries on topics including Northern Ireland, the 1982 Falklands War the 1984 Brighton bombing, and the miners' strike (1984-1985), Mrs Thatcher demanded that the BBC "put its house in order" (McQueen 2008).

Members of the Iron Lady's cabinet were caustic about BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme. Nigel Lawson accused its presenter, Brian Redhead, of voting Labour and Dennis Thatcher decorated a wall at 10 Downing Street with a picture of Broadcasting House leaning to the left.

John Major enjoyed only a very brief honeymoon in his relationship with journalists before the British media turned its critical eye on him. Seymour-Ure notes that Major found the experience dispiriting and complained about "negligible response time, reductive soundbites, ritualistic rhetoric (often misleading), skeleton reporting (even in the broadsheets), [and] pressure to produce sensational stories" (Seymour-Ure 2003: 8).

Tony Blair basked in the glow of largely favourable coverage until the invasion of Iraq harmed his reputation. Afterwards he compared the media to a ‘feral beast’, determined to destroy politicians for selfish gain (Blair 2007). The former Prime Minister also noted that his efforts to circumnavigate mainstream media by using the internet had failed utterly.

### Journalists as independent critics of government

Supporters of liberal theory see these examples of criticism from both wings of British politics as evidence that journalists are independent critics of government. Work originally inspired by the Glasgow Media Group in the 1970s has, nevertheless, continued to dismiss the liberal position, arguing that excessive reliance on official sources and mainstream representatives of politics and business erodes journalism’s autonomy and makes it power’s lackey (McQueen *op cit*).

British journalism’s achievements in the years since James Callaghan surrendered office to Margaret Thatcher in 1979 are too numerous to list, but a few examples may serve to illustrate the profession’s potency as a watchdog. Granada Television’s *World in Action* series was first to investigate the convictions in 1975 of the Birmingham Six. The company’s journalism was instrumental in correcting a grave miscarriage of justice.

*The Scotsman’s* dedication to the cause of constitutional change helped to keep the case for devolution of power to a Scottish Parliament on the UK political agenda despite Conservative opposition. After 1997, it helped to maintain the pressure on Tony Blair’s New Labour administration when the Prime Minister’s doubts about devolution resurfaced (Peterkin 2010).

The *Guardian’s* exposure in 1995 of the lies told by Conservative cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken ended the career of a powerful politician who had betrayed the confidence shown in him by the electorate. Independent Television News held to account a regime responsible for brutal abuses of power when it broadcast, on 6 August 1992, evidence of the barbaric mistreatment of Bosnian Muslim prisoners in the Serb-run detention camp at Trnopolje, in northern Bosnia. These examples date from before the dawn of the multimedia age.

### MPs’ expenses scandal – and the liberal theory of the media

It is noteworthy that although the internet has damaged journalism’s profitability, it has done less to dampen the profession’s pursuit of liberal ideals. The *Daily Telegraph’s* exposure of the details of MPs’ expenses claims in 2009 revealed abuses by MPs from all parties and seriously damaged public faith in politicians. Few stories have demonstrated more emphatically the willingness of liberal media to scrutinise in the public interest institutions they support and admire.

In December 2010, the *Daily Telegraph* returned to the fray by deploying subtlety and misrepresentation to record Liberal Democrat ministers in Britain’s coalition government expressing fierce disapproval of coalition policy and of their conservative ministerial colleagues (Prince 2010). The *Telegraph’s* claim that it acted in the public interest – the only justification under Section 10 of the Editor’s Code of Conduct – was only partially undermined by its failure to publish immediately comments by Vince Cable, the Business Secretary, revealing his personal hostility to a complete takeover of BSkyB by News Corporation (BBC News 2010c).

The expenses files also demonstrated the potential of partnerships between the fourth and fifth estates as newspapers including the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Guardian* invited readers to mine online data about expenses claims for details about their MP.

Another example of partnership emerged following the death in April 2009 of Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper seller who collapsed and died in the City of London during mass protests against the G20 summit then taking place in the city. Initial post-mortem findings indicated that Tomlinson had died of natural causes. That version was challenged when the *Guardian* obtained film taken by an American fund manager which showed him being hit and pushed by a police officer wielding a baton (Guardian 2009).

### The importance of user-generated content

Such use by mainstream media of user-generated content is not a new phenomenon, but it has become more common in the digital era and media companies now encourage it actively. Thus Sky News uses its home page to appeal for ‘your videos’ and ‘your photos’ (Sky News, 2010). BBC News makes a comparable appeal via the ‘have your say’ section of its website which is also advertised on its home page (BBC News 2010d).



Rusbridger detects tension between the authority enjoyed by professional journalists and the desire of some news consumers to create their own content and make their own judgements (Rusbridger op cit). But will citizens with busy lives really make time to hold power to account via Facebook and Twitter or will they rely at least as heavily as their pre-internet ancestors on the power, independence and professionalism of big media to do the job with them?

Crowdsourcing has taken journalists beyond appeals for individual stories, photographs and videos to a new understanding that a newsroom which works in symbiosis with its audience may produce more richly informed news. Richard Sambrook believes that this curatorial approach to news gathering and production may spawn a new breed of foreign reporting in which traditional foreign correspondents will be replaced by teams consisting of foreign news desk staff and local journalists working collaboratively with their audiences (Sambrook 2010). One Reuters editor told him: "We used to need hunter-gatherers; in future we'll need farmers."

What skills will these farmers of news require to nurture, fertilise and reap collaborative journalism? The vocational toolkit is reasonably easy to describe. Convergence has reduced the market value of single-medium skills. Today's multimedia reporter needs the ability to gather, organise and deploy information, images and data from primary and secondary sources and to create and deploy text and images for publication in print, for broadcast and online. They need to be able to use cameras and audio recording equipment and the relevant editing software. They also need advanced ability to build, edit and update web pages.

To these practical competencies must be added advanced awareness of and familiarity with social networking technologies and sites and editorial ability to exploit them fully. Creating content for and interacting with online audiences and, in particular, with mobile online audiences is an essential editorial skill. Learning to deploy journalism via mobile operating systems such as Google's Android and Apple's iPad is already important and will become more so.

### Basic skills for the multimedia environment

For journalists, team-building has been a core skill since the professionalisation of the news industry in the second half of the

nineteenth century. Now, the modern journalist needs the flexibility to work in and organise teams creating output in single, bi- and multimedia formats.

This basic skill is useful at every level of the free media's social hierarchy. It applies when a journalist toils to produce the novelist Jay McInerney's recipe for tabloid success: "Killer Bees, Hero Cops, Sex Fiends, Lottery Winners, Teenage Terrorists, Liz Taylor [Cheryl Cole?], Tough Tots, Sicko Creeps, Lying Nightmares, Life on Other Planets, Spontaneous Human Combustion, Miracle Diets and Coma Babies" (McInerney 1985: 11).

It is as useful to BBC journalists who are enjoined to "apply due impartiality to all of our subject matter" and to "reflect a breadth and diversity of opinion across our output as a whole, over an appropriate period, so that no significant strand of thought is knowingly unreflected or under-represented" (BBC 2010: 9 section 1.2.3.).

But technical virtuosity alone does not a great liberal journalist make. To serve the purposes defined in fourth estate theory the profession demands intellectual acuity too. Leonard Downie and Michael Schudson note: "Although much basic news reporting is routine, enterprise and accountability journalism, which by definition bring new information to light, can grow into society-changing work not that dissimilar to academic research that makes original contributions to knowledge in history and the social sciences" (Downie and Schudson 2009: 89).

For decades aspiring British journalists have questioned how best to realise their ambitions. Well-intentioned advice from veteran liberal journalists has tended to recommend a degree in history, politics or English literature and a graduate traineeship at a newspaper or broadcaster. Universities offering degrees in journalism have made the case for learning core skills as an undergraduate in order to enter the market place with a competitive advantage.

Even in today's restricted job market either route can work, provided the aspirant has drawn to their attention the unavoidable truths that journalism jobs are exceptionally hard to get, that competition is ferocious and that few professions are as intensely meritocratic. Too few universities which offer journalism degrees identify students who are

plainly not bright enough to work in journalism and warn them of their shortcomings. Many that offer candour are accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists.

### Basic knowledge for today's journalists

Absent from the debate is much sincere effort to define the academic learning journalists will require. In fact, the answer is implicit in the typical veteran liberal's answer. To perform their job effectively journalists need to understand the history of liberal, capitalist, representative democracy and how it works. They also need the ability to express themselves clearly. In other words, they need to add to their multimedia skill set thorough grounding in history, politics, law and literature.

A very basic reading list should include Milton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, and Adam Smith, Tom Paine, Jeremy Bentham, Karl Marx and J. S. Mill. It should offer an introduction to the development of representative democracy through works including Boyd Hilton's *A mad, bad and dangerous people – England 1783-1846* (2006), Hugh Cunningham's *The challenge of democracy – Britain 1832-1918* (2001) and David Marguard's *Britain since 1918 – The strange career of British democracy* (2008). It should offer understanding of the Second World War through Angus Calder's *The people's war* (1969) and Robert Kee's *1945: The world we fought for* (1985) and of its aftermath via Peter Hennessy's *Never again – Britain 1945-1951* (1992) and *Having it so good – Britain in the Fifties* (2006).

It should introduce readers to a basic understanding of contemporary politics through works including Vernon Bogdanor's *The new British constitution* (2009), Bill Jones, Dennis Kavanagh, Michael Moran and Phillip Norton's *Politics UK* (fourth edition, 2006) and David Judge's *Political institutions in the United Kingdom* (2005). Journalism's relationship with the law should be approached through McNae's *essential law for journalists* (20<sup>th</sup> edition, 2010) and Frances Quinn's *Law for journalists* (2009).

With such foundations built, the education of aspiring journalists should begin to incorporate study of the role of the press. Andrew Marr's *My trade* (2004) offers an invaluable introduction. Students should also read *Power without responsibility* (sixth edition, 2001) by James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Newspaper history from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day*, edited by

George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (1978) (including Boyce's essay *The Fourth Estate: The reappraisal of a concept*), and *Why democrats need an unlovable press* (2008), by Michael Schudson. Their education will be incomplete if they do not also read *Obscure scribblers – A history of parliamentary journalism* (2003) by Andrew Sparrow, *Flat earth news* (2008), by Nick Davies and *The universal journalist* (2000), by David Randall.

### The essential media diet

None of this will be of any value unless the student also consumes journalism daily. A basic diet of *Today* on BBC Radio Four and/or *Breakfast* on Five Live, one quality daily newspaper, one tabloid (in print or online) and the *Daily Mail* should be reinforced by evening consumption of television news and current affairs, ideally Channel 4 News and Newsnight on BBC2. Students should check authoritative news websites including BBC News, Guardian Unlimited and Mail Online constantly.

Journalism students at Kent often blanch when I remind them that such daily consumption is the essential starting point for a career in public service journalism. But I tell them because I know hardly any successful journalists who do not consume news avidly. And the same discipline is essential in niche journalism. Motorcycle journalists read *Motorcycle News* and magazines including *Bike* and *Ride* as closely as political correspondents read websites including *Conservative Home*, and Guido Fawkes' blog ([www.Order-Order.com](http://www.Order-Order.com)).

Such dedicated attention is essential to success in journalism and the profession's demands will only become more grueling as the number of outlets and the opportunities to respond to audience demands expand in parallel with the creative opportunities for multimedia story-telling.

Critics of the mainstream media may deride these recommendations as a recipe for creating new servants of the liberal capitalist media. They are designed for that purpose. Mainstream media is not hostile to dissident opinion. Indeed, as Richard Keeble notes, "progressive" writers have often written for professional, liberal media outlets as well as contributing to campaigning outlets (Keeble op cit).



Such partnership will be more common in the multimedia era. The alliance between *Wikileaks* and the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *Le Monde* etc. which placed the US embassy cables in the public domain, is a compelling example. It illustrates the efficiency with which mainstream liberal media outlets can now work in partnership with consumers to serve core fourth estate purposes, and the enthusiasm with which they pursue that virtuous ideal.

Journalists with advanced multimedia skills, intense academic training and Stakhanovite work ethics are better placed than ever before to hold power to account on behalf of, and in partnership with, their audiences.

**References**

Assange, Julian (2010) Video interview with Kirsty Wark. Available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-11047811>, accessed on 8 December 2010.

BBC (1999) Scotland tabloid bites back at Steel, 6 September. Available online at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/439580.stm>, accessed on 20 December 2010

BBC News (2010a) Mark Thompson expresses "regret" over Sky letter, 8 November. Available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-11713108>, accessed on 2 December 2010

BBC News (2010b) Tommy Sheridan found guilty of perjury. Available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-12059037>, accessed on 24/ December 2010

BBC News (2010c) Peston on Cable's B&KvB comments. Available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12053179>, accessed on 24 December 2010

BBC News (2010d) Home page available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>, accessed on 13 December 2010

BBC (2010e) Editorial guidelines. Available online at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our\\_work\\_editorial\\_guidelines/2010/trust\\_commentary.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work_editorial_guidelines/2010/trust_commentary.pdf), accessed on 13 December 2010

Blair, Tony (2010) On public life: Speech to Reuters, 12 June 2007. Available online at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6744581.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6744581.stm), accessed on 17 December 10

Boyce, George (1978) The Fourth Estate: The reappraisal of a concept, Curran, James and Wingate, Pauline, *Newspaper history: From the 17th century to the present day*, London, Constable pp 19-41

Busfield, Steve (2010) Guardian editor hits back at paywalls, *Guardian*, 25 January. Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/jan/25/guardian-editor-paywalls>, accessed on 27 January 2010

Dacre, Paul (2008) Speech to the annual conference of the Society of Editors 2008. Available online at <http://www.societyofeditors.co.uk/page-view.php?pageName=TheSOLELecture2008>, accessed on 9 December 2010

Downie, Leonard and Schudson, Michael (2009) The reconstruction of American journalism, 20 October. Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Available online at [http://www.journalism.columbia.edu/system/documents/1/original/Reconstruction\\_of\\_Journalism.pdf](http://www.journalism.columbia.edu/system/documents/1/original/Reconstruction_of_Journalism.pdf), accessed on 13 December 2010

Dutton, William H. (2007) *Through the network of networks*, Oxford, Oxford Internet Institute

Engels, Friedrich (1893 [1968]) Letter to Franz Mehring, *Marx and Engels correspondence*, London, International Publishers

Freedman, Des, (2010) The political economy of the "new" news environment, Fenton, Natalie (ed.) *New media old news*, London, Sage pp 35-50

*Guardian* (2009) Video of officer hitting Ian Tomlinson. Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/g20-police-assault-ian-tomlinson>, accessed on 13 December 2010

Holden, Anthony (2002) Reporting the reporters: Review of *People's witness* by Fred Inglis, *Observer*, 5 May. Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2002/may/05/highereducation.1> news, accessed on 20 December 2010

Keeble, Richard (2010) How alternative media provide the crucial critique of the mainstream. Available online at [http://medialens.org/alerts/10/100120\\_the\\_future\\_of.php](http://medialens.org/alerts/10/100120_the_future_of.php), accessed on 20 December 2010

Lewis, Seth (2010) The future of journalism, A class blog for J349T Writing for Online Publication, in the School of Journalism at UT-Austin. Available online at <http://writingforonline.wordpress.com/2010/03/19/citizen-journalism-2/>, accessed on 2 December 2010

- McInerney, Jay (1985) *Bright lights big city*, London, Jonathan Cape
- McQueen, David (2008) BBC's *Panorama*, war coverage and the "Westminster consensus", Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, 2008. Available online at [http://www.westminster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/20007/WP-CC-Vol5-No3-David\\_McQueen.pdf](http://www.westminster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/20007/WP-CC-Vol5-No3-David_McQueen.pdf), accessed on 17 December 2010
- Moss, Stephen and Joris Luyendijk (2010) The old model of journalism is broken, *Guardian*, 30 November. Available online at [www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/nov/30/future-of-journalism-joris-luyendijk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/nov/30/future-of-journalism-joris-luyendijk), accessed on 2 December 2010
- Murdoch, James (2009) The McTaggart lecture. Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/video/2009/aug/29/james-murdoch-edinburgh-festival-mactaggart>, accessed on 2 December 2010
- Newman, Nick (2009) The rise of social media and its impact on mainstream journalism, London, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available online at <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/about/news/item/article/the-use-of-citizen-journalism-by-tr.html>, accessed on 12 December 2010
- Peterkin, Tom (2010) Tony Blair memoirs: I was never convinced on devolution – it was dangerous, 2 September. Available online at <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/scotland/Tony-Blair-memoirs-391-was-6508131.jp>, accessed on 17 December 2010
- Prince, Rosa (2010) Liberal Democrat ministers backed after expressing concerns, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 December. Available online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/liberaldemocrats/821220/Liberal-Democrat-ministers-backed-after-expressing-concern-over-Coalition.html>, accessed on 2 December 2010
- Rosen, Jay (2010) Audience atomization overcome: Why the internet weakens the authority of the press. Available online at <http://archive.pressthink.org/2009/01/12/atomization.html>, accessed on 2 December 2010
- Royal Commission on the Press 1947-1949 (1949). Report available online at [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL21768421M/Royal\\_Commission\\_on\\_the\\_Press\\_1947-1949\\_Report](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL21768421M/Royal_Commission_on_the_Press_1947-1949_Report), accessed on 2 December 2010
- Rusbridger, Alan (2010) The Hugh Cudlipp Lecture 2010. Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/jan/25/cudlipp-lecture-alan-rusbridger>, accessed on 9 December 2010

Sambrook, Richard (2010) Are foreign correspondents redundant? The changing face of international news, Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available online at <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/publications/risj-challenges/are-foreign-correspondents-redundant.html>, accessed on 2 December 2010

Seymour-Ure, Colin (2003) *Prime Ministers and the media*, Oxford, Blackwell

*The Times* (1939) *The history of The Times 1841-1884*, London, *The Times*

Sky News (2010) Home page available online at <http://news.sky.com/skynews/>, accessed on 13 December 2010

#### Note on the author

Tim Luekhurst is Professor of Journalism at the University of Kent and the founding head of the university's Centre for Journalism. He is best known as a former editor of the *Scotsman*, Scotland's national newspaper. He began his career in journalism on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme for which he produced, edited and reported from the UK and abroad. For BBC Radio he covered the Romanian Revolution of 1989, reported from Iraq, Israel, Jordan and Kuwait during the first Gulf War and reported the Waco Siege. He reported conflict in Former Yugoslavia from Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia for the *Scotsman*. He was co-editor of *Today's* coverage of the 1992 General Election and worked as the BBC's Washington Producer during the first year of the Clinton presidency. He returned to the UK to become a senior member of the team that designed, launched and edited BBC Radio Five Live. From 1995 to 1997 he was Editor of News Programmes at BBC Scotland. He joined the *Scotsman* in 1997 as Assistant Editor and was appointed Deputy Editor in 2008 and editor in January 2000. He has won two Sony Radio Academy Gold Awards for news broadcasting (*The Romanian revolution 1989* for Radio 4's *Today* programme and the *IRA ceasefire of 1995* for Radio Five Live). His publications include *This is Today: A biography of the Today programme* and contributions to *What a State: Is Devolution for Scotland the End of Britain?* He writes for publications including the *Guardian* and the *Independent* and is a frequent contributor to programmes on BBC Radio and Television, Sky News, LBC and Talksport. He is a member of the jury for the annual UACES/Reuters Reporting Europe Competition.