collection of this nature. However, reading the chapters in this volume, one is struck by the seemingly repetitive nature of this debate and its continuing prominence. A feature that could have been tempered here had there been greater discussion of topics that, for this reviewer at least, are more central to this debate, yet are given only cursory attention. For example, though the demarcation between the two camps is explicitly set out in the volume, scholarship devoted identities, role perceptions and so-called ‘boundary maintenance’ do not loom as large as they should. This is a shame as a discussion of how media and academic practice and identity become manifest within this contestation would have been useful and taken the conversation forward some way. Moreover, given the increasing numbers of those within the academy who come from ‘practice backgrounds’ coupled with the growth in research which genuinely transcends the so-called divide, one is left wondering whether or not the ‘chasm’ between ‘theory and practice’ is as problematic as the premise of this volume suggests. Nevertheless, it is refreshing to gain an insight into critical practitioner perspectives on the work of academics within a scholarly publication such as this. Likewise, greater prominence to media and journalism scholarship that does not meet the utilitarian demands of ‘relevance’ within the mainstream media would be another step forward in this conversation.

Reference


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With so many excellent books about journalism currently on offer, why should a discerning reader select Boczkowski and Anderson’s book for his or her next read? If I had to choose one reason, I would say that this book is future-proof – unlike many others that have a short shelf life because their authors either respond to current challenges or report on specific recent developments in media. Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism in the Digital Age does a lot more than that, as its editors present an impressive collection of essays, whose authors (established experts in media studies and communication studies) focus on the fundamental changes in journalism associated with the use of digital technology and examine this transformation from various standpoints. In doing so, they strengthen the links between media studies and other fields such as history and philosophy and set an agenda for future research in journalism studies. Therefore, both communication scholars and their students would benefit from acquiring this book (and keeping it nearby), as they may find themselves reaching out for it in years to come.
To elaborate, the volume’s contributors offer a series of interconnected conversations as the four sections of the book develop specific themes while also incorporating a dialogue with one another.

Section 1 ‘Introduction: Words and things’ deals with theoretical and methodological issues, broadly conceived, taking into account the latest research on digital journalism, followed by the authors problematizing the concept of knowledge in the context of digitized media in Section 2 ‘Rethinking key concepts’. Following that, the discussion progresses to ‘the ontology of journalism as an object of enquiry’ (p. 8) in Section 3 ‘Interrogating occupational culture and practice’, while Section 4 ‘Foregrounding underexamined themes’ concludes the book with a discussion of the interplay between power, authority and discrimination in the production of digital news.

At the outset, Pablo J Boczkowski and Eugenia Mitchelstein identify a methodological failure whereby scholars researching digital journalism draw extensively on research findings from various fields, but do not invest much effort in evaluating the significance of their own findings for other fields beyond media studies. The authors articulate the need to overcome ‘the limitations of this one-way strategy of conceptual development’ (p. 15). The proposal to build ‘intellectual bridges’ with ‘relevant scholarly partners’ (p. 15) becomes a dominant idea underpinning the entire project. Accordingly, Rodney Benson argues against the practice of studying particular case studies in digital media without drawing on a wider social and conceptual context and without ‘historicizing news research’ (p. 41). Moreover, Victor Pickard demonstrates the need to consider digital media from the political economy perspective, for example, in order to understand ‘[w]hat happens as local journalism becomes increasingly reliant on crowdsourcing and other forms of low or unpaid labor?’ (p. 48) Also, CW Anderson discusses ‘[n]ewsroom ethnography’ (p. 66), involving ‘historical contextualization’ (p. 69), although William H Dutton, commenting on the above discussion, reminds readers that ‘[d]igital journalism research is inherently technologically anchored’ (p. 87) and that it was probably inevitable that early research in this area was ‘ahistorical’ (p. 87).

In his analysis of ‘news as knowledge’, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen contributes to the field of philosophy as he offers a timely investigation into the problems of epistemology, which need to be considered in the context of news production in the digital era. Using terms such as ‘news-as-impression’ and ‘news-as-items’ (p. 93) and differentiating between being acquainted with something and having knowledge about something, he reviews important philosophical questions in the context of digital news production. Seth C Lewis and Rodrigo Zamith continue the philosophical evaluation of ‘journalism and its interrelationship with technology’ (p. 112) by exploring the heterogeneity of social actors and technological agents, the conventions that shape creativity, and the continuously fluctuating ‘arrangement’ of people, practices and products.

Notably, there are cases when readers or viewers may expect a certain event to be covered in the news but it is not. These and similar situations of an absence in news coverage may be disappointing and frustrating for some. Mike Ananny’s investigation of the constructive role of absence in digital news production deals with this, as he focuses on the meaning and consequences of censorship, self-censorship and lack of journalistic coverage. Ananny identifies ‘five sources of absence in the networked press: professional norms, media avoidance, invisible audiences, organizational openings, and
infrastructural holes’ (p. 137). Zizi Papacharissi, concluding the discussion about the role of technology in journalism at the end of Section 2, adds that the problem of remaking news ‘is about finding a place for technology, instead of technology finding its own place’ (p. 150).

The conversation intensifies, as Natalie Jomini Stroud ‘consider[s] the intersections between academia and journalism and between journalism’s business and democratic goals’ (p. 157). She reveals the inherent contradiction of the news media, which ‘are asked both to turn a profit and to inform a public’ (p. 158), so, for example, the press must choose whether to publish the results of accurate investigations, which only a limited audience will be interested in reading, or offer material that would attract a mass audience. Consequently, the author argues that ‘when the news media industry faces tougher economic times, democracy suffers’ (p. 160). Moreover, as digital media ‘has profoundly altered the normative landscape of journalism and the duties that fall on reporters’ (p. 177), Matthew Hindman observes that some journalists and editors ‘are shifting from process-focuses ethics to results-focused ethics’ (p. 178) and argues that ‘journalists now have a positive obligation to use new audience measurement tools’ (p. 192). Following on from that, Jane B Singer addresses the entrepreneurial aspects of digital journalism, examines its challenges and concludes that collaborative effort and the ability to find funding sources are the key elements of success. Nevertheless, the market-driven journalism inevitably generates specific ethical dilemmas because entrepreneurial journalists address ‘audiences as clients and consumers rather than citizens’ (p. 205). Responding to Stroud, Hindman and Singer, W Russell Neuman calls for rethinking the stereotypical role of a journalist altogether, as it is no longer ‘crystal clear’ (p. 214) who is a journalist and who is not, given the diversity of information sources and media practices. Interestingly, Sue Robinson modifies the above question, as she calls for a critical examination of ‘who gets to speak in the public news realm’ (p. 217), thus questioning social power dynamics in connection with access to public space and news production.

Mirjam Prenger and Mark Deuze discuss entrepreneurialism in journalism in the book’s penultimate essay and consider the contemporary news industry in the historical context of the 1950s and 1960s innovations arguing against overestimating the supposedly disruptive influence of technology on journalism. In the book’s final chapter, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen advocates the need for researching failures specific to digital journalism, such as the failure to adapt to technological change, although Michael Schudson, in response to that, questions the concept of failure itself.

In a helpful Postscript, Michael X Delli Carpini reiterates that the study of contemporary journalism must be interdisciplinary, but he also suggests drawing on both traditional and new methodological approaches and engaging in collaboration with ‘journalists (professional or not)’ as well as various information providers and ‘the people for whom this information is intended to serve’ (p. 286).

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