

*About journalism – Sur le journalisme – Sobre jornalismo*  
*International academic journal*

<http://surlejournalisme.com/rev>

**Call for papers**

*Local News:*

*sustainability, participation and community life*

Starting date: October 12th 2016 – Deadline for paper submission: March 30th 2017

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Proximity media are facing tough times. The small size of these news organizations in many countries makes them the most vulnerable actors to the crisis within the media industry. Local newspapers are often struggling to balance their print and online strategies. Digital television has problems to consolidate even in areas like Catalonia where local broadcasters have a long-standing tradition, while in the UK its viability at the proximity level is dubious even before it is established. In a moment of a dire general economic crisis, even the survival of local radio stations is at stake.

At the same time, professional newsrooms have definitely lost the monopoly of information production. The voices participating in the local public spheres multiply online: social networks, websites, blogs and mobile apps help citizens share news and debates that are related to their community. These contributions are usually very weak in organizational and financial structure, but they definitely oblige to rethink the dimensions of local news ecosystems. Traditional local news media have reacted to this active audience by incorporating participation spaces to their online presence, but they have serious structural problems in addressing the immediacy, ubiquity and proximity of amateur initiatives.

This issue of *About Journalism – Sur le journalisme – Sobre jornalismo* wants to foster the necessary reflection on the shifting landscape of local journalism and its implications for democracy. The fact that there is still no clear business model for online news, combined with the crisis of traditional media and the rise of the active audience, is menacing the existence of proximity media and that may have a profound impact on the health of community life and local politics. Many local communities risk being left without professional news about their worries and the events in their vicinity, but in many cases emergent (often non-profit) initiatives are filling that gap with a new set of skills and practices that deserves the attention of research. The configuration of local public spheres may change dramatically, and there is a need to explore possible solutions to foster cohesion, plurality, and deliberation in our local communities.

Contributions to the issue may combine empirical evidence and theoretical insights to analyze the current challenges of local journalism. We would like the combination of articles to portray the diversity of cultural, socio-economic and regulatory contexts in different parts of the world. More specifically, we invite research focusing on a combination of the following aspects:

- The evolving role of professional journalism in the production of the public sphere, as well as of the significance of the boundaries between professionals and other actors in local news production. This could include exploring the reorganization of the interactions between the different actors of the local public sphere, the articulations between traditional journalistic functions and social media dynamics, and the changes in the identities and news practices of professional journalists, their sources and their publics.
- Attention to the nature and implications of changes and/or continuities in the content of news in local communities, whether this news is produced by established or newer players, or combinations of (dominant, residual, or emergent) producers of local information within the new local news networks.
- New business models aimed at local media sustainability, their strengths and their weaknesses, and their implications for the production, distribution and use of local news. This may include evaluating how and/or whether the socio-economic configuration of local news projects fosters vibrant local communities.
- Considerations of the media policies which regulate local media ecosystems, analyses of how they are evolving (if at all), consideration of the factors which shape the decisions of law makers, and assessments of the consequences for local news.
- Interrogation of the implications of the involvement of the publics in supporting local media (be they private, public or third tier) through financial means (crowdfunding, audience co-operatives, subscription) or through the (co)production of content.

#### *Key references*

Anderson, C. W. (2013). *Rebuilding the news: Metropolitan journalism in the digital age*. Temple University.

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Parasie, S., & Cointet, J. P. (2012). La presse en ligne au service de la démocratie locale. *Revue française de science politique*, 62(1), 45-70.

**Online submission of full articles** (30.000 to 50.000 characters, including references and footnotes) **before March 30 2017**, at

<http://surlejournalisme.com/rev/index.php/slj/author/submit/1>

Articles may be written in English, French, Portuguese or Spanish.

The articles will be subject to ‘double-blind’ assessments; they should include theoretical references, research methods and a corpus reference.

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... is a space where historically shaped intellectual traditions and interests in journalism studies meet. The field of journalism studies has developed with different epistemologies, approaches and methods that inform national research traditions. The journal fosters the encounter of these divergent approaches via an international editorial board and active solicitation of submissions from international scholars. In a context of globalization and relative homogenization of media systems and journalistic practices, the journal also focuses on the similarities and differences between journalistic and scholarly cultures.

The journal is dedicated to research. A committee of four editors responsible for facilitating exchanges works with editorial boards that include scholars from Europe, Latin America, and North America. The members of the editorial boards are figures widely known for the quality of their research and the international and intercultural orientation of their approaches to journalism studies.

The journal is a springboard for the publication of innovative works in transdisciplinary perspectives; it publishes the research not only of established scholars but also of students. Published online and on paper, the journal's issues are organized around precise themes. Results of graduate theses, field and research notes, and scholarly reports may also be included in any given issue.

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