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Bill Grueskin, Ava Seave, Lucas Graves, eds. *The Story So Far: What We Know about the Business of Digital Journalism.* Columbia Journalism Review Books Series. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. 139 pp. $15.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-231-16027-8.

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Awakening the Rules of Engagement

This report by the Columbia Journalism School provides a good sense of the current state of journalism, or more precisely the state of journalism when the book was researched and printed in 2011. Even the authors admit that some information was outdated by the time it reached print, but the text still offers a brief history and analysis of recent developments of journalism and its potential future. Most of the research was based on interviews conducted with journalists at print and broadcast organizations in 2010 and 2011. The report does not predict the future, but recommends how news organizations can address new challenges.

Given that a great deal of the terminology that is used to describe the digital era might be unfamiliar to many readers, the authors define these new terms, like CPM (cost per thousand views). They realize that this is a paradigm shift for everyone and that journalists are starting to think more about metrics and usability almost as often as they thought about Associated Press style and nut graphs in the past. The writers of the report admit that they have a bias: "We think the world needs journalism and journalists" (p. 3). What they do not explore here though are definitions of these terms. Has the concept of journalism changed in the digital era? What has remained the same and what has not? What does this mean for the work journalists do? Even though the report touches on a few differences of tasks for digital journalism, it does not point to how willing or prepared our present journalists are to perform these tasks.

The report examines changes in traditional or "legacy" journalism organizations as well as the journalism outlets that were born digital. One of the common themes is engagement. It is clear to the authors that this concept intertwines among choices in editorial content, advertising, and technological delivery of information. If a user does not engage with what the news organization has to offer, the move on. According to the report, those who continue to do journalism need to recognize that it requires an entirely different mind-set. Their audience is new. Even those who read print newspapers now have new devices, new interests, and new points of view. As we know, today's audience (formerly readers and viewers) has more choice, quicker delivery of news, and a variety of platforms on which to receive their information. These readers, whether they know it or not, utilize aggregated information on a daily basis. Aggregation is something that many traditional news organizations claim to detest or at the very least, say that they do not agree with. Other new information outlets, like the Huffington Post, the most prominent example, give readers access to information for free, while traditional news organizations set up paywalls around their information to gain financial stability again.

The importance of audience emerges in almost all of the chapters in the report. Readers like to pass along information, states the report. They like to comment on topics that are of interest to them and build relationships. And, perhaps most important, readers often like to do all of this via a mobile device that they carry along with them all the time. Indeed, the authors of the report see the greatest opportunity in mobile devices for traditional journalism to get on the digital train before it goes too far ahead. According to the report, "early data about

tablets appeared to show great promise for news organizations" (p. 57). Also, many mobile users are accustomed to paying for information that comes across their tablet or smartphone. News organizations might be able to capitalize on this predisposition of their users.

Many news practitioners might find themselves turning to the conclusion of the book where the report offers recommendations. Some of the key suggestions are:"build[ing] economic success by creating high-value, less commoditized content designed for digital media," "understanding the audiences they have and the ones they want," and"develop[ing] a thoughtful approach to understanding what topics best lend themselves to aggregation and how best to engage their readers in the effort" (pp. 120, 130, 131).

The report describes this era as "the disruptions of the digital transformation" (p. 9). Yet the journalism industry could have avoided reaching the disruption stage by being innovative and forward thinking about how the field was changing. News organizations have to be responsive and not just by reporting news by a deadline or responding to a tip about a story, but by responding to the environment that has been changing around them. Up until now, that oversight has been the industry's downfall. That said, the development of new platforms and devices might just provide them with a way to pick themselves back up.

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