

## **Reconfiguring Journalism: Syndication, Gatewatching, and Multiperspectival News in Australian Online Journalism**

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**[open quote]** It is proper to ask who should be responsible for story selection and production. The news may be too important to leave to the journalists alone. — Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (p. 322) **[end quote]**

The Internet has been used to exchange news reports amongst its users almost since its inception; indeed, its earliest many-to-many discussion fora were named 'newsgroups' for this very reason. Commercial news publishers began to take an interest only once the World Wide Web emerged as a popular medium, and it is in a Web-based format that most major online news publications can now be found. Many news Websites are today operated by organisations that also have interests in print or broadcast news; in Australia, they include the Murdoch (News Ltd.) and Packer (PBL) media groups as well as the publicly owned Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). Alternatively, and often in sharp contrast to these commercial operators, there exist a host of independent publications which build significantly on their users as content contributors, and often operate in networks with local and overseas colleagues. Here, and not in the mainstream news sites, is often where the most innovative approaches to producing online news can be found.

Three key opportunities exist for online news to distinguish itself from other media: the ability to combine text, images, and audiovisual material in innovative ways; the possibility to involve news audiences in a highly interactive fashion; and the chance to use hypertext to create connections of published news items with the wider Web. Unfortunately, traditional Australian news organisations are no different from most of their international competitors in making little attempt to realise these opportunities. Even a casual glance at key Australian news Websites such as News Ltd.'s News.com.au or PBL's NineMSN.com.au reveals that news published there consists mainly of plain-text articles which at most incorporate the occasional image,

but fail to utilise the vast audiovisual resources both of these media networks could bring to bear. Neither do they engage their audience beyond basic opportunities to 'personalise' Websites or to respond to online reader polls ('Can Australia win the cricket test series?'). Their use of hyperlinks remains highly restricted, too, with both sites even failing to offer significant direct links between related articles on their own sites. The ABC News Website does a little better in this respect: as a result of its late-1990s 'One ABC' policy which positioned the ABC's online operations as equal to its other media platforms, here significant interlinkage (even to off-site content) and hypermedia elements are utilised – but opportunities for readers to become interactively involved (for example through commenting on published stories or offering their own views on news events) remain very sparse.

As a result, many commentators decry the online offerings of traditional news organisations as 'shovelware': material repurposed from the main news publications and dumped online with little regard for or understanding of the requirements of the medium or the interests and needs of the online audience. It is little surprising, then, that such Websites which offer few advantages over the content of newspaper or television news have so far failed to develop a particularly committed audience of their own. The trend towards massive mergers in the media and entertainment industry has also affected the placement and nature of online news: in conglomerates such as AOL-TimeWarner or indeed the Australian-based media empires of Rupert Murdoch (News Ltd.) and Kerry Packer (PBL), news now plays only a contributing role, and is often used to attract consumers to commercial content. PBL's main online venture, for example, is NineMSN, a collaboration between Packer's Nine TV Network and Microsoft. In 2000 a similar venture through which the publicly owned ABC would provide news content to communications provider Telstra was aborted due to significant concerns (not least from ABC journalists) about the effects of this public-private collaboration on the ABC's editorial independence.<sup>1</sup> As Kovach and Rosenstiel point out, this may affect the agenda of news: 'the news increasingly is produced by companies outside of journalism, and this new economic organisation is important. We are facing the possibility that independent news will be replaced by self-interested commercialism posing as news.'<sup>2</sup>

Beyond this, the past decade has also seen the development of 'alternative' online news publications. Most prominent amongst these were for a while the 'muckraker' sites perhaps best exemplified by the U.S.-based *Drudge Report*, which

broke the news about the Monica Lewinsky affair, and its Australian counterpart *Crikey.com.au* (which first published details about the far less significant tryst between politicians Cheryl Kernot and Gareth Evans). However, especially now that these affairs no longer command vast amounts of column space and airtime, it would be misleading to consider *Drudge* and *Crikey* as the key representatives of alternative online journalism. While able to exploit the Web's low news production and delivery costs to set up their own operation and gain nationwide notoriety, except for their deliberately confrontational, no-holds-barred approach to news coverage journalistic practice on these sites is little different from that in traditional news organisations. Rather than pursuing innovation, indeed, such sites could be compared to the highly partisan news journals of the early 19th century – and while they invite readers to submit their views, and insiders to blow the whistle on shady practices, on or off the record, they leave their staff journalists well in control of news content.

#### **[A] Involving the audience**

Its failure to engage with the new medium also points to a fundamental problem with traditional journalism: the widespread reluctance of its practitioners to directly engage with the news audience. The use of interactive features or even of hyperlinks to enable readers to contribute or at least actively seek out information are seen as undermining the ability of journalists to determine what news the audience needs to know. The United States have seen the development of a movement for what is variously called 'public' or 'civic' journalism in recent years, which aims to more accurately reflect a wider range of public views on specific issues through changes in the research and reporting approaches of journalists while maintaining journalists' self-styled leadership role.<sup>3</sup> The movement sees especially newspapers and their Websites as instrumental in developing a new form of 'civic commons' where solutions to existing problems are found through constructive debates orchestrated and led by editors and journalists on their pages.

Significantly, then, public or civic journalism could be hoped to contribute to activating the interactive features of news Websites for example by allowing readers to 'have their say' on the news. However, as Chan points out,

**[quote]** while ... incorporation of user-authored web pages may be an important step in expanding uses of interactivity, it should be noted that such sites are hosted separately from the core 'news' content on the site, where daily articles would appear and be refreshed. Such an integration of user-constructed content, therefore, could be argued to still maintain a substantial separation between user and editorial perspectives, reserving content devoted to the 'newsworthy' to news professionals exclusively.<sup>4</sup> **[end quote]**

**[NP]** Indeed, many commentators have criticised public journalism as little more than a token gesture aimed at pacifying the reading public while maintaining journalism's traditional *modus operandi*. Howley writes that 'on the whole the current practice of public journalism is undemocratic'<sup>5</sup>, while Platon and Deuze add that

**[quote]** nothing in public journalism removes power from the journalists or the corporations they work for ... . The notion of 'us and them' is still used to describe the difference between journalists and citizens. The 'us' are professional journalists while the 'them' are the concerned citizens telling their stories to these reporters and editors. The public journalist is, in other words, still the gate-keeper.<sup>6</sup> **[end quote]**

**[FO]** In fact, Cliff Wood, one of the editors of alternative technology news Website Slashdot.org, which entirely relies on its users as content providers, makes the point that 'if you take the users away from [U.S.-based NineMSN equivalent] MSNBC you still have the News. If you take the users from Slashdot, you have a whole lot of nothing.'<sup>7</sup> We might regard this as the Wood test of interactivity: would the news on a Website look fundamentally different if users did not interact with it? Even for most public journalism Websites, the answer is 'no'.

In Australia, at any rate, public journalism has as yet failed to make a significant impact. This might be explained in good part by the fact that news in Australia remains controlled by a very small number of commercial operators who either have no direct competition (as in the case of a number of the metropolitan dailies) or compete with only a limited number of other outlets (as in the case of free-to-air television). There is thus virtually no competitive pressure to adopt public journalism approaches in order to distinguish one's operation from other players. Further, despite

a strong tendency to provide a local face to news coverage, local operations are usually tightly locked into a national corporate network, which hinders individual moves towards public journalism models. Commercial needs to maintain or increase audience shares are usually addressed through mere populism rather than truly 'public' journalism.

### **[B] Collaborative News Networks**

Going well beyond such approaches, by contrast, there are key alternative news sites which introduce fundamental changes to the very production of news reports: rather than merely *adding* some representation of reader views in a contained area, they commonly *replace* journalists with users in the role of content providers. Chan therefore describes such sites as 'collaborative news networks', a 'unique manifestation of online journalism in their reliance on a large, physically dispersed and anonymous body of site users to produce ... nearly all news content.'<sup>8</sup>

In such publications, which internationally include Websites such as Slashdot.org, Kuro5hin.org, Plastic.com, and the sites of the Indymedia network, users themselves are encouraged to submit news articles. Frequently, such articles serve as pointers to news material published elsewhere on the Web, providing a brief summary of the information available there and discussing its implications. They also provide the starting-point for a communal discussion of the specific news report, and to this end debate functions are usually directly attached to each published article. This practice of monitoring the content of external sites and alerting the community to new developments can usefully be described as 'gatewatching'<sup>9</sup>: users-as-journalists watch the gates of other publications to see what material passes through them – but they have no ability to prevent that material from being published, or to keep other users from reporting material which they themselves might have considered less than newsworthy.

Gatewatching is a significant modification to the power structures of journalism; the focus has shifted away from a strict selection of 'all the news that's fit to print' (leaving anything else unpublished), to the alerting of readers to the most relevant of information from all the content which is currently available (while not limiting the availability of that content for users). But the most fundamental modification to gatekeeping practices would be to do away with this form of filtering

the news altogether, of course — and this, in fact, is what many collaborative news publications have now begun to do. Notably, they are also highly interactive, and would pass the Wood test of interactivity with flying colours; their news *depends* on their users' participation.

The Indymedia network of Websites provides a central example for collaborative news networks. It is also of particular interest from an Australian point of view, as it is based largely on concepts and technologies developed by Matthew Arnison of the Active Sydney group.

### **[C] Indymedia: open publishing**

The first Indymedia Center (IMC) was set up to cover the 1999 Seattle World Trade Organisation meeting and the protests against the WTO agenda by activist organisations:

**[quote]** concerned that the major news organisations would fail to cover the WTO protests adequately, if at all, a group of Seattle media activists ... formed the Independent Media Center (or Indymedia). They gathered donations, organised volunteers, registered a Web site, [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org), and set up a newsroom with computers, Internet lines, digital editing systems and streaming audio and video.<sup>10</sup> **[end quote]**

**[FO]** A similar approach led to the development of the Melbourne Indymedia Centre, covering the 2000 World Economic Forum meeting at Crown Casino on September 11-13 (protests during these days became known collectively as 'S11'). Subsequently, many more IMCs emerged around the world, to a point where in late 2003 well over one hundred Indymedia Websites are now listed on the global IMC site at [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org).

Like many alternative news Websites of its kind, Indymedia exists therefore in direct response to the perceived shortcomings of the mainstream news media. Indeed, as Gibson and Kelly point out, 'the perceived misrepresentation of events within the mainstream press, radio and television led protesters to adorn walls with slogans such as "the media tells [*sic*] lies" and "don't hate the media — become the media". The message was clear — the kind of participatory, democratic and sustainable social

system the various groups involved in S11 stood for had to include a space for effective public communication.’<sup>11</sup> Traditional media spaces, even had they been more accessible to protesters, were seen as inappropriate: ‘a perhaps basic yet important point was echoed by protesters throughout the three days [of the S11 protests] — the bulk of Australian media is owned by members of the World Economic Forum.’<sup>12</sup> (Indeed, mainstream news coverage of the protests was focussed mainly on the conflict and violence allegedly promoted by the protesters, rather than on their political views. This supports Gans’s observation that ‘journalists treat participators as deviants rather than as citizens.’<sup>13</sup>)

IMC publishing approaches are inspired by those of Active Sydney, whose Web technology was created by local programmer and activist Matthew Arnison. While different Indymedia Centres have now moved to other, similar Web technologies, his definition of the IMC news publishing approach as ‘open publishing’ remains a shared fundamental characteristic of Indymedia:

**[quote]** Open publishing means that the process of creating news is transparent to the readers. They can contribute a story and see it instantly appear in the pool of stories publicly available. Those stories are filtered as little as possible to help the readers find the stories they want. Readers can see editorial decisions being made by others. They can see how to get involved and help make editorial decisions. ... If they want to redistribute the news, they can, preferably on an open publishing site.<sup>14</sup> **[end quote]**

**[NP]** In practice, this means that any story submitted by the user of an Indymedia site will appear immediately and automatically on the IMC ‘newswire’, a continually updated list of current news articles usually displayed on the front page of each IMC Website. This completely removes the traditional journalistic institution of the gatekeeper; rather, it relies on users as both gatewatchers and contributors of original content. This is similar to (and inspired by) Websites such as Slashdot<sup>15</sup>, which operate along similar lines but retain a small group of editors who review user-submitted news articles and publish only those they deem suitable — it is, therefore, truly *open* news.

Perhaps the most important aspect of open news is that (in what may seem as a sharp contrast to much commercial journalism) the user of Indymedia news is seen as

an active and intelligent participant rather than a passive consumer: ‘open publishing assumes the reader is smart and might want to be a writer and an editor and a distributor and even a software programmer. Open publishing assumes that the reader can tell a crappy story from a good one. That the reader can find what they’re after, and might help other readers looking for the same trail.’<sup>16</sup> Arnison portrays this as an issue of trust, and notes that ‘open publishing is playing at the opposite end of the trust spectrum to the corporate media.’<sup>17</sup>

As Gibson and Kelly describe it, then, this conception of users *as* users (and indeed, producers) of news ‘proceeds from a logic of engagement founded upon notions of production and involvement rather than consumption and spectacle’<sup>18</sup>; thus, there is a total transparency of the news production process, and an opportunity for users to be involved at any stage — from newsgathering to reporting, publishing, analysis and discussion. The importance placed on the discussion of news items after publication of the initial articles also explains the fact that in Indymedia, *all* submitted articles are published: even poorly researched or expressed articles can still serve as useful points of departure for insightful and informative discussion as what Slashdot founder Rob Malda calls ‘fact checking in real time’<sup>19</sup> takes place.

Arnison even envisions a system of ‘open editing’<sup>20</sup>, where articles are collaboratively improved as facts are checked and additional information is added while previous versions of articles also remain available. Rather than re-introducing a privileged caste of editors with power greater than that of ‘average’ users, this approach would maintain the absence of gatekeepers and editors while enabling editorial revision and selection to take place again *and* maintaining the rights of the original news author to see their work published in its original, unedited format.

### **[D] Open news, dialogic news, multiperspectival news**

Overall, then, some central characteristics of open publishing (or indeed, as our concern here is with news, *open news*) emerge: open news relies centrally on its users as content providers and producers — as what we might call *producers*. The content offered by these producers sometimes consists of original articles (not uncommon in the case of Indymedia), but frequently points to material found elsewhere, publicising the existence of those sources; where this is the case, producers serve as gatewatchers, monitoring the content of other publications. As (prod)users assume a larger role in

publications, then, the power of staff journalists and editors is significantly reduced — in the case of truly open news they no longer possess the power to prevent user-submitted material from being published and might only deal with what is perceived to be particularly unacceptable content. Where open publishing becomes open editing, finally, all power is removed from specific editors, and rather can be exercised by users themselves as they collaborate on the editing process.

Finally, born out of the necessity of distributing news around the rapidly growing network of Indymedia Centres as well as out of the conceptualisation of news as open and freely distributable (in analogy to open source software), Indymedia and other collaborative news networks also make significant use of RDF/XML technology to produce newsfeeds which enable external Websites to incorporate the stream of incoming IMC news into their own sites. In addition to the on-site interactivity offered in collaborative news networks, this is a form of further *external* interactivity, which provides for interaction with news reports even by Websites and users who do not *directly* become involved with the originating open news site.<sup>21</sup>

News coverage therefore becomes truly interactive, or as Meikle calls it, ‘conversational’; for him (building on ideas developed by new media artist Brian Eno), this even goes beyond the interactive to develop a form of ever-unfinished media: ‘if the “interactive” is about *consuming* media in (more or less) novel ways, the “unfinished” is about people *making* new media for themselves.’<sup>22</sup>

In Indymedia and similar sites, then, this ‘making’ of new media (news) is inherently collaborative; news coverage is arrived at through conversation and dialogue rather than the traditional monologue of journalistic reporting. Such dialogic news therefore realises the stated ideals of public journalism to a much greater extent than proponents of public journalism in traditional media are able (or willing) to do. There are strong parallels to open source software development here; while *public* journalism could be described as similar to corporate software developers’ attempts to better incorporate user feedback into their products by conducting user focus groups and involving large numbers of beta testers for new releases while keeping the development process itself from public scrutiny, *open news* journalism turns users themselves into journalists and analysts just as open source software development has turned users into conceptual designers, software developers, quality testers, bug trackers, and feedback evaluators.

We might consider long-standing journalism researcher Herbert Gans as the patron saint of open news. Writing in the late 1970s, Gans already expressed grave concerns about the ability or willingness of (U.S.) mainstream news to cover a broad range of community views, and suggested that ‘ideally ... the news should be omniperspectival; it should present and represent all perspectives in and on America. This idea, however, is unachievable, for it is only another way of saying that all questions are right. It is possible to suggest, however, that the news, and the news media, be multiperspectival, presenting and representing as many perspectives as possible – and at the very least, more than today.’<sup>23</sup> Gans’s difficulty lay in imagining how such multiperspectival news reporting could be instituted in late-70s America. At his time of writing the media system changes necessary to introduce multiperspectival news appeared insurmountable, especially considering the significant increase in the newsworld (the total published amount of news) which his changes would entail.

Gans eventually envisioned a ‘two-tier’ model of the media, where traditional-style ‘central (or first-tier) media would be complemented by a second tier of pre-existing and new national media, each reporting on news to specific, fairly homogeneous audiences.’ Multiperspectival reporting, in this model, would then take place mainly in the second tier, whose ‘news organisations would have to be small’ for reasons of cost. ‘They would devote themselves primarily to reanalysing and reinterpreting news gathered by the central media — and the wire services — for their audiences, adding their own commentary and backing these up with as much original reporting ... as would be financially feasible.’<sup>24</sup> It is not difficult to see this model as resembling the system of mainstream and alternative media which exists today. Alternative media — especially where they operate online and engage in gatewatching — do indeed frequently focus on reanalysing and reinterpreting mainstream media reports, while their ability to utilise electronic networks and cheap digital equipment for news production and distribution has also meant that networks such as Indymedia *can* now offer a good deal of original multiperspectival news content without suffering massive financial penalties. From a traditional point of view, their news organisations are indeed small, as they employ few or no journalistic staff; at the same time, however, they have expanded their body of journalists to encompass potentially their entire readership — as the Indymedia slogan goes, ‘everyone is a witness. Everyone is a journalist. Everyone has a story.’<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, then, the argument might be made that Gans's 'second tier' of news media would be particularly well placed in an online context, for more than merely financial considerations. Multiperspectival news seems ill-suited to the traditional one-to-many media of print and broadcast journalism, as these media almost inherently imply the presence of journalists or editors to select from the multitude of possible perspectives what fits the available airtime or column space, thus reducing the range of perspectives. Conversely, while there is no guarantee that they will be used in this way, the many-to-many exchanges possible through Internet technologies seem much better suited for exchanging and representing a broad range of views. Today it is easy to see that multiperspectival news has now emerged on the Websites of Indymedia and other alternative, collaborative news networks.

### **[E] Lessons for traditional news media**

The producers of the online presences for traditional news organisations may feel comforted by the fact that, as use of the Web by Australians grows, their audiences are also increasing; however, except for a few notable exceptions such as ABC Online the content of online news has remained relatively stagnant. As Platon and Deuze note,

**[quote]** one may ask why traditional media have not succeeded in offering this [news from a variety of perspectives] to their audiences? One possible strategy for them may be ... that mainstream news media may be able to incorporate the principles and ideas of the online alternative media model that Indymedia claims to stand for into their own systems.<sup>26</sup> **[end quote]**

**[NP]** Such strategies seem unlikely to be adopted to any significant degree, however, since the multiperspectival model of Indymedia and others challenges what Walsh calls the 'knowledge hegemony'<sup>27</sup>. Indeed, in such challenges the profession of journalism itself is called into question: 'a shift in the relationship between supplier and user to the advantage of the latter changes the old, paternalistic relationship into a new, more pragmatic arrangement and a new emancipation of the information user ... . Traditional journalism is ... a product of industrial society with its centralised, hierarchical, and paternalistic characteristics'<sup>28</sup> — today, however, it is now possible

to bypass the profession altogether and to publish news without the direct involvement of journalists.

In the post-industrial environment, journalists will need to re-invent themselves and the news reporting process, Bardoel and Deuze believe:

**[quote]** the journalist of tomorrow is a professional who serves as a nodal point in a complex environment between technology and society, between news and analysis, between annotation and selection, between orientation and investigation. This changing environment cannot be held outside journalism. The journalist does not work in 'splendid isolation.'<sup>29</sup> **[end quote]**

**[FO]** Thus, journalists also need to make their news reporting processes far more transparent than is the case so far — audiences increasingly used to direct access to primary sources and participation in dialogic open news processes will expect to see a similar acknowledgement of sources and diverging opinions and evaluations as a matter of course in mainstream journalism as well. (This is again similar to the effects of open source on traditional software developers, who are struggling to develop modes of making their development process transparent to users while maintaining control of its directions.)

In all, therefore, Platon and Deuze suggest that mainstream news media might develop valuable insights by looking at open news sites as competitors and colleagues rather than caricaturing them as rabid anti-globalisationists.<sup>30</sup> But this might only be a first step. Overall, traditional journalistic institutions will have to come to terms with the need to set their news free: especially in the networked electronic environment with its immediacy of information publishing and its ease of distribution, news organisations can no longer hope to control what happens with their news reports after publication — whether they are linked to, quoted, reprinted in part or as a whole, commented on, criticised, embedded in larger contexts, and so on. This has already happened in the case of music (through MP3 files) or videos (through DeCSS): content — in this case, news — has become detached from its containers — here for example the newspaper containing the gatekeeper's daily selection of 'newsworthy' material. 'News media have derived power from their ability to determine the definition of news ... . The new technological capabilities have undermined the news

media's authority in this area'<sup>31</sup> — and it is unlikely that they will be able to regain that authority.

Examples ranging from Google News and other news aggregators to the use of RDF/XML newsfeeds for news syndication already point in this direction. Whether legal or not, various Websites like NewsIsFree.com or Syndic8.com even offer RDF feeds for Websites which do not do so on their own accord. As the use of such feeds and the cross-referencing from gateway news sites to news reports published elsewhere becomes increasingly common-place, the average Web user will be less and less likely to see 'all the news that's fit to print' as according to *The Australian* or NineMSN news, and will rather become accustomed to communal, multiperspectival news selections from a wide variety of sources, and to subsequent commentaries and debates carried out by participants at their favourite collaborative news network. Individual news items may still bear the imprimatur of *The Australian* or another originating publisher, but they will appear alongside Indymedia reports, insightful blog entries, and a multitude of comments and criticisms. In a networked and syndicated online news environment, in other words, the context of publication of news items and their subsequent usage will be removed from the publisher's control; rather than fighting an unwinnable battle against unauthorised syndication and 'deep linking', or frustrating the cooption of their content through subscription or login requirements for users, online publishers need to accept this fact. As Matthew Arnison puts it, 'instead of activists having to subvert a centralised media technology, it's the corporations madly trying to subvert a decentralised technology, and so far largely failing.'<sup>32</sup>

Giving up such rear-guard actions would make good commercial sense as well: sites which lock themselves out of this free flow of news items lose visibility and relevance, and will be replaced by users with more 'open' news sources. If they are well received by their eventual readers, on the other hand, widely and repeatedly syndicated and gatewayed news items from a specific news publisher will contribute to that publisher's recognition as a source of quality news, and will draw an audience to its site as the original place of publication for these news reports.

It should be noted, too, that news reports have always been subject to public debate and scrutiny, even if this has traditionally taken place outside the media themselves; while the methods are different, and while news discussion and evaluation now takes place on a more public and permanent stage, in distributing and

critically evaluating news articles users of collaborative news networks only do what they have always done. Mainstream news publishers who lament their loss of control over the news would do well to remember that this control was always tentative and never justifiable.

Finally, then, we should also note that these changes do not mean the end of news as we know it. Writing in 2003, Gans suggests that ‘someday [*sic*] print and electronic media may be entirely replaced by websites (or future versions thereof), but even so, news media can exist only if they include news organisations. Without them they are something other than news media.’<sup>33</sup> Alternative news media such as the Indymedia network, and alternative ways of distributing and evaluating news reports, such as gatewatching, syndication, and open news, do however offer the potential to profoundly affect how we conceive of news and the profession of journalism. As Hartley puts it, ‘currently, ... there is a complicated readjustment in progress between the *previously* fastest and the *next* fastest news media’<sup>34</sup>, and professional journalists will have to come to terms with changes in the balance between ‘mainstream’ and ‘alternative’ news, and will be forced to engage with the multiperspectival nature of available news and views especially online. As Alex Burns, the Melbourne-based editor of alternative site Disinformation.com, puts it, ‘to really “Work the Web”, you have to embrace uncertainty and live in the present. The very human qualities that *other* media producers seem to despise.’<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A Camphuizen, 'Telstra and ABC content deal off', viewed 30 Dec. 2003, <<http://www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/391431>>.

<sup>2</sup> B Kovach & T Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*, Crown, New York, 2001, p. 13. Such concerns notwithstanding, however, it should also be pointed out that even pre-merger news organisations were usually commercial operations.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see J Black (ed.), *Mixed News: The Public/Civic/Communitarian Journalism Debate*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, N.J., 1997.

<sup>4</sup> AJ Chan, 'Collaborative news networks: distributed editing, collective action, and the construction of online news on Slashdot.org', MSc thesis, MIT, 2002, viewed 6 Feb. 2003, <<http://web.mit.edu/anita1/www/thesis/Index.html>>, ch. 1, n.pag.

<sup>5</sup> K Howley, 'A poverty of voices: street papers as communicative democracy', *Journalism*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2003, p. 278.

<sup>6</sup> S Platon & M Deuze, 'Indymedia journalism: a radical way of making, selecting and sharing news?', *Journalism*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2003, p. 340.

<sup>7</sup> C Wood qtd. in AJ Chan, 'Collaborative news networks', ch. 2, n.pag.

<sup>8</sup> AJ Chan, 'Collaborative news networks', ch. 1, n.pag.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A Bruns, 'Gatewatching, not gatekeeping: collaborative online news', *Media International Australia*, no. 107, May 2003, pp. 31-44.

<sup>10</sup> G Hyde, 'Independent media centers: cyber-subversion and the alternative press', *First Monday*, vol. 7, no. 4, April 2002, viewed 11 Dec. 2003, <[http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue7\\_4/hyde/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue7_4/hyde/index.html)>, n.pag.

<sup>11</sup> J Gibson & A Kelly, 'Become the media', *Arena Magazine*, no. 49, Oct.-Nov. 2000, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> J Gibson & A Kelly, 'Become the media', p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> HJ Gans, *Democracy and the News*, Oxford UP, New York, 2003, p. 95-6.

<sup>14</sup> M Arnison, 'Open publishing is the same as free software', 9 June 2003, viewed 11 Dec. 2003, <<http://www.cat.org.au/maffew/cat/openpub.html>>, n.pag.

<sup>15</sup> See A Bruns, 'Stuff that matters: Slashdot and the emergence of open news', paper presented at the Association of Internet Researchers conference, Toronto, 16-19 Oct. 2003; AJ Chan, 'Collaborative news networks: distributed editing, collective action, and the construction of online news on Slashdot.org', MSc thesis, MIT, 2002, viewed 6 Feb. 2003, <<http://web.mit.edu/anita1/www/thesis/Index.html>>.

<sup>16</sup> M Arnison, 'Open publishing', n.pag.

<sup>17</sup> M Arnison, 'Open publishing', n.pag.

<sup>18</sup> J Gibson & A Kelly, 'Become the media', p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> R Malda qtd. in AJ Chan, 'Collaborative news networks', ch. 2, n.pag.

<sup>20</sup> M Arnison, 'Open publishing', n.pag.

<sup>21</sup> The Resource Description Framework (RDF) is an XML-style markup language convention which can be used to describe virtually any content available on the Web, making it easier to search for and to process through automated systems. A specific subset of the RDF is called RSS (variously known as RDF Site Summary, Rich Site Summary, or Really Simple Syndication), and has become a standard for providing small downloadable files containing information on the most recent content changes of a specific Website. These RSS files can then be processed automatically by *other* Websites, which can incorporate links to this new content into their own pages. RSS feeds have become very popular with bloggers, who use them both to incorporate other bloggers' content into their own blogs, and to add news from more 'official' sources; sites like NewsIsFree.com and Syndic8.com even offer up-to-date

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RSS feeds for news Websites which do not do so on their own accord. For a useful introduction to the RDF/XML/RSS universe, see for example

<<http://www.webreference.com/authoring/languages/xml/rss/intro/>>.

<sup>22</sup> G Meikle, *Future Active*, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup> HJ Gans, *Deciding What's News*, p. 312-3.

<sup>24</sup> HJ Gans, *Deciding What's News*, p. 318.

<sup>25</sup> Brisbane Independent Media Centre, 'About Brisbane Indymedia', viewed 30 Dec. 2003,

<<http://www.brisbane.indymedia.org/about.php3>>, n.pag.

<sup>26</sup> S Platon & M Deuze, 'Indymedia journalism', p. 339.

<sup>27</sup> P Walsh, 'That withered paradigm: the Web, the expert, and the information hegemony, in H Jenkins & D Thorburn (eds.), *Democracy and New Media*, MIT P, Cambridge, Mass., 2003, p. 368.

<sup>28</sup> J Bardoel & M Deuze, "'Network Journalism": converging competencies of old and new media professionals', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 23, no. 3, Dec. 2001, p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> J Bardoel & M Deuze, "'Network Journalism"', p. 98.

<sup>30</sup> S Platon & M Deuze, 'Indymedia journalism', p. 352.

<sup>31</sup> MD Alleyne, *News Revolution: Political and Economic Decisions about Global Information*, Macmillan, Houndmills, 1997, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> M Arnison qtd. in G Meikle, *Future Active*, p. 95.

<sup>33</sup> HJ Gans, *Democracy and the News*, p. 30.

<sup>34</sup> J Hartley, 'The frequencies of public writing: tomb, tome, and time as technologies of the public', in H Jenkins & D Thorburn (eds.), *Democracy and New Media*, MIT P, Cambridge, Mass., 2003, p. 253.

<sup>35</sup> A Burns, 'Automatic for the People', *Disinformation*, 4 Feb. 2002, viewed 11 Dec. 2003,

<<http://www.disinfo.com/archive/pages/article/id1303/pg1/>>, p. 1.