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# The Journalist in the Network. A Shifting Rationale for the Gatekeeping Role and the Objectivity Norm*

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*The move to a networked media environment presents a range of challenges to journalistic routines, roles, and norms. This article suggests that professional ethics have evolved to articulate and safeguard a traditional gatekeeping role that no longer exists; as a result, the rationale behind those ethics must shift to accommodate interconnections rather than discrete products and functions. Similarly, the notion of journalistic objectivity is open to renewed debate when detachment can translate into isolation from the rest of the network.*

**KEY WORDS**: digital journalism, journalism ethics, gatekeeping, objectivity.

**PARAULES CLAU**: periodisme digital, ètica periodística, *gatekeeping*, objectivitat.



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The underlying norms of human ethical behavior are more or less universal, involving such precepts as truthfulness and fairness. This article is concerned with the ethics that involve the decisions and behaviours of one particular group of humans, those who work as journalists - decisions and behaviours related to their jobs, their social roles, and their profession. In particular, it is concerned with the ethics that inform how they conceptualize what 'doing journalism' means and thus determine the appropriate way to go about it.

As we move from a journalistic framework based on the delivery of information in a traditional, linear media system to a framework based instead on relationships in a network, those conceptualizations are changing. It is not that journalists are abandoning —or should abandon— norms of truthfulness, fairness, and the rest. Rather, both scholars and journalists need to think about those concepts a little differently as the journalist's position relative to others in society changes.

In a network, all communication and all communicators are connected. No single message is discrete. Message producers and message consumers are interchangeable and inextricably linked. You may be a producer one minute, a consumer the next - or, if you're a good multi-tasker, both simultaneously. Moreover, you are always connected to others who also are occupying both roles. This is quite a different situation from that of a traditional media environment, in which roles are far less fluid and far more narrowly delineated.



## THE GATEKEEPER

For some time, media observers have been tracking the change in the traditional journalistic role of gatekeeper. The idea is simple, though its execution is not. In this conceptualization, which was a reasonably accurate one for 20th century mass media from the newspaper through cable television, the journalist occupies a privileged position. He or she decides what information is to be disseminated to the public and what information is not to be disseminated. Different journalists may make different decisions,

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though research suggests that assessments of newsworthiness are broadly consistent and result in comparable judgements about what should pass through the gate (Shoemaker et al., 2001).

That pivotal position in the flow of information suggests a set of normative principles to which the journalist voluntarily adheres in order, essentially, to preserve trust in and value for the role itself. In other words, journalistic ethics, as they are codified and articulated by both individual practitioners and journalism organizations or institutions, can be seen as stemming from this perspective of the journalist as gatekeeper. The role carries with it the notion of someone who has a particular set of responsibilities both to the people on the other side of the gate —the audience, or the public broadly defined— and to the other gatekeepers, including the journalist's employer and other journalists within the profession as a whole.

Importantly, in this perspective, that role is central to the broader civic good or civic goal of democracy, which rests on citizen self-government. Journalists see themselves as key to a democratic process that survives only through broad public access to reliable accounts of what is going on in the world. This is what Gans (2003) calls the journalistic view of democracy and what Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) call the journalist's primary responsibility to provide the information that citizens need to be free and self-governing.



The perspective is interwoven with this traditional notion of the journalist as gatekeeper. Without them, as journalists see things, democracy comes apart. Information is central to democracy, and the journalist is central to information. Its provision is the journalist's *raison d'être*. Ethics are necessary to protect the quality of that information and thus the value of the information delivery role. Without the ethical gatekeeper, in this view, information may circulate —but it may be disinformation or misinformation that, according to the journalist, is worse than no information at all.

The reality may not match this idealistic and somewhat simplistic view, which tends to mask or ignore the market forces that have underpinned journalism for centuries. The imperative of delivering credible information is rooted not only in ethical goals but also in the commercial goals of marketplace survival. Nonetheless, it underlies the public service perspective that most journalists share and that has been the strongest basis for their claim to professional status over the years (Dennis, 1996). If you see yourself as the conduit through which information necessary

to democracy passes, then you need ethical principles to guide you in that role and to publicly underscore your commitment to fulfilling it in a certain way.

For example, if you are the gatekeeper, the commitment to seek and report truth —the first principle in the U.S. Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics and a universal principle in journalistic codes around the democratic world (Cooper, 1990)— is important because it is your responsibility not to let the misinformation and the disinformation through the gate. If you are the gatekeeper, then it matters that you act independently in choosing, organizing, and disseminating information because if you do not, we cannot trust the quality of what we receive and our ability to act appropriately as citizens is diminished. Other components of professional journalism ethics rest on similar rationales.

In short, the ethics of journalists in a traditional media universe seem to me to stem from and depend upon this gatekeeping role, this view of the journalist as central to the flow of information. The ethics are a way to both articulate and safeguard the role, a set of normative principles intended to establish or preserve trust in the persons and institutions guarding the gate. There is a hypothetical element here. The system, even when it works, certainly does not work flawlessly. But that is the concept on which the idealized ethical principles are based and on which rests the behaviour they recommend to the practitioner.



## ENTER THE NETWORK

The journalist's ethics, then, stem from his or her own perceived role in the traditional media environment of one-way information flow. In this environment, news about people and occurrences in the world 'out there' is delivered along a sort of media-controlled conveyor belt. It passes through the gatekeeping journalist, who weeds out what is bad and keeps what is good, before travelling out the door via publication or broadcast to the public. Members of that public wait eagerly in the metaphorical dark for the process to be completed and the information —neatly packaged and professionally, ethically vetted— to arrive.

This process no longer reflects the world in which we live. The information conveyor belt has been replaced by an information network, and when we lose the conveyor belt, we also lose the gatekeeper who tended it. The network is inherently nonlinear. Information in this environment flows not only through the journalists but also, continuously, around them.

And so while the ethical precepts or principles themselves may remain the same, the rationale behind them needs to change fundamentally —and therefore, the ways in which the principles are conceptualized and enacted also may need to change. The rationale becomes one based not on linear models, not on the delivery of information to 'the people formerly known as the audience' (Rosen, 2006). Instead, the rationale must rest on relationships within a network (Nel, Ward & Rawlinson, 2007). These relationships or connections are nonlinear, interactive, and iterative, and they have little if anything to do with gatekeeping.

One could argue that the role of gatekeeper remains viable but in a different form, one that has more to do with sense-making —with helping people understand, interpret, and use information, rather than merely giving them access to it (Schudson, 1996; Singer, 1997; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). That is an important distinction, but for the present purposes of exploring a shift in ethical rationale, the more traditional interpretation of the gatekeeping role merits additional attention.

Consider some of the fundamental ethical principles of journalists. They remain vital, but for different reasons than in the past. Truth-telling, for instance, is as important as ever, but not because if the journalist doesn't provide the truth, the public will not get the truth. Truth-telling remains vital because telling the truth is, generally, the ethical foundation of any relationship. This is Sissela Bok's key idea (1999): Truth-telling is fundamental to trust, and trust is the basis for all social relationships. If I have no confidence that you are telling me the truth as best you know it, I cannot have a viable relationship with you.

Similarly, fairness is important not just because it is my responsibility as a journalist to vet ideas in an even-handed fashion, without using my power as gatekeeper to deny one side the opportunity to be heard. Rather, ethical underpinnings of fairness are something closer to the biblical golden rule, which is based on social interaction: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. I treat you fairly in the expectation that you will do the same to me. It too is a relationship norm, and it functions within the context of personal connection.

Other key ethical components of journalism also can be reconsidered —and strengthened— when the journalist is considered as one part of an interactive and iterative network rather than as the person holding the central role in a much more linear process of information delivery, the traditional media model. The following section considers three of these ethical components:

authenticity, which loosely correlates with the idea of credibility; accountability, which is related to responsibility; and autonomy, or independence.

## AUTHENTICITY

In a traditional environment, the media institution typically 'authenticates' its employees' practices and products as journalists. The institution essentially acts as a gatekeeper for the gatekeeper: The individual journalist vets information through the gathering and writing process, and the institution then additionally vets the work of the individual through the processes of editing and ultimately of publication itself.

In a networked environment, the online information associated with traditional media, such as a newspaper web site, may or may not go through the same authentication process. The current reality seems to be that some information is authenticated in this way and some is not. The emphasis on speed of information delivery, or getting the information out as quickly as possible, is one reason why the traditional second level of gatekeeping, the editing process, is sometimes bypassed, especially for breaking news.



More to the point here, that process also may be bypassed for interactive content. Journalists often do not even attempt to act as gatekeepers for information generated by users. Instead, they may post a set of ethical guidelines and ask users to voluntarily adhere to them —an approach that, again, is based on relationships and at least some degree of trust rather than gatekeeping. Content unique to the networked environment largely is left up to the community to authenticate, for instance by flagging items that are inaccurate, offensive, or otherwise problematic.

Journalists and their employers have taken this hands-off approach largely for legal rather than explicitly ethical reasons. If you touch the content, you assume some degree of legal responsibility for it, and media organizations would really rather not. But I think there are ethical issues here related to a shared responsibility to create a space for civic discourse, as opposed to the provision of information within a space wholly controlled by the journalist and the media organization.

Another aspect of authenticity relevant in a networked environment is one that journalists have not quite gotten their hands around yet. In a traditional media environment, the daily product is aggregated into a concrete and finite information package. The newspaper, the magazine, the newscast —even the web

site though it is neither concrete nor finite— all provide recognizable packages of material from organization X.

This is increasingly not the case in a networked media environment —or at least, it is not the way that users see organization X's content. On the contrary, users are increasingly likely to access information as a discrete unit, such as a single story or even a single blog post about a story, rather than as part of an institutionally assembled package. People find and read isolated stories through search engines, news aggregators, and other personalizable tools rather than through a packaged product such as a newspaper —or its web site.

The route to establishment of authenticity changes accordingly. It becomes less institutional and more individual. It becomes less a matter of trusting *El País* and more a matter of believing —or not— what a particular reporter has to say today about a particular topic. We thus are moving toward a situation where authenticity or credibility becomes more a matter of the relationship that an individual establishes with his or her readers than with the institutional role of the media organization.

I do think that the media brand remains important in a networked world and in fact is closely connected to, and identified with, the ethics of those who work under its banner. But I also think that as connections are loosened between information and its institutional 'home', brand may over time become less important, or at least differently important, than it is today.



It is worth quickly pointing out that there are some benefits to this shift from an ethical perspective. For thousands of years, from the time of Aristotle to that of Jean-Paul Sartre and beyond, philosophers have emphasized the role of the individual in choosing among alternatives to enact an ethical decision. The existentialists, in particular, remind us that authenticity is an individual attribute: Ethics must be personal, a matter of free choice rather than conformity to group norms. So from an ethical perspective, authenticity is best viewed as a matter of individual moral responsibility, not something conferred by or derived from an employer. Again, ethics is about relationships among individuals within a social milieu, and that was every bit as true in ancient Greece as it is in our online world.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Authenticity, then, offers one example of a norm of professional journalism that remains vital in a networked environment

but for somewhat different reasons and with different permutations than in a traditional media world of information gatekeepers. A second traditional norm for which the journalistic perspective shifts is the one of accountability, which is closely related to, though not quite synonymous with, the ethical idea or ideal of responsibility. Although the need for accountability is formally recognized in a number of journalistic ethics codes, it has been controversial largely because many practitioners worry about its potential conflict with autonomy or independence, which will be considered below.

In the meantime, accountability has been a route for information providers who are not associated with traditional media to demonstrate their own credibility. A network, again, demands at least some degree of mutual trust —and trust, in turn, rests largely on the openness of communication. Accountability and the associated notion of 'transparency' offer an avenue to demonstrations of trustworthiness that are more in line with the demands of today's media environment.

Yet at the same time, transparency can weaken the authority of members of an occupation that once held relatively unchallenged jurisdiction in an area such as information delivery (Lowery & Anderson, 2005). Journalists are, frankly, unaccustomed to and to some degree uncomfortable with the sort of 'transparency' that is part of this online zeitgeist. The notion that personal views or other subjective considerations should not be factors in determining what goes in the day's news product is closely connected with that old gatekeeping role. The journalist who determines, without fear or favor, what passes through the gate must be both impartial and uninvolved —or at least appear that way to the public. A story passes through, in theory, based on its merits, not on the journalist's personal beliefs, which, again in theory, are irrelevant.



This norm of nondisclosure leads journalists in a traditional media environment to ask readers or viewers to trust them more or less blindly. The public must trust that the journalists are being truthful, that they have been diligent and open-minded in their information gathering, that they have captured the most important part of a story in the ten inches or two minutes allocated to it within their employer's product. It is a lot to ask —maybe, as the steadily declining reputation of news media worldwide suggests, too much.

In an online environment, journalists are beginning to rationalize and to enact the concept of accountability in at least two new —for them— ways. One is through increased personal

disclosure, including participation in conversational forums such as blogs. The other is through provision of greater evidentiary support for what they write, including the use of network capabilities such as hyperlinks.

In an online environment with its virtually unlimited news hole, journalists have the ability to go beyond simply asking the public to trust them. They have a technically enabled capability to show where their information comes from, to provide background about their sources, to expand the depth and breadth of any given story, and, importantly, to solicit additional input and feedback from readers. Journalism, as Dan Gillmor (2004) likes to say, becomes a conversation rather than a lecture —or a relationship rather than an information delivery mechanism. Again, a news story need no longer be a discrete entity. The ability to link it to anything else in the network means that story becomes part of a multi-sourced amalgamation of information about a given topic.

This idea relates closely to authenticity. People can, or at least should be able to, easily ascertain where information comes from and what sorts of standards the person who provided it believes are important. They can, or should be able to, clearly identify sources —even check the sources out themselves. So the network facilitates openness, and in doing so provides a new rationale for, and a new approach to, both authenticity and accountability.



The other way in which the notion of accountability changes online involves personal disclosure. This one is harder for journalists, but they are increasingly incorporating it in an evolving online ethic. Bloggers have made this sort of transparency their own golden rule (Lasica, 2005). Their posts let readers know about the blogger's actions, motives, financial considerations, and, it seems, random thoughts over the morning cereal. Mercifully, most journalists have not gone quite that far. But we are seeing increased accountability or transparency of this sort, too —including on journalists' own blogs.

There are by now thousands of these 'j-blogs', and they contribute to journalistic accountability in at least two ways. First, journalists are using them to explain the rationale behind the news, particularly of editorial decisions that may be controversial. There are now blogs from editors and editorial boards, from ombudsmen and other reader representatives. In this way, journalists are using the blog format to move beyond 'trust me, I'm the gatekeeper' to an approach that's more iterative: 'Here's why you should trust me. Here's why our relationship should be ongoing... we hope!'

It is quite true that the impetus behind many of these moves is commercial —and frankly, defensive rather than necessarily stemming from a strong ethical commitment. But still, they are indications that journalists and media organizations are using the genre to explain their actions and to invite dialogue about those actions.

The other way that journalists are increasingly using formats such as blogs is to humanize the reporting behind the news. We're not quite into 'what I had for breakfast' yet, but we are seeing more and more attempts to describe what it is like to gather news. Journalists are using their blogs to explain how the story was obtained, why it was pursued, what the journalists felt while interviewing the bombing victim, for example, and why they thought telling the story was worth the pain it caused.

Again, offering this sort of information goes well beyond the traditional journalistic role, which consisted solely of providing the story itself, allowing it through the gate. Journalists have begun to explain not just the story but also the human process that goes into creating that story. In effect, they are using blogs and other online formats to tell an additional story, one that arguably goes beyond providing the information the public needs and comes closer to what you might tell your friend about that information —including why you thought the story was worth telling and what it meant to you to tell it. This is a step toward establishing a relationship with people based not just on delivering information to a mass, anonymous civic entity —the public— but on relating to other individuals in a more human-to-human context.



## AUTONOMY

Finally, there's the ethical principle of independence, or autonomy. Journalists in all democracies, perhaps most notably the United States, have fiercely protected their freedom from external oversight as a fundamental perquisite to the credibility of a 'Fourth Estate' able to report impartial truth. But in a networked environment, no journalist is an island. Oversight of professional behavior has become a team sport, and journalists no longer control who gets to play. In this environment, a virtually infinite number of participants simultaneously serve as sources, audiences, and information providers. And a considerable number of those people are challenging the journalist's exclusive right to deem information credible or behaviour ethical (Hayes, Singer &

Ceppos, 2007). Journalists today find their autonomy challenged not so much by government —the threat they have guarded against for centuries— but by the very citizens to whom they owe their primary loyalty (Singer, 2007a).

Bloggers have taken very much to heart the self-appointed role as watchdogs of the watchdogs. Bloggers embody the idea that democratic power is essentially distributed and that the pursuit of truth works best as a collective enterprise. They personify the marketplace of ideas with a vengeance: Put it all out there, and the truth will emerge. For the first time, there really is the capability to put it all out there (Singer, 2005). That is what happens when there are no gates and no gatekeepers —for better or worse. And regardless of whether you think it is better or worse or a little of both, the fact is that the journalist no longer has a lock on the role of declaring what information is and is not credible. Some blogger, somewhere, will always be waiting to 'fact check his ass' (Lasica, 2004).

But of course, it's not just bloggers, who are merely among the first waves of digital natives developing along with participatory media forms and formats. The medium itself opens to challenge the previous journalistic claims of autonomy. For starters, the network enables engagement with people of diverse beliefs and backgrounds, which itself challenges a tendency for journalists to see only professional peers as legitimate contributors of credible news (Deuze, 2005). Moreover, as discussed above, no single message in this environment is discrete. No single messenger stands apart. And so the whole notion of autonomy becomes unavoidably contested (Singer, 2007a). In fact, I might even go so far as to say that autonomy suggests at least some degree of isolation, and isolation in a network equates to irrelevance at best. Without connections, there essentially is no online existence at all.

Before exploring those ideas further, a quick summary. I'm not convinced the ethical precepts of journalism change, at least not fundamentally. The central norms remain —and remain important. But what does change, or at least needs to change, is the rationale behind the norms. Journalists must still provide credible information, but they must recognize that they're not the only ones providing it —and that they control neither what information people receive nor the context in which they receive it.

Authenticity of information thus becomes more a matter of personal concern for the journalist than it was in a more institutionalized world, in which not just the individual but also the organization served as gatekeeper. Journalists working within a network must be accountable to others not merely in the usual

ways —which frankly have tended to have more rhetorical style than substance anyway— but in quite a concrete fashion. This includes letting people know where information comes from and, more broadly, thinking about communication as an interactive process that involves not just an anonymous public but other distinct and unique individuals within a social network. Journalists, in turn, are not just faceless professionals in this environment but real human beings.

Perhaps most difficult of all, journalists need to acknowledge that autonomy is increasingly difficult if not impossible to maintain within a network, which is inherently about relationships and connections. Seeking to remain apart from such relationships may render journalists less admirably independent than dangerously isolated and even irrelevant, a concern that leads to consideration of the perpetually controversial topic of objectivity.

## OBJECTIVITY[1]

The idea of journalistic objectivity is both much-revered and much-maligned as a core normative component of journalism. Journalists praise the virtues of remaining completely unbiased in covering the news, but they acknowledge that doing so is humanly impossible. Being even-handed in providing information is a plus, but 'he-said-she-said' reporting is a disservice to the public. Accurately reporting the facts is a journalistic virtue, but failing to pursue 'the truth behind the facts' is a shortcoming.



Numerous scholars and media practitioners have written about objectivity. Most agree that as both a rhetorical claim and an information-gathering method, it has had clear economic and professional value (Schudson, 1978; Mindich, 1998; Stephens, 2006). In the 19th and early 20th centuries, news organizations and practitioners positioned objectivity as both a goal and a distinguishing characteristic. They claimed a commitment to objectivity helped set their work apart from earlier journalistic forms, such as the partisan political press, and from contemporary competitors, including purveyors of 'yellow journalism', marketers and public relations campaigners.

In reality, objectivity was always problematic, but it largely withstood both professional and societal challenges throughout the

1 The material in this section originally appeared in *Media Ethics* (Singer, 2007b) and is reused here with permission of the editor.

20th century. It was challenged from within the profession by print forms that included the 'new journalism' and 'literary journalism' of the 1960s and beyond. It was challenged, as well, by the more personal delivery style of radio and television journalism. And it was challenged by the overall cultural shift to post-modern and deconstructionist perspectives that emphasized an inherent subjectivity of human perception. Yet for the majority of mainstream journalists, objectivity served as a bulwark against these challenges: It was a way to arrive at truth, neither sidetracked by literary pretensions nor deterred by esoteric debates about whether reality was knowable. It happened. We reported it 'objectively'. It's true.

Today's challenge is different and less easily brushed aside. As described above, the contemporary media environment no longer consists of discrete media products, created and controlled by people and institutions distinct from both their competitors and their audiences. The digital products that journalists create within today's information network are neither finite nor free-standing nor final. Instead, their stories are part of a fluid, seamless, participatory, and inextricably interconnected media world, and ongoing development of those stories is a collective and ultimately uncontrollable process. Indeed, the pervasive use of hyperlinks, search engines, RSS feeds, news aggregation sites such as Yahoo! News, and other personalizable tools for locating and retrieving information implies the number of stories that are even seen within the context provided by a single media entity's web site is rapidly diminishing.



But of course, it is not just the stories that are part of this networked world. More important from an ethical perspective, the network also encompasses the journalists who produce those stories. In a 20th century media environment, the distance provided by an objective stance held value for defining journalism and the journalist, as well as for doing journalism —for enacting that defined role. In the media world of print and radio and television, distance from both sources and readers —and therefore presumably from any direct influence they might wield— was arguably useful. In the 21st century, it is not even possible.

Objectivity, as print journalists in particular have defined and sought to enact it, involves metaphorically standing apart from the world on which the journalist reports. It positions the journalist as one who observes but is not observed, who attends —both in the English-language sense of being physically present and the sense of paying attention— but does not participate. Objectivity works in a world in which the end product itself reproduces the same roles: A

newspaper or news broadcast enables readers or viewers to look at the day's occurrences but not directly engage in them.

In a digital media environment, all distances collapse. Physical distance is erased by the immediacy with which any message can span the globe. Metaphysical distance is erased by the interconnections among all manner of information. And professional distance, such as that maintained by journalists through their articulation of objectivity as a normative stance, is erased by the interconnections among all manner of information producers.

Journalists in recent years have been startled by the scrutiny under which they have suddenly come, and by the fact that most of those doing the scrutinizing reject claims of objectivity and instead see media professionals as active —and not necessarily altruistic— participants in the construction of news. The emergence of blogs, with their impetus toward greater transparency or openness, has been especially eye-opening, as alluded to before. Bloggers emphasize communication not just to but also with their readers. And they are more than willing to both attack and traverse the boundaries that journalists have erected over the past 150 years. This is hardly surprising for a media form that has arisen on the Internet, which again makes boundaries of all sorts difficult to sustain, whether they are boundaries among products, among ideas, among people, or among social roles.



Newspapers are the children of an industrial world structured to produce tangible objects suitable for a commercial exchange that determines their value. Blogs have been born of a digital network that is amorphous and participatory, where information itself is the commodity and value lies less in one-to-one exchanges than in many-to-many linkages (Tremayne, 2004). The more links pointing to your site, the easier you will be for a search engine to find. The larger your social networking site, the more new people will want to join.

What does this have to do with objectivity? A lot, I think. The shift to a world of fluid and interconnected information —rather than information transfer from one source, such as the journalist, to another, the reader— means that standing apart from this world in order to observe it is no longer desirable. Such detachment is deeply isolating, and in a networked world, as suggested above, there is no value in isolation.

This is not at all to suggest that journalists should cease to be observers, nor that they should become participants in the events they observe. We need, and will continue to need, people who are both willing and able to serve as trustworthy eyes and ears

in places we cannot be. We need, and will continue to need, people who can convey what they saw and heard from a perspective that bears in mind the interests of the public as a whole rather than the interests of a few of its members. In fact, those needs become arguably greater than ever in an information environment to which so many can and do contribute.

It does, however, suggest that journalists need to rethink what they mean by 'objectivity'. The term does not mean detachment. It does not mean erecting walls around the journalistic product, process, or person. It does not mean a determination to be unmoved by an event or its effects. It cannot mean those things if journalism is to retain any relevance in a world in which we are all so thoroughly intertwined.

Instead, objectivity in a networked environment should mean a recommitment to the professed rationale behind establishing it as a norm in the first place. Journalists have long claimed that an objective approach to gathering and reporting information is the best way to enable them to fulfill their primary loyalty. That central loyalty is not to an advertiser nor an employer, not to the overall profession nor to the individual story, nor even to the sources of information leading to that story. The primary loyalty of any journalist is to the public (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001), and that public no longer occupies a distinct space or passive role within the media environment, a space and a role apart from the journalist's. We all are citizens of the network, and we all contribute to it. Serving today's public means conveying not just the 'news' itself but also as much as we can about the people, process, and products that shaped it —including us.

Because, in a networked world, there no longer is the 'journalist', 'audience', and 'source'. There is only 'us'.



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