

The Örebro Journalism Programme (180 ECTS)

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Input from the media sector/industry
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Random thoughts

If you start a new journalist program at Örebro University, what would be important to include?

Following are some random thoughts from Facebook friends who are also colleagues in the media business:

“The web, the web, the web and the web. Everybody says that present journalist programs are hopelessly old fashioned. There is an acute lack of web journalists – people who can think three dimensional or more. And that of language knowledge – like Chinese – would not be wrong, but that is not included in a journalist program”.

”Oh, what a giant question.....Just one worry; that the ”clean” journalism is clouded behind all the platforms, social media etc”

“If starting a new journalist program today, you should consider that there is an over education of journalists today. There are too many journalism programmes. So why start a new one? What can you offer that differentiates Örebro from the others? Quality, view of practical skills, cooperation with the trade etc. What can you make more incisive?

I think you should take into consideration that there are fewer employments today. More and more engage production companies and freelancers. You must learn to work in that form and run a business. Extremely important are practical skills. That the students have knowledge of all existing tools and systems in an editorial office. That they have practised, practised and practised. That they learn to give and take critique. That they know formalia on one hand. Rather prepared to fly than to do research.”

“What I think of immediately is the competence and research taking place at the Media & Communication and Social science departments at Örebro University. Access to practical journalism; here are newspapers, radio and TV, it is also a plus that Karlstad University is close by. The existing cooperation between Örebro University and others is favourable for such an education. The city of Örebro is rapidly growing and the access to student apartments could be a plus”.

“Exciting. Apart from learning the journalistic tools – how to write a journalistic text – I believe media critique, questions dealing with press ethics and discussions regarding the power of media and influence are important. What does the journalistic body look like today/historically and how has that affected what has been written and what impact has that had on media? What is good and bad journalism? What is the media’s democratic influence on society? What is objectivity, does it exist? Neutral to consequences.”

“Theory, good intentions and high ideals are good during education. Later you land in reality. But theory must be mixed with practical exercises.... I missed process-writing. You have to write over and over again the get the habit and to take critique, something I believe I have needed the whole time. The ability to think fresh when things go wrong, automatically focus on redoing and improving etc....”

Particular demands and ideas from the media industry

Paying for editorial material

Battling finances, the media industry needs versatile journalists working in media houses, journalists who have knowledge about society globally, who follow the increasing flow of information also on social networks, being able to identify reliable sources and protect them, working in collaboration with media consumers to protect the journalistic trust. Fewer journalists will be employed and more will work as freelancers. Employed or freelance; they have that in common that the demands on them professionally are increasing.

The commercial media industry is battling over the issue of getting paid for journalistic work. Public radio and TV is constantly cutting costs to balance the budget. Newspapers, magazines, radio- and TV-stations alike are competing to get readers, listeners and viewers. Financing journalism is and will be a crucial issue to deal with.

Media consumers have gotten used to the idea of finding free newspapers - like Metro - more or less daily, at least in the bigger cities. Financing is traditionally through ads. Costs for journalistic work need to be limited. Much of the journalistic content is therefore based on that from news agencies. It is expensive to employ journalists or/and send correspondents around the world. Journalism becomes streamlined. One example; Metro in the US as well as the local newspaper in Örebro, Sweden, used text from Reuters to write about the Afghan President Karzai when he was declared winner in the presidential race 2009.

The free daily newspapers struggle as well; the competition for advertisement gets tougher. Free newspapers not only compete with traditional newspapers you subscribe to and other free newspapers but also with themselves. Free or not, newspapers today must do more to reach the consumers in different ways. It is no longer enough to produce a paper version; you must produce a daily paper for the web as well. Most Swedish newspapers are today on the web. The format for the printed paper and that on the internet differs in style and technique; you need more staff to produce both. From where do you have the money for it? Most newspapers in Sweden today produce a paper version that is distributed in the early morning hours and one version that is constantly updated on the net. Even on holidays, when the regular printed paper is not printed, consumers today take it for granted they can go to the web and read the paper anyway. That means more staff and consequently higher costs for the media industry. It has been difficult – at least up till now - for the media to make web-consumers pay for journalistic work. But the web has come to stay.

Cross ownership

Media and news organizations must look for other ways of bringing in funds to cover costs for journalism, like cooperation and cross ownership with web based consumer sites. People with special interests communicate around the globe via the net like never before, reaching each other in seconds, forming networks. It is efficient for advertisers to find their customers this way - be it about birds, riding horses or planning weddings - and reach them directly compared to a newspaper reaching a broader, general consumer group.

Under the headline "Swedish media must be more daring", Anna Serner, CEO of Swedish Newspapers Publishers's Association, addresses the problem in a contribution to the debate in Svenska Dagbladet September 21, 2009. *"The question whether newspapers should be paid for its editorial material on the net breaths bad low esteem. Of course they should be paid, the question is for what?.....An open and democratic society expects free and competitive media. Right now, in the middle of recession and structural transformation, the media and in particular daily newspapers are targets of big challenges. Advertisement revenue and circulation figures drop. The poorer economy, the less free and competitive media.....One issue that has been vividly discussed concerns how journalism on the web can be financed. The issue has been under scrutiny for long but intensified after Rupert Murdoch's plans to let many of his newspapers make consumers pay for editorial material like Wall Street Journal already does with success".¹*

It is too early to say if Swedish media consumers, or European media consumers, are ready to pay for journalistic work on the web. In Great Britain, the London Times is planning on starting 2010 to have costumers pay for the web based newspaper.

Media reaches consumers in different ways. This is constantly changing. So do consumer habits. You can have news and other editorial material delivered via a newspaper, radio, TV, the web, text-TV, your e-mail, phone, iphone etc. There are also small scale tests with e-book, or reading plates, for newspapers. According to the Swedish magazine Ny Teknik, Amazon is together with New York Times, Boston Globe and Washington Post testing the updated Kindle which supports PDF-files and has a larger screen than the original. Consumers in areas where the newspaper is not delivered will during the fall of 2009 be offered to subscribe to it on Kindle which they can purchase to a reduced price.² In Sweden, the local newspaper Nerikes Allehanda is involved in a small research project at the Halmstad högskola in regard of reading plates; it is too soon to point in any directions where it will lead.

Journalism need to change the way it perceives itself. *"We are in the middle of a dramatic decline with ads and commercials in media dropping 12% - 22%. We are changing to digital media and print is decreasing. Media need to use the web to motivate people to read the newspaper where you follow up on the news and find the*

¹ Ur Svenska medier måste väga mer, debattartikel av Anna Serner, vd för Tidningsutgivarna, införd i Svenska Dagbladet 21 september 2009, översättning av Nina Hjelmgren

² Ur Ny Teknik, 7 maj 2009

advanced articles deepening the content”, says Magnus Anshelm, managing director of IRM, Institute for Advertising and Media Statistics. “Therefore, it will be an increased demand for really good journalists”.

Many in the business believe that we will see many changes in regards of cross ownership to finance journalism. One way to put it today is pointing out that classified media draws paying customers on the net today.

The Norwegian media house Schibsted is one example of that. In Sweden, they own the morning paper Svenska Dagbladet and the evening paper Aftonbladet. In their report from the 3rd quarter 2009, it is clear that the positive balance is due to online activities, *“Online operating revenues increased by 17 per cent in Q3.....Schibsted increases its exposure towards profitable online classified sites”*.³ Schibsted owns Blocket and Bytbil, both active on the net. Now, is it the incomes from Blocket that pays for the journalistic content in Aftonbladet and Svenska Dagbladet? Most likely, at least to a big part. *“Journalists need to see this and still keep the distance”,* says Magnus Anshelm.

“Journalistic products must earn their money in other ways than traditionally thru ads and subscribers to the printed paper. What are people willing to pay for? The web has no borders or limited editions, special interest groups find each other easily this way. It is more useful to aim commercials/ads directly to these special interest groups knowing you reach motivated people instead of a general audience, be it about used cars, weddings or fishing gear. We will see another kind of relationship on the web between media and special interest groups, with cross ownership and links to each other”, says Ove Joanson, Chairman of the Board SR, Swedish National Public Radio and independent media analyst internationally through his company Media Conglomerate AB. He also underscores the importance of a thorough basic education of journalists. *“Journalists must have the knowledge how to come as close as possible to the problems to be able to describe the conditions in the world. This takes basic education, training and experience”.*

Newspapers, radio- and TV-stations are all media houses today regardless of how they are financed. You can no longer separate print journalism from radio or TV journalism in basic journalism programs. Newspapers on the web broadcast TV. TV writes stories on the web. Radio print photos on the web etc, etc. During the finals in national soccer for example, the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet urged its readers to go the web to see the most spectacular goals including reactions from players and trainers.

Images

Today, there are cameras everywhere, like digital cameras, surveillance cameras, and cameras in mobile phones. They are easy to use and it is equally simple to transmit pictures. Pictures from cameras not operated by media photographers are published daily and globally. A surveillance camera for example caught a driver of a SUV in Canada running over a car in the parking lot. The story including the video is

³ www.schibsted.com

published around the world, including Dagens Nyheter⁴. Dagens Nyheter also has web-TV where you November 3rd 2009 could see Jim Carrey play eight rolls, Usain Bolt adopting a gepard and scenes from the suicide attack in Pakistan the day before. Videos are important to newspapers as consumers expect to find them there today. Swedish newspaper Expressen is for example changing its Webb TV player to accommodate customers with a larger screen.

Almost anyone can record sound and picture with a mobile phone, edit it and transmit it in seconds via social networks like You Tube, Facebook and Twitter, it can also be sent to news agencies etc. How do you know the material is credible? Can you trust the source? News is also entertainment. There is a lot of news out there not produced by journalists. In media houses, there are still gateways like editorial bosses screening what comes through before it is published. That is not the case with social networks including Wikipedia; anyone can write anything. With less and less journalists working in media houses, this becomes increasingly difficult. **Information flows with less gate keepers in the production. This puts demands on today's journalists like never before to identify sources, determine if they are credible and reliable and not forget the protection of sources.**

In this concept, it is also vital to discuss whether media treat the whole content of a story/report with the same ethical rules. Take for instance a newspaper article, built up traditionally with headline, article and pictures. Someone writes the article, someone else the headline and a third person might choose pictures. The journalist writing the text is waging words to carefully write the story. Sometimes a journalist spends a lot of time just searching for the right word, the right expression. It is a creative process built on facts, nothing must be wrong. When sensitive, it is vital to protect sources and follow press ethics taking the reaction of relatives into consideration etc. After the sinking of the ferry Estonia on Östersjön in 1994 with more than 800 dead, media was criticized for getting too close to mourning relatives and friends. This took place near to home, most people knew someone who was affected. It was our colleagues behind cameras and microphones. Something happens though, the further away from home we get. The same press ethics seem no longer to be of same importance. When reporting about the school massacre in Beslan, Russia, in 2004 where more than 330 people were killed - most of them children - images of dead bodies and close-up pictures of mourning relatives were spread around the world and broadcasted, so also in Sweden.

Media has its own photographers but many times photos are distributed via international agencies, like news agencies. A journalist revises the text, often with background knowledge, waging words on the relevance scale. Is the image material - be it photos or videos - treated with the same journalistic seriousness or chosen more to be a dramatic effect that is entertaining instead of journalistically relevant? I believe this happens all the time. Our ways of communicating has become more visual and we need to be conscious about these dilemmas not to be manipulated. Images are also being used to create reactions, sure words are too, but there is some truth to 'a picture says more than a thousand words'. Just imagine the impact of the picture of the dead US soldier dragged through the streets of Mogadishu in Somalia after two Blackhawk helicopters were shot down.

⁴ DN on the web, November 3, 2009

Journalists need multimedia competence and in the visual communication make sure that ethical awareness works the same for text and images. Örebro University has experience from doing surveys in this field, putting it in the context of identifying the game, opinion and propaganda. One book dealing with the problem is *“Global War Local views”* by Stig Arne Norstedt, professor of Media and Communication at Örebro University and Rune Ottosen, professor of journalism at Oslo University College.

Shallow journalism

In a democratic society, it is not enough to have a free and competitive media; media has to be credible and reliable as well. Media houses are struggling with the limits in the attempts of enticing consumers, one limit being if journalism is based on entertainment or information. The entertainment factor runs high in our picture oriented society; a dramatic video without too much relevant information might outscore less entertaining information that concerns many more people. Another constant struggle limit for media houses is between local and global content. Never before has information swept around the world with such speed. Still, media consumers are very home bound.

“We are at the beginning of a Golden Age of journalism – but it is not journalism as we have known it. Media futurists have predicted that by 202, ‘citizens will produce 50 percent of the news peer-to-peer.’ However, mainstream news media have yet to meaningfully adopt or experiment with these news forms” writes We Media.⁵

How is traditional journalism tackling this? One way is by encouraging readers – listeners – viewers to send in their comments and pictures. The whole range of media does this on a daily basis, from CNN to local newspapers – part of their intake is based on consumer participation in real time. Then the media industry can still function in the traditional editorial way by being the ones making the selection based on traditional journalism; credibility and reliability.

Lobbyists, politicians and special interest groups have one aim in common; to get their picture across. There are different ways these groups traditionally act to have an impact in the media jungle in their aim of reaching the consumers. One traditional way is to publicize a report, call for a press conference and answer questions about it. They elaborate on *when* to make the report public since timing is a key. They also media train their representative so they better control the kind of questions that might be asked and how to answer them to put their own objectives in a good light. With easy access to the consumers via the web, they can easily create their own newsrooms where they stage the event. All it really takes today is Skype and Youtube. This way they avoid critical questions from journalists. They can even make it look like consumer participation when in fact it is preplanned participation with planned questions. *“There is no doubt that the importance of the web for the political communication is growing”*, writes Lena Hennel, journalists on Svenska Dagbladet, analyzing politics⁶. *“As long as a newscast from Rapport reaches over a million*

⁵ We Media is commissioned by the Media Center at the American Press Institute

⁶ *Slaget om medierna*, analys av Lena Hennel i Svenska Dagbladet October, 2009

viewers each night and as long as Youtube as its best reaches only a few thousand, you cannot cancel the contact with the traditional media”, she writes. When I talk to her, she stresses the need for intellectual discussions in the different editorial offices, discussions that today are limited to editorial writers, “journalism becomes more and more shallow in Sweden without the intellectual discussion”. She continues by pointing out that critically analyzing sources becomes increasingly important. “You can always learn the tools but if you do not know how to take in knowledge and critically analyze it, journalism is impoverished”.

Basics of journalism take years of training

There is a surplus of students who have had some kind of media or journalistic course in their education believing that as background it is enough to work as a journalist. That is far from the case. The industry needs basically trained journalists with competence, people who are familiar with the basics of journalism. It takes years of learning and training to reach that. Journalists need to be educated by lectures still familiar with the journalistic reality - which is constantly changing. They also need to have academic lectures familiar with the journalistic conditions, not only as observers on a distance but in reality. *“One way would be to have temporary staff move back and forward from the academic world to the journalistic”*, says Thorbjörn Lindskog at Medieutbildarna, an affiliated company to TU, Tidningsutgivarna, providing further training in the media business. He points out the necessity of flexibility in the education based on the fact that the conditions change constantly and fast. With that said, he also, like so many others, point out that the most important part of journalistic education concerns the identification of sources, how to critically view sources and protect them.

Time has always been - and always will be - a threat to the identification and protection of sources. Take for instance a radio show to which just anyone can call in, in real time. How do you know it is the person you have on the line he/she claim to be? You really don't. It has happened that friends and foes have used someone else's name just to make fools out of them. Media encourages interactive readers/listeners/viewers and many people enjoy seeing themselves in media. How can you make sure the source is what she/he claims to be? I had for example a picture of mine printed in a newspaper without my knowledge or consent, send in by someone else claiming it was her picture. How do you identify the sender in the flow of information? It is part of basic journalistic training. But compromises are made, to which cost? The cost is loss in confidence, in trust. **It takes a long time to build a relationship based on trust and confidence between journalists and media consumers but only seconds to erase it.** Media houses cannot afford having journalists not doing the job professionally. Locally, the news paper Nerikes Allehanda has a high level of trust among the readers and need to constantly work hard on keeping that trust. They have not been hurt like national newspapers during the difficult financial times when ads are dropping, advertisers are still looking for local markets. Public Swedish Radio and TV are also obliged to work on keeping a high level of trust among media consumers, including developing the web.

Identify reliable sources in the jungle of information

Traditionally, journalists worked as print journalists or with broadcasting, either radio or TV. Today, journalist working in media houses need to be familiar with print, photography, radio and TV including editing and working on the web. This is the basis in general journalism; eventually during the education you can specialize. You need to know how to write for different kind of media, how to use the language for printed media compared to broadcasting and the web. There are differences. As a journalist you also need to be familiar with social media on the web, not only by name, but how to use them. They are also sources of information and working with sources is without comparison the most important journalistic tool. The limits change constantly on what is reachable and were to find what. Searching for information has become a household-tool. Knowledge of the use of the social media on the web is basic when it comes to critically analyzing sources. For instance, much of Barack Obamas' presidential campaign ran on the internet.

It becomes increasingly important to have the journalistic tools to handle the jungle of information. What is true? What is relevant? Can you trust the sources? What do the consumers want to know? Referring to sources without checking the relevance of the source is not sufficient for trustworthy journalism.

At Örebro University, there is plenty of academic experience from analyzing politics in journalism including research of interviews of political representatives. This academic experience and knowledge is vital in the democratic process and can make a base in the journalism program.

Union says no

The Swedish Journalist Union (Svenska Journalistförbundet SJF), visited a few years back Högskoleverket with demands of lesser journalists being educated at fewer places due to high unemployment figures which, according to SJF, are rising. *"We see unemployment among journalists rise"*, says Justus Bennet, ombudsman, SJF.

SJF underscores the importance of practice as part of the education; this being an important way for journalists to network and actually land a job. *"This is the way most journalists find a job"*, says Justus Bennet. SJF is critical though to many journalist schools, believing many do not take their responsibility finding useful places to practice and let the students look for practice on their own which can lead to a waste of time professionally as the do not get the journalistic experience they need.

The Swedish Journalist Union, SJF,⁷ has written down guidelines for what they believe is needed for a good journalist education. "It is important that the education reflects that the journalistic profession is both an academic one and a handicraft product.

Items that should be part of a journalist education:

⁷ translation to English from webpage in Swedish my Nina Hjelmgren

- The roll of journalism and the journalistic roll in the democracy including critical attitude and criticism of sources.
- Journalistic methods and ways within different journalistic production forms like practical exercises in writing, research and editing, interview technique, journalistic selection and news evaluation and also criticism of sources.
- Practise for at least four months on in an editorial room according to regulations for practise in the different collective agreements.
- Media law and especially expression of opinion and freedom of the press and the applications in agreements with focus on public access to official records, including relevant EU-laws.
- Labour legislation as is and in a democratic function, how it is implemented in laws and agreements.
- Copyright in law and agreements including its democratic importance.
- Journalistic ethics in theory and practice, aim and application of *Spelregler för press radio och TV* and also corresponding rules for broadcast media.
- Media knowledge meaning the roll of media in the society historically, present and future.
- Trade knowledge like ownership of Swedish and foreign media, business economics, labour market.
- Orientation about present media research.”

Communication skills

So, what is new, what has happened? People ask each other that all the time, being social and curious. If we do not hear anything or enough about something that has caught our attention, we make something up and might even write a story about it. Storytelling around the world is an old arts form, still active in areas without radio and TV. If we only hear fragments of something we might find interesting, we fill out the empty spaces with fantasy. Rumors are created based on gossip. ‘Never check a good story’ is a well known slogan in any newsroom. Many stories *are* too good to be true.

Part of being a journalist is understanding human nature to some point. In every kind of meeting between two persons, something happens, we have different effects on each other. This often depends on perception of power – gender – age – race etc. Are we familiar with that when we for instance enter an interview situation? We need to be. This needs to be part of education in journalism.

Journalism communicates information. The consumer comprehension might differ from what the journalist attempted. How do you as a journalist respond then?

On the net people interrelate without borders and gatekeepers. What happens to our way of thinking then? How does different kind of communication affect or ways of thinking? How does it affect the way we see journalism? Borders are always changing, making what seemed impossible possible at a rapid pace. How do these changes affect media? Where is the money paying for journalism?

The media industry needs journalists from different backgrounds of different gender with a variety of knowledge. It is essential that journalists get as close as possible to the story they are working on. For that, you do not only need journalistic skills and

knowledge about the subject, but also social skills. **You need to know how to communicate and feel comfortable in different places and cultures. A journalist also benefit from having deeper knowledge in some area** like law, biology, business management or Chinese. It is here taken for granted that political science is part of the basic education. Örebro University can contribute with a year of studying a subject of choice.

Every newspaper has journalists blogging today, in particular about sports and everyday trivia. Bloggers like Sanna Lundell nationally and Lotta Gray locally touches large number of readers and both have received awards during 2009. Journalists need to be aware of what is happening in the global internet world, they also need to be familiar with the social networks, being able to identify credible sources and also protect them.

Today there is too much of a mold of young women studying social sciences becoming journalists. A journalist program at Örebro University can change that.

Language

The Swedish media market produces mainly journalistic material in Swedish. Occasionally it is translated to other languages like English and/or languages spoken by larger groups of immigrants.

Doing research and critically analyzing sources is essential in journalism. Regardless of working locally, nationally or globally, journalists today need knowledge in other languages to be able to do research. English might not be spoken by the largest amount of people around the world but is the language used by many to communicate globally. Take for instance the problem with swine flue; it is a current issue in Sweden that has an impact on people every day, it is highly relevant to cover the problems locally, nationally and internationally. To be able to do so, you also need to do research in English. Issues today affect us both locally and globally.

In Sweden, most scientific work regarding journalism is written in Swedish. This means that the results can only be perceived by a small group and not reach the bigger field of science. Journalism needs to be developed and analyzed in the mirror of global changes.

There are now years of experience from the masters program in Global Journalism at the Örebro University. Students from all over the world share experience and knowledge in a growing process. The course is in English. Fruitful experiences from Global Journalism can be used in a basic journalism program at Örebro University.

Working editorially from the very start should be part of a new journalism program at Örebro University. It is vital that the students from the beginning learn to see the difficulties in the journalistic process and discuss them among themselves in the group. They must be able to produce articles and reports along the way, for print, radio, TV or the web and critically analyze each others work. The language here is essential. Journalists wage words on an imaginary scale, test sentences and analyze content. *“Journalism is shades, nuances. Journalism is in the language, in the story*

telling. You must be able to connect to your inner language”, as Jan Hermansson, senior advisor at Swedish National TV, puts it.

If you cannot find the right words as a journalist, you get stuck or frustrated. You feel limited and insecure.

This happens to basically everybody, also the Global Journalism students when they were working on articles in a media project during the spring of 2009. English was a second language to all of them. Many did not feel they could tell the story using the language it deserved because they felt their English was not good enough. They had to make literary compromises which are something most journalists try to avoid. How we use the language like the building of sentences and use of words got lost here.

We use the language differently in different media like newspapers, radio, TV or the web. In radio, you work for example with shorter sentences compared to newspaper articles, you use less figures and numbers and more volume relationships etc. On the web, you repeat the same word more often for search motors to actually find your story. It goes without saying that you build a TV report on both words and images.

You must know the language to be able to see the differences. And the differences are vital in journalism. Most students in the program are still rather young; some come directly from high school. Therefore, let us discuss

- the education in Journalism at Örebro University is to a large extent in English including writing academic reports but
- the practical work being done in the media centre is in Swedish or English, at least during the first couple of years.

Here, we need to learn from international experiences not to lose vital tools in the education, one being able to express yourself in your own language starting off producing journalistic material, another being that the group discussions then gets lost.

In what ways could a new academic programme in journalism contribute to the media market? Obligatory elements?

Fewer journalists will produce more; how to avoid shallow journalism when the flow of information is increasing?

To meet the demands of tomorrow, you must be familiar with the journalistic conditions of today, not yesterday. The demands today are versatile and demands journalists with basic training both in basic journalism and political science plus the practical know how to work in media houses with either print, radio, TV or web etc. Journalists today must also have their own field of knowledge – be it biology, Chinese or business management - around which they can build a network of sources. This is needed working with in-debt journalism.

Doing research, journalists today have access to the borderless internet. The flow of information increases and so does players in both society and on the web.

Journalists working both locally and globally need knowledge about how societies work in order to being able to protect the democratic basis for journalism. It has become increasingly important to identify sources, decide weather they are credible or not and protect sources. **Critically analyzing sources is the backbone of journalism and needs to be scrutinized in a world wide perspective to share experience and knowledge globally.**

A new journalist education needs to adapt to the current media market with cross ownership and flow of information both in the traditional way and on social networks, educate versatile journalists to work in media houses. It is also essential to educate in journalistic ethics and media laws in order for journalists to keep their distance, independence and critical view regardless of how editorial work is financed.

Fewer journalists handle a larger flow of information globally. There are less gate-keepers in media houses leaving journalists and photographers to make editorial decisions; they must be comfortable with making decisions identifying reliable sources and credible work. **Constantly evaluating the content of the work on journalistic principles is essential.**

Therefore it is necessary to from the very beginning train to work in a real environment where you constantly need to make those judgments. “It is easy to learn the theories but a completely different thing to work in reality”, Helena Janson points out. She is a Swedish journalist with experience as lecturer in journalism at UTS, University of Technology in Sidney, Australia and co-author of “Careers in Journalism”. “At UTS basically all lecturer in journalism were still working journalists”.

From the start of the journalist education, you need to train and constantly discuss the problems within the group of students; what is to be produced and how, critically check sources and content before publishing, is it good enough, what happens if is not? What happens if the work is sloppy to the individual journalist and/or the group? It takes a long time to build trust with readers/viewers/listeners and seconds to ruin it. What happens if one member of the group is cheating and a story is being published without the group realizing it is cut&paste journalism? What about copyright rules and regulation? Who makes final decisions and why? How do you work with the equipment you have? Who makes decisions based on what?

A media center needs to be part of the education, where the students produce stories and programs for print, radio, TV and the web. The cost for this is today not overwhelming. Maybe Örebro University can find sponsors, like Ericsson? The Media Program at Tumba gymnasium is for instance “academic partner with Avid”.⁸

⁸ Ad in Svenska Dabladet November 4, 2009

Input from a radio broadcasting perspective, and the freelancing aspect of journalism

Visualized world - challenge for radio

Radio is used to working in real-time and dealing with difficulties connected to the journalistic challenges occurring under stress. While newspapers need to find ways to produce journalistic material in real-time on the web, radio needs to find ways of making radio programs becoming accessible for listeners after air-time. *“Media consumers today are far more flexible and demanding than before. If they do not find what they are looking for, they search somewhere else. In old times, you would change newspaper when your subscription was up. Now you change by clicking on the web. This is of course one of the challenges for Swedish Public Radio. Radio works fine in the digital society”* says Mats Åkerlund, head strategist for Digital media, SR. *“But we are not alone anymore having the most rapid connection to the listeners/consumers. Media consumers know how to search. We live in a society based on recommendations; someone you trust recommends a program, that is how you find it. Listeners take it for granted today that you can listen afterwards to anything that has been broadcasted, be it pod-radio or ituner. We better make sure it is there then!”* Mats Åkerlund agrees that the more visualized world is a challenge for radio. How do you make radio visible? *“We have photos on our web pages, often photographed and edited by radio-reporters, and videos send in by listeners, Mats says.”* Some radio-stations also have video-cameras in the broadcasting studio; it is questionable how many media consumers enjoy that as the quality is still to be improved. Far from all radio-programs have TV potential; it would be boring watching a televised current affairs program with edited reports; all it takes is a host and a computer. Still, transmission costs have come down dramatically as technology has developed. Skype, for instance, is a great tool for both radio and TV journalists and programs. Take Oprah, she often has guests participating through Skype. With today’s technology it is possible to record and transmit both sound and images from places that was unheard of or had impossible connections without expensive satellite transmission. *“And our listeners are no longer limited by the FM-net”*, Mats Åkerlund adds.

Swedish National Radio, like Swedish National Television, is sponsored by license-money based on decisions in the parliament. It is not likely that Swedish Radio will produce moving images. *“With Swedish Television across the park, I do not see that we can use our money to produce TV. Sure, we make videos of our own arrangements like P3 Guld. And today there are co operations between the radio and TV in regards of some sports events. But it is a problem for the radio, how to visualize radio. We need to accept the web culture, which to a large extend is moving images. At the end though, Swedish National Public Radio is about quality and relevance”*, says Mats Åkerlund.

“A radio-reporter does so much more today than just radio. The web takes more and more time and resources. You have to be able to photograph, edit on the web, be active on social medias and understand how the next generation finds news”, writes Dan Segerson, station-manager for Swedish Public Radio in Jönköping, when asked

what is needed from a journalism program. *"I also believe that the future for radio is to be the company ...in the car, in the kitchen, at work and then we must have employees who dare bring out their personality and do their thing in radio. The times of anonymous newscasters are passed."*

Freelance

Far from everybody buying freelance material is like Björn Öijer, longtime editor-in-chief for SIF-tidningen. He would always take time, meet you with mutual respect and handle your material with outmost professional care. And you would get satisfactory pay, be it stories from Sweden or abroad. It was fun working as a freelance for Björn Öijer.

You did not jeopardize your credibility. That is not always the case. Once I withdrew an article after the editor had made changes in the text to the point where it was full of mistakes. If published, the confidence those I interviewed, and my readers, had in me would be damaged.

Last year, I was reminded how humiliating it can be to work as a freelance. An administrator wanted to cut the reimbursement I had dealt with the editor, claiming I was overpaid. I tried to give her the picture of expenses in connection to doing the story in Afghanistan and pointed out that employed staff would have cost much more. Covering everything including research and planning like getting visa and buying air-tickets etc, extra insurance, hotel, translator, car and driver and security, doing the job in Kabul during a few days and editing a couple of days on return I was paid a total of Skr 23.320:- for text and pictures, including social costs and taxes. That leaves about 15 000:- to pay for visa, air tickets, hotel room, car and driver plus security. Now, how much do you think there is left as income to cover regular costs? Of course I must work for more than one employee to meet ends when I get out there and bust my tail. But there is a limit. This humiliating feeling left me with the wish to do something else.

More journalists will work as freelancers. Part of the program need to focus on freelance conditions from different aspects, including how to keep your integrity and how to run your own business.

How to get paid for journalistic work has always been a struggle for freelance journalists. There are union guide lines which the media market seldom follows. It takes time to build a relationship build on professional trust between a freelance journalist and media representatives. A freelance must on her/his own keep updated, build sources, buy equipment and spend a lot of time trying to find a market for the article/report. *"Count on not being paid for 80% of the time you spend on an article. You don't get paid for doing research, looking for sources and building sources. It is a lot of unpaid hard work behind every freelance story of mine"*, as one colleague puts it.

Gabriella Grünwald is a hardworking, rather successful freelance journalist in Sweden. She also knows that networking is vital part from being visible on the web. She is the founder of the network Kvinnodrivet.se to encourage female

entrepreneurs; she is also ambassador for the government sponsored program Women in Business. Gabriella has part from a degree in journalism also a degree in behavioral science and often writes features where she needs to work on getting a relationship build on trust with those she writes about. She constantly fights for methods and ethics in journalism and means that journalists' reputation is at stake if the audience loses confidence in journalistic work. *"The truth is enough. You do not need any superlatives describing reality"*.⁹

A convergence reporter

Journalism as we knew it is changing. There have always been journalists rather negative to the technical development surrounding journalism. Today, you must master the tools. One who has been part of developing them on the radio-side in Sweden is Claes Andreasson, freelance journalist based in Los Angeles, USA since 1989. He has since then covered stories on environment and climate change. Recently, he returned from a trip to Peru. He was asked to share his experience which shows that you as a freelance journalist need to be on the cutting edge to have a chance to stay in the market. You need to have knowledge about the subjects you cover part from technical equipment. Claes Andreasson is also the co-author of the book "Berätta Med Ljud" – att spela in, redigera och mixa i dator", literature for Media Design I at Örebro University. His story "The Thrill of Being a 'Convergence' Reporter" is appendix 1.

Furthermore: how could a new academic programme in journalism contribute regionally and locally?

With a high quality programme in journalism, everybody could benefit. The media market, be it newspaper, radio or TV, need professional staff on short or long term basis. The journalist programme needs to find practice for their students. One problem today with students practicing is that all journalism programmes are not professional enough to have them actually practice in real life. Newspapers, radio and TV don't have the sources to basically train journalists; they need to know they have that basic training before they accept them to do their practice there. There are programs not delivering enough, they do not educate and train their students sufficiently to actually being able to handle a practice situation in real life.

The journalist program needs educators who are experienced journalists still working, being familiar with the current conditions out there on the field. The journalistic world needs the assistance from the academic world doing research on journalistic conditions. The academic world needs input from the journalistic world. This would work automatically with a journalist program networking with the media houses. Everybody would benefit from building bridges between the academic world and the journalistic, not to forget the general public, the media consumers, as the conditions

⁹ Read Journalisten, No 22 3-22 december 2009

for a free and independent journalism would be strengthened in democratic terms. The conditions in the different worlds differ somewhat. Maybe more journalists go into the academic world for a period of time? And maybe more representatives from the academic world get out in the journalistic world? Hopefully the result is better trained journalists and more academic research in journalism. These bridges are essential in the eye of democracy locally, regionally and globally.

At the end, it depends on the willingness to build bridges between the academic and the journalistic world. There is not automatically a dynamic cooperation just because there is a journalism program in a city full of newspapers, radio- and TV stations and web productions like Stockholm and Gothenburg.

The willingness to build bridges, cooperate and look ahead is more important than geography. Örebro University is on that road, the conference at Loka Brunn being a great example. This application sure is.

Summary

The media industry needs journalists able to work in media houses; with print, radio, TV and web. The information flow is increasing, especially on the web based social networks. The web is without borders. Just anyone can collect information, edit it and send it anywhere. Journalists need to be familiar with social networks as well as other websites globally.

The media industry is battling over finances, how to get paid for editorial work. Fewer journalists will be employed at the same time as there are fewer gatekeepers in media houses. In basic journalism, knowing how to identify sources, determine if they are credible and reliable and protect sources, is crucial. In a world with an increasing flow of information, this is vital to protect credibility and trust. It is vital to learn from each other internationally, as working with sources is a completely different task today.

The web for political communication is growing globally. What impact does that have on journalism and democracy?

Journalism is being produced in real time with increasing participation of readers/listeners/viewers. What does that mean? Can/how is this taken advantage of by lobbyists, politicians etc? Are there differences/trends globally?

Editorial material on the web lures media consumers to look for in depth coverage and analyzes. This puts high demands on journalists. Knowledge of specific subjects, like international politics, law or Chinese becomes increasingly important. This can be offered in a journalism program at Örebro University.

More journalists will work as freelancers. How do you keep your credibility in a world where you need to sell your material to sometimes scrupulous editors? What are the

conditions, the reality, for freelancers in today's media industry? This needs to be part of a journalism program at Örebro University.

We live in a more visual world today. Do we evaluate images with the same journalistic ethics as the written word? Images are used differently in different parts of the world, how does that effect journalism?

Journalists work in a global world locally. On every level, there is propaganda, interest groups pushing their ideas, disinformation and attempts to pursue journalists to follow your angle, intimidation or even threats. This needs to be focused on and compared in a global perspective. With the journalistic world and the academic world working much closer together, the problems journalist encounter individually could be lifted to a completely different level. Not only journalism, but also democracy would benefit from a closer relationship between the academic world and the journalistic.

Appendix 1

The Thrill of Being a “Convergence Reporter”

“In 1992 I made my very first digital audio cut. A few months later I was staying in a small, rather shabby motel room in Cedar City, Utah. The purpose of my trip was to cover the city's well-known Shakespeare Festival for Swedish Radio. I was sitting at the edge of my bed, and on my laptop I was able to edit and mix actualities, natural sounds, tracks and music from the performance I had just seen.

Although I had to transfer the final audio story over a rather hissy telephone line, it was an enormous liberating feeling of being able to sit in a motel room in nowhere and be able to do “real” radio stories on a laptop!

The experience from Cedar City was truly revolutionizing to me, yet things have developed a breakneck speed since then. Technically, soft- and hardware has developed quite a lot and have given me almost endless opportunities in my work. It is also a very long time since I had to use a hissy phone line to transfer my stories across the Atlantic. But journalism has also evolved; it is no longer enough to just offer an audio story, I also need to take stills, record video, write and design a web page – present my material in many formats. In today's changing media market, I believe it is absolutely necessary to gain extra knowledge and experience, to work in many fields, to survive as a freelance reporter.

The Internet's explosive development, with this tremendously vast amount of information, has truly changed the role of the journalist - from being the one reporting on an event, to being the person who analyzes and contextualizes. Anyone can Google a topic and find a treasure trove online with more or less correct information, tossed in with more or less valid opinions. It is the role of the journalist to sort, question and evaluate it. As well as present the material in various formats.

So far, it seems as if the big newspapers are ahead when it comes to “convergence.” Beside the written story, you can often find photographs, video and or audio recordings, illustrations and animations, supporting documents and links to additional information. There are also examples of media companies that own e.g. a television affiliate, as well as a cable channel and a newspaper – and where a breaking news event over the course of a day can move between these various formats.

Before long, I believe that this way of using as many different formats as possible will be commonplace for newspapers, magazines, radio and television companies. Which is why I believe it is extremely important to master the necessary tools. As a radio reporter it's no longer enough to just record interviews, write your script, and edit and mix your story. A freelance reporter who wants to survive also needs to be able to offer stills, video, web texts, documents, links and animation. Besides offering various formats of my story, I also need to create my own web page to showcase stories I have done, somewhat of a "show reel" online. I currently have three such thematic web pages online:

- "Dirty Harry – When the American Dream Became a Nightmare:" which is a documentary for American public radio about the U.S. nuclear weapons tests and how it affected the people living nearby, or working at the Nevada Test Site. Besides being able to listen to the documentary in its entirety on the web page, there is also a brief video introduction, extended interviews and photographs. My plan is also to upload even more photographs, video and documents about the nuclear weapons tests.
<http://www.swedishpublicradio.com/dirtyharry.htm>

- "A Day in the Work Life of..." is a series of brief portraits of various professions that I produced for a magazine show on American public radio called Marketplace Money. Using a flash audio player, people can listen to the various stories. The purpose of the page was primarily to show people I contacted for an interview how the stories are formatted.
<http://www.swedishpublicradio.com/indexd.htm>

- "Climate Change:" In the fall, winter and spring of 2008-09, I had a special assignment focusing my reporting entirely on climate change. On this web page, I have gathered most of the feature stories I produced. There are also stills, slide shows, video and since all of the stories were produced in Swedish, there are also translations to English for download. The stories are available in flash audio as well as they are downloadable in mp3 format.

I also think it is smart to use external web site to promote your work. In my case I am a member of the Public Radio Exchange – <http://www.prx.org> – which is a market place for radio stories by independent producers. Anyone can listen and review the stories, and local public radio stations can license a story for broadcast. There are similar market places for still photography, video and written stories.

This being said, I believe that a "convergence reporter" needs to have basic knowledge and understanding in various software – here are a few examples:

- Dreamweaver for web design
- In-Design or Quark for newspaper or magazine layout
- Photoshop to be able to edit and filter stills
- ProTools and Final Cut Pro, or SoundForge and Vegas, to edit and mix video and audio.
- Flash to be able to do simple animation, as well as use flash audio and video players online.
- FTP client to be able to upload material to the Internet.

But the requirement for knowledge and experience, of course, extends well beyond the technical skills. In an increasingly tough media market, I believe it is important to have your own special "beats," topics that you are especially knowledgeable in, closely follow and where you have an ever expanding network of contacts that you are in touch with on a regular basis. The very first story I produced in California related to air pollution. Over the years, environment and climate change has become one of my beats.

As aforementioned, in the past year I had a special assignment focusing on climate change. The project also took me traveling, from Alaska in the north, to Chile, Bolivia and Peru in the south. I recently returned to Peru for additional stories on climate change. I

believe that this assignment and these trips were possibly because my editors were well aware of, and confident that I had the background knowledge and experience necessary.

My most recent trip to Peru is also a good example of convergence; Along with about thirty hours of audio recordings, I also brought back still photos and video, as well as a blog online (the latter somewhat failed due to the lack of internet connection in the Amazon).

The demands on a journalist are much tougher today. Thirty years ago, when I started working at Swedish Radio, it was somewhat of a revolution for journalists to be allowed to edit their own quarter-inch tape. Today, Swedish Radio expects a freelance reporter to deliver a mixed story on a disc or via the Internet (along with photos, texts and documents etc.) A radio journalist also needs to have basic understanding of e.g. what microphone to use when and where. Why mp3 audio is fine on the Internet, but not for broadcast. Where to put the level on the natural sounds in the background in relations to the interview bites etc. The demands are tougher, but by learning more, we also have increased control over our material and we can do a better job. And although there may be a lot of hurdles to overcome, being a convergence reporter is a lot of fun!

Here is a story that is only ten years old:

“Internet audio is not for broadcast”

Hi Claes,

I just heard that the transfer from your web site worked out just fine. Great! This is radio history.

Greetings, Per.

Excerpt from an email from Per Eurenus, Swedish Radio's Current Affairs Dept. March 8, 1999

It was March 5, 1999. The current affair's show "P1 Morgon" had assigned me a story about the coastal city Huntington Beach, also known as *Surf City, U.S.A.* The city had made an agreement with soda giant Coca Cola Company. In exchange for a few, well needed, millions the company would receive exclusive rights to all vending machines in public places.

I met with the mayor and talked with surfers on the beach, who by the way didn't care if the March winds were chilly. "The surf is bitchin,'" one of them told me. That was really the only thing that counted.

Sunday evening and my story was ready to go. But how would I go about transferring it to Stockholm? Together with Lars Nilfors at the department, I had made some earlier, very successful attempts to transfer audio via my web page. Now it was time to try it "for real."

I reached the producer of the show, who sounded surprised that I didn't have ISDN just like the staff correspondents. I explained that I had uploaded the story to my web site. "Web site," the producer said, but offered to try to hunt down someone who could help him download the audio file from cyber space. Moments later he called me back. He had checked with a sound engineer, who had said that "it wasn't possible." And besides, the sound engineer had added, "we can't broadcast that kind of internet audio anyway."

By this time the producer sounded less enthusiastic, but I explained that the sound engineer probably thought we were referring to RealAudio sound quality. "The sound quality of my story is excellent," pledged. "Better than via ISDN."

A few phone calls later my story was on its way from my web page to the Digas audio system at the current affairs department.

“This is damn cool”

The story from Huntington Beach was six minutes total. I had converted it to a 192 kilobyte per second (kbps) mpeg-file in layer 2. At this time I only had a rather slow dial-up modem, and it did take me quite a while to upload the story to my web site. Forty minutes, no less. Today it seems it would have been faster to row across the Atlantic with it.

It has now been twenty-two months since the premiere. A lot of things have happened.

These days I transfer my stories entirely via the Internet. With very few problems and much higher speed. And we have shown that there are simple, reliable and cost effective ways for radio reporters to transfer their stories. Whether they'd be in Ludvika, Lusaka or Los Angeles. And whether or not they are freelance reporters or on staff.

Hi Claes,

It took us three minutes to download the story about "Elia Kazan." And that seems to be the typical speed.

Since it works so well, you don't have to express mail your stories anymore.

This is damn cool!

The next step would be for you to upload a stereo file in mpeg, just to see how it sounds.

Excerpt from an email from Lars Nilfors, Current Affairs Dept. Swedish Radio, March 19, 1999

I believe that one of the strengths of radio is – the audio. The possibility to bring the listener to a time and place they've never been, to make them part of the experience. That means using as much natural sounds, and as high quality recordings as possible.

The technical developments have made good quality recording vastly cheaper than it once used to be. But in order to make really high quality recordings, and to be prepared for all eventualities, this is a list of the equipment I brought along on my most recent trip to Peru:

- Boom pole – a handheld microphone stand that can be extended. It can either be placed on the ground and used as a "unipod," or extended and held in the air above an interviewee's head to avoid getting the microphone in the video frame.
 - Rycote Blimp – a cylindrical zeppelin made of plastic that protects the microphone inside from wind. It also has an outer fluffy cover ("*the dead cat*") if it's really windy.
 - Schoeps SMIT 5U - shotgun microphone
 - Schoeps CCM8 LG – a figure-eight condenser microphone that I use in combination with the shotgun microphone to record in MS Stereo.
 - Sanken COS 11 – two very small lavalier microphones to be put on the lapel of an interviewee.
 - DPA 4088 – a lavalier microphone mounted on a headset. The microphone has a super cardioid shape which makes it extra well suited for recordings in a noisy environment, e.g. an interview in a car. It is also a great hands-free microphone for the interviewer to wear.
 - Sennheiser MD 46 – a typical dynamic reporter microphone. In this case equipped with a wireless transmitter.
 - ElectroVoice RE 27 N/D – a dynamic studio microphone. Since it's dynamic it is less affected by wind and also does not pick up quite as much ambient sound in a noisy environment.
 - Neumann TLM 103 – a condenser studio microphone. It sounds excellent, but can be a little too sensitive in wind and noisy environments.
 - Lectrosonics Wireless Kits – I brought four sets of wireless transmitters and receivers. A couple were used for the lavaliers and one was used to wirelessly transmit the sound from my audio bag to the video camera.
 - Sound Devices 788 T SSD – a twelve track recorder that records on a 260 GB solid state disc. By using a multi-track recorder, I can download the isolated tracks into my computer, work on them individually and use only the ones I want for the final mix. In the field I can also mix down the tracks I want to an individual stereo track, and in a similar way wirelessly send the tracks I want to the video camera.
 - Ultrasonics PROline 750 – headphones.
 - Sony MDR-V900HD – backup headphones.
- ...and a lot of cables and batteries.

In my dedicated (no connections to the Internet) PC computer at home I use:

- Sound Forge – a software to edit, filter and polish the individual audio files.
- Vegas – a software to mix audio and video and render them to a single stereo or surround sound file (or video file)
- Waves – a software with a great number of audio plug-ins for e.g. filtering.
- Wave Agent Beta – software to administrate polyphonic audio files.
- Dreamweaver – software for web design
- Flash – software for flash animation and for making audio and video players for the Internet.
- WS_FTP Pro – software to upload material to a web or FTP site.
- Acronis True Image – software to make an image of my main hard drive, in case it gets corrupted.
- RAID – hard- and software to constantly create an identical copy of my main hard drive. If and when my main drive crashes, I will always have an identical drive, with all my software and files intact, to replace it with.
- LynxTWO – sound card
- Tannoy Precision 8D – powered monitors
- External hard drives – for security back-ups and for transferring files between my dedicated PC and a computer connected to the Internet.

Links on Convergence

Knight Digital Media Center, a collaboration between University of Southern California, UC-Berkeley and the Knight Foundation: <http://www.knightdigitalmediacenter.org/>
Nieman Journalism Lab, at Harvard University: <http://www.niemanlab.org/>
Poynter Institute; <http://www.poynter.org/>

THE END

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