

Working as a Journalist in 2020: What Will It Take?

A Round Table Discussion

Moderator: Gene Allen

Participants:

Derek Chezzi, Editor-in-Chief, Yahoo Canada

Steve Ladurantaye, Twitter Canada

Jonathan Whitten, Executive Director of news content, CBC News

It's no longer news to anyone that journalism is facing a crisis; nor is it news that this presents opportunities for those who are willing to reimagine what journalism is, or might be. Every week brings new evidence of both trends: continuing declines in advertising revenue for newspapers, along with newsroom layoffs; and the emergence of new, mostly Web-based journalistic ventures and methods. Sometimes the two go on simultaneously under the same organizational roof, but often not. Underlying everything is a historic shift in power away from journalists and journalistic institutions and toward audiences.

In these circumstances, it may be worth considering the traditional "theory versus practice" debate about journalism education from a new angle. A frequent criticism of journalism schools has been that they focus too narrowly on producing what Robert Picard, in his challenging keynote address at this conference (reproduced elsewhere in this volume), described as "news factory workers who can be dropped into a slot at a journalism factory." With most established journalism factories shrinking and many facing an uncertain future, this approach is clearly more questionable than ever.

A large part of Picard's critique is frankly intellectual: journalists have insufficient knowledge to explain what truly needs explaining about the world, and their status as defenders of democracy is almost entirely self-ascribed. As well, journalism faculty are not producing enough research that will help us understand and shape their field's evolving landscape. But a second major thread of Picard's critique is that, as the boundaries of traditional journalism become ever more porous, students need to learn a new and different set of what might be called, for lack of a better word, "skills." As digital media challenge "the monopolies on informational functions formerly held by journalists and legacy news providers,"

many of these functions “have been seized by other information providers.” These new forms of communication “are every bit as important to speaking truth and holding power to account as journalism.” In these changed circumstances, Picard argues,

we need to be teaching about how to write and produce content for multiple digital platforms for which audiences have different requirements. We need to teach how to understand audiences and use the avalanche of user data that is overwhelming news organizations. We need to help them prepare their work and lives for new types of journalistic employment. We need to teach them to be digital developers and how to be problem solvers.

The idea behind this round table discussion is that journalism educators should understand these new forms of communication, how they work, and what they require, in order to prepare their students for a world in which they will occupy a growing share of the wider journalistic (or perhaps post-journalistic) ecosystem. This is not to say that journalism education should concern itself solely with the prospect of employment (on this point, see Mike Gasher’s paper in this volume); but no one would argue that a professional university program like journalism (or medicine, law, engineering, nursing, social work, etc.) should have no concern for the eventual employment of its graduates. At the end of the session, an audience member asked whether we were not perhaps just replacing the old factory with a new one. To this, one panelist replied that the kind of entrepreneurial education he was recommending would give young graduates more autonomy than they had in the past. Seeing how this question, among many others, is resolved over the next five years will be one of many intriguing aspects of the changing journalistic landscape.

Gene Allen: When we were organizing this conference, the members of the organizing committee wanted to hear from people in the industry about what they were looking for from graduates of journalism programs. And the immediate question this raised for some of us was, well, what *is* the industry these days? Because it is changing so much, there are so many new forms, the established organizations are going through such a transformation. So we’re fortunate to have three people here representing the different modes and different forms that the journalism business is taking now, and is perhaps taking in the future: Derek Chezzi, editor-in-chief of Yahoo Canada; Steve Ladurantaye of Twitter Canada; and Jonathan Whitten, executive director of news content for CBC News. We owe a special thanks to Steve Ladurantaye – having just won a National Newspaper Award in Charlottetown last night, he took the midnight plane to get back here today. So we have one transforming legacy news organization, we might say, and two more in the new media, digital-native camp.

I'm going to start with an easy question to get things going: What do you think the journalistic landscape will look like in the year 2020?

Derek Chezzi: Let's just think about four years ago, when students might have been entering the stream, who might be matriculating this year – what has changed? The landscape has changed so dramatically in those four years. Now online video is a focus. We didn't really have tablets at that time. I'm trying to remember when I bought my first iPad – I think that might have been 2010?

Steve Ladurantaye: 2010.

DC: Social media was something that was there, was starting to be reported on, but now it's so integral to our operations ...

SL: If one thing is clear, it's that news will be more mobile ... The *Globe and Mail* is the example I have off the top of my head. The *Globe and Mail*'s Rob Ford story, where they paid all the money for the photos from the video – the traffic for that story was 68 per cent mobile ... It wasn't going to their website, it wasn't going to print. Is print going to get any better? No. Are websites going to be more popular? No, they're probably not going to be. And what does that mean? It means it's going to be mobile. It may be phones, it may be tablets – I think it's probably phone.

But this is where I'm going to sound like a broken record throughout this whole panel. I'm going to keep saying the same thing: I don't think any of that matters when we're talking about journalism, because we're still delivering stories and we're still delivering content. The platform, and where the money is going to be, and how it all shakes out – we have no control over that, largely. You know, some newspapers are going to go up in flames, some TV stations are going to vanish and go online only. But [for] journalists, the storytelling skills are what really matter. I wasn't hired at Twitter because I'm good at social media, I was hired at Twitter because I'm a good reporter. They want to know, as a content delivery company – they're not a content company – what do people who write content need to get their stories out to the people who want to see them? How can we build roads that will get people to stories, where they're going to be in 2020? And that has nothing to do with being good at any one platform, or any one trendy thing that's happening right now. I was [on] a panel earlier, and they were talking about how much time should we spend teaching students to code? That's the exact same conversation we were having in my classes – I went to college – about desktop publishing, fifteen years ago. There were people in my classes who failed because they couldn't define encapsulated postscript – I'll never forget it, EPS files. The people who would be very good storytellers didn't need that technology, necessarily. So I'm

going to keep saying over and over: it's more important to teach people to write well, to be clear in their thoughts, to know what a good story is, to be able to pitch that good story, and to get off their arse and get out of a newsroom and go talk to people, which I think is the number one thing we should be teaching because it just doesn't happen any more ... What the business models are going to be a couple of years from now, I don't know, but I think the core of what we do hasn't changed an awful lot from when I went to school, and when people are going to school now. And it's really easy to lose sight of that as shiny things come along and show promise ...

Jonathan Whitten: I think there's probably a thousand things we could talk about when we're looking forward to 2020. I'm going to pick five. And some of it is obviously guesswork – who knows what we'll be dealing with then? – but looking at trends and looking at what's happening so far, I'll talk just briefly about five things.

One of them is wanting to build a little bit on Robert Picard this morning, [when he was] talking about entrepreneurship. It's not exactly in the way that he talked about it, which was becoming a start-up. It's more that I think in 2020 – we're seeing it now, it'll be really clear then – reporters are going to have to be entrepreneurial, even if they're working for a large media organization like ours. They're going to have to find their audience themselves, and they're going to have to be pretty good at doing most of the work of finding their audience. So today, if you're a radio reporter, and you've got an item, and you're in a radio newscast that's at a strong part of the morning, on a strong network, buttressed by a good morning show, you're going to find your audience. I think in 2020, the entrepreneurship will come from not having that luxury any more, and really having to do the hard work of finding people who are going to consume your content. That, in a sense, is not just looking at contacts as people to give you information, but using that contact base to actually accelerate the process of delivering what you're doing. And part of that entrepreneurship will mean being much closer to the business than I think reporters are now. That's not finding advertisers, it's finding new formats, it's finding new ways to reach audiences. So I think *entrepreneur* is actually an important word to use, and I didn't want it to get lost. People need to leave journalism school and have that ethos and do a start-up. Even working for a big company, you're going to need to do that.

Working for a large, unionized organization, what we'll see for sure by 2020 is the maybe a hundred job categories that we have right now coming down to something like ten. More and more jobs are merging. There aren't the disconnects between a writer and an editor, a producer and a reporter. We're seeing it already, and I think that by 2020 you're going to see that happen at an accelerated pace. The technology is allowing that to happen, and I'm not just talking about forcing people to do more work. I think actually it's a good thing in a lot of ways. It's not just a question of now sending one person to

Ukraine where a large organization used to send five. It's just that if you send five people to Ukraine, one of them is not the camera, one of them is not the reporter, one's not the producer; you're breaking it up in different ways. You're breaking it up by a.m. and p.m., by breaking news and context, so it's a whole different way of looking at how you deploy. And I think in that universe, it's more about being a journalist than about whether it's camera, reporter, producer.

I think we'll also see – I'd like to see students coming out of journalism school and helping with this, because I know when I was in school we were learning formats that existed in conventional forms of television and radio. People have to come to us with new formats. Having seen, for twenty years, people predicting the death of the 6:30 network newscast in the United States, or the prime time newscast in Canada – I don't necessarily want to do that because that's a bit of a mug's game – but I think by 2020 the conventional two-minute news item will have largely merged or will live in a much smaller space than it does now. So really what we'll see by then is an explosion of formats, an explosion of figuring out new ways to tell stories ... templates that can be used over and over again ... that can deliver text, audio, video, photos, separately, together, whatever it's going to take, and that's going to have to shift constantly to meet whatever the next iPad is, or whatever the next piece of technology is.

This is an obvious one, but I do think that it will be truly digitally driven. A lot of us who are now in broadcast, at least, or new media (and perhaps less in print) would say that we are digitally driven ... I think we'll move very quickly from trying to figure out how our broadcast content will work on digital, to trying to figure out how our digital content is working in broadcast. So you'll see a total flip in how we approach content. And I do think this will lead – and this is maybe more provocative – to a landscape where it really will be all about content. Again, talking about a large, multiplatform organization – radio, television, online, local, network – I think you'll see the part of the organization that's dedicated to assignment, or to bringing content to different parts of the organization, or lining up a program, or creating a program, that portion of the operation will shrink, and the portions actually newsgathering will expand. You'll see verticals that will be divided, perhaps in the same way they are now around locations, or around areas of expertise or around specific kinds of content – City Hall, if you want to think about it in an old-fashioned sense. Those content-creating areas will be expected to deliver at certain times of day, certain kinds of content, some depth, some context, always breaking news, and deliver it in a way that it's understood where it will go and where it will be received. So essentially, your newsgathering operation grows and if it works out and if you can make it all come together, the part of the operation that actually delivers the content shrinks. For newspapers, that's really about the thing you'd be reading. People are just creating content all day at some papers, and the number of folks who put the paper out is actually shrinking and shrinking. I think you'll see that trend move into television and radio. So that's five areas that I would capture, among many.

SL: You've seen that in newspapers, for sure. When you're looking to 2020, you want to be the person producing the content, or you want to be the person bossing those people around, and you don't want to be anything in the middle. If you're working at the *Toronto Star* or the *Globe and Mail* as a copy editor, your company is outsourcing your job to itself through another division for half the money. And that's going to keep happening in everything. Circulation has been merged. I have one guy who delivers four newspapers to my house every morning. It's not four different guys delivering four different papers, it's one guy. That's going to happen across all media. Content producers are going to be the bosses, and that flattens out so the people who are producing the content have to be able to produce *all* the content, because there aren't going to be those big support networks in between.

JW: The way we think about it sometimes is – if we've got a couple of people in Afghanistan doing a series of stories, you'll often find at any big media organization that the various sections or platforms or whatever it is meet in a room. You've got seven or eight people sitting around talking about the work of the two people in Afghanistan and where that work is going to go and what it's going to look like. What we're talking about here is a shift, where you've got two people in a room somewhere, trying to figure out where all of this stuff goes, and eight people in Afghanistan. Now that's aspirational, and we'll see if that actually comes to pass, but that's the theory, at least in my mind, of where we're heading.

DC: I find it interesting that you characterize it as the merging of jobs and the merging of different classifications. Because where I work, we're a digital organization; we don't have this legacy business where you have all these different touch points coming together. The challenge we find in hiring people is that the people coming out of the schools don't have the combination of skills that we're looking for. So it's interesting that you mention storytelling skills, but for us that's only one part of it. There are curation-type skills that we're looking for in the editors who come through the door. They need to be able to understand analytics. Even if they're not super-familiar with math, as long as they're comfortable with numbers and comfortable looking at spreadsheets and building PowerPoint presentations and looking at dashboards ... [with] being able to synthesize that information, extract insights. How does that inform the choices that they're making going forward? They don't all necessarily need to have coding skills, as you mentioned, but they need to be familiar enough with taking a project from the beginning to completion to be able to – sort of like in project management, not as project manager, but that kind of a context – to be able to communicate with developers, explain to them what the needs of the writers and the editors are so that the CMS [content management system] works. Being able to communicate to the developers, who might not have the sort of consumer-facing experience, or the same sort of touch, in terms of how the

readers are interacting with the content. To be able to communicate to them what sorts of changes are needed to the front end to be able to increase the performance – sorry, I use all these types of words, that’s how we talk internally – being able to, as you say, work on a mobile platform. So there are a number of skills ... and you know, these are skills that are portable between industries as well. Students can take and use them in the journalism media context, but then [maybe] they want to move outside of that and get into a job with a technology company, for instance, where increasingly that’s where we’re seeing a number of jobs open up.

GA: Derek was essentially answering my next question, which is, what are the intellectual capacities, skill levels, and attitudes that journalists will need in order to thrive in the new environment, and how will these requirements differ from what they’ve been in the past?

SL: Well, I think the two things that you need to know – and I don’t always agree that you need to be taught a lot of this stuff while you’re in school – are the ability to be flexible and the ability to pick up new things. The technology will change from year to year, content management systems will be different, you’re going to be doing things five years from now that you weren’t doing five years ago and all the rest. Just the idea that you need to be nimble and teach yourself these skills as you go. Nobody taught me how to code, but it was very clear five years ago at the *Globe and Mail* that if I wanted to build a spreadsheet and make sense of it, that’s what I would have to do, so I went and did it ... I think it’s really important that people do understand that. There’s a lot of self-directed learning that has to happen if you’re going to stay current. The fundamentals don’t change. What *will* change over time is the way you deliver it, and if you don’t understand analytics as a reporter in 2014, or whatever year we are, then you’re going to be in some kind of trouble. Even if you’re not going to let it dictate your coverage, you need to understand how all of that works. Whether you need to learn it in school or not, I’m not convinced, but that’s something you need to understand. As journalists we haven’t really thought that way historically, we haven’t really thought about what the broader business is all about. We haven’t thought about the implications of the way we write stories and the way we deliver stories. Changing that mindset and talking about advertising levels, or the best way to deliver content – it doesn’t have to be a dirty conversation.

JW: If we are talking 2020, I have to think that social media, photography, video shooting and editing, all these kinds of things – people will come equipped with that because they’re life skills now. Certainly for my fourteen-year-old they are, and they’ll increasingly become that way. When I went to journalism school, I wasn’t taught how to use the telephone. I think we’ll see the same thing in 2020. You’re not going to have to teach people how to do those basic things. I’m not up on what’s being taught now, in

terms of things like video editing in a place like Ryerson, but the latest iteration of desktop editing that we're rolling out right now is very similar to what you would edit on with a \$90 program for your home computer. It's quite intuitive, fairly simple to use, so if you don't show up at journalism school already having those skills, then we'd wonder why you were there. So I agree that those specific skills don't really, shouldn't have to be taught. I think they're life skills, now more than ever, and certainly will be in four or five years.

To add a bit in terms of what I think the attitudes are going to have to be – more than ever now, people are going to have know how to find stories. It's amazing still to see people who don't have that as a skill, and I think increasingly, as distinctiveness and an ability to get yourself an audience, and an ability to rise above the rest, to move beyond basic news, as that becomes more of an imperative to helping your company become successful, then finding stories is really [going to be] key to thriving. And I think having a passion for stories too is ... something that's important now, often not as prevalent as you might think, but that needs to be there for the future.

SL: Historically, you could ... kind of half-ass a story in the past and it would go in a newspaper or on air, and you had no idea if anybody was reading it or not. You can't really play that game any more. Increasingly, you know exactly who your audience is. When I was at the *Globe* the last couple of years, I wrote about media, which is a fairly marginal beat in the grand scheme of things. There are maybe 4,000 people in the entire country who care about it regularly, but I was able to deliver those 4,000 people because I went out and found those people. They found me on social media, I was targeting my coverage at them, I was listening to what they were talking about. I couldn't have done that years ago. You didn't get that instant feedback, where I could say to the *Globe*, "We have to keep doing this beat because I can see the traffic on this story, because we pushed it there." So reporters who understand how to push their own coverage, or their own audience, and more importantly understand that their audiences are going to have audiences increasingly as well, and that you need to take advantage of that ... You need to distribute your own content, and in order to do that, you have to actually be producing good content. Before now, as I said, you could have half-assed it a lot more than you can now. Everything's measured -- that's fundamental change.

DC: When I started at Yahoo, the notion of the editor as the gatekeeper was just starting to fray apart, and the idea of editors as facilitators for conversations was part of the conversation in the industry at that time – just closing that feedback loop. And now it's gone beyond just the editor – the individual contributor is the one who's actually fostering that. So you're putting your piece out there, marketing it essentially, listening to, looking at the conversation, taking that feedback from the conversation, using that to inform

how you follow up your piece, or what is the next topic that you're following up on. That's just at the reporter level. Then you stand back, and editors are using that [information] every single day to optimize the overall traffic to their websites. You mentioned self-taught – whenever I speak to students, the one thing that I mention to them is that the skills that we're looking for ... all the tools to teach themselves these skills, exist today for them, for free. They can go and create a blog on WordPress or whatnot, and plug in Google Analytics and just look at the traffic on their own blog, test ideas out, see how readers react to the different pieces of content they're developing, understand how search works ... distribute their material on social networks, see how that is and just test it out. There's nothing stopping any of these people, the students who are coming in, from just playing around. It could be that the institution, the format for education in journalism, is going to be fostering that behaviour, but also providing them the opportunities, the laboratories where they can go in and learn from people, and from one another. So maybe it's that everyone has to put out some sort of website, or a Tumblr blog, or what have you, and test and test, and learn from one another, and see what worked and see what didn't, because those are ultimately a lot of the skills that they're going to learn.

JW: If you think of an app like Videolicious, or something similar – I'm sure they'll have more of a role to play in newsgathering in the years ahead. The kind of content you can create with that app in an hour, it's amazing to think what it would have taken just ten or fifteen years ago to create similar content, in terms of mixing stills and video and audio, and adding music. And now it can be done intuitively in an hour with a free app. So that's disruptive.

SL: I think one of the important things for trained reporters is that they can use those same apps but they do it a lot better. So, sure, the six o'clock newscast may not be what it once was in 2020, but one of the things I'm currently obsessing about is what happens when you take that six o'clock newscast and you explode it essentially? You've got all these pieces, and it doesn't have to wait until six o'clock. You could do that two-minute segment at ten in the morning, if that's when the news happened, and distribute it and reach your audience. And then, there's no reason you can't package that all back up at the end of the day and put it there for everybody who didn't see it. Having the technology that lets you do that is actually very liberating and very exciting, because you're doing quality work. It's no less – well, it's always going to be more work. The one thing I always hear when we're talking about new things that you can do is, "Oh my god, there's going to be more work." We need to get over that idea, because everything we ever do for the rest of our lives is going to be more work than what we did yesterday ... But with the tools we have there's a lot we can do and that's pretty exciting.

DC: It's also different work. That's the other thing: people see it as more work, but some of the work that they were doing, they no longer have to do, so it should be shifting. Whether that's at a traditional organization or even at Yahoo, it's the same thing: we're changing, we go through eighteen-month cycles where it's just change, change, change. People who started at the organization eight years ago still need to learn how to adapt, and there are the same grumblings you would find at a traditional media organization: "Oh, it's more work, we have to do this ...". And the answer is, well, yes, but we're going to free up some time by no longer worrying about these other things, and that's just how we're going to shift. We need to be flexible and we need to be able to adapt.

GA: Let me pick up on that point, the idea that you cease doing something in order to do other things. The people who are involved in journalism education spend endless amounts of time trying to figure out what we should be doing with the curriculum, and it's essentially a zero sum game. If you do a bunch of new things, there are things you're already doing that you have to cease doing. I was very encouraged when I first spoke to Steve about this panel, and he said that the basics of journalism – the ability to report, identify a story, tell a powerful story – are still highly relevant. But what do you think are the basics of journalism? Jon, you were raising questions about the two-minute TV news report, which some people who teach the course, like me, might think is a basic format for TV journalism. What do you think really are the basics that we absolutely should make sure that our beginning students know about?

JW: The folks I mostly deal with are mature staff so I don't do necessarily a lot of hiring. So I did ask around and the answer is unanimous. You can teach it, I think, although I think from my own experience that if you have it, you have it, and you can get better. And if you don't, you may not be getting it. But it's writing. It's the answer that I got from everybody. It seems obvious, but certainly, no matter what you think of in terms of future formats or future ways of gathering, wherever you are on the spectrum, you need to be able to write. Even if you're going to be doing more visual storytelling, there is metadata, there are things you have to input, there are captions, there are all kinds of things. So writing is a basic skill. It's a tough one to teach, though, but for sure that is the answer that comes back, and that makes sense to me.

SL: The things that you can't teach, and you hope that they have when they come here, are just the curiosity and empathy that people who are interested in journalism bring to it. And then it does come to the writing. I don't necessarily mean 9,000-word boring pieces about whatever, just the ability to organize thoughts and streamline them in a way that you're going to be able to (a) identify a good story, (b) pitch the good story to your editors in a way that they're going to let you do it, and (c) actually deliver a compelling piece of journalism in whatever medium you're going to do it in. But you need to be able to

identify those stories and be able to deliver them, and that's a skill that needs to be taught in school because it's a way of thinking, it's a way of understanding the way people consume news ... At the most basic level, I would agree that writing is the key because that allows you to get into everything else.

DC: I'm not sure it's just writing. As we're becoming increasingly digital, there is probably a suite of five or so basic skills that we need that go beyond writing. I agree that it's the foundation. But if we think increasingly that everyone's a content creator – whether that's just our utopian vision (or not) that everyone is kind of equal at that level, that everyone is able to create – then what sets people apart? What is it that will make student journalists marketable, let's say? And more than journalists, people working in media? That's where I think of analytics. Being able to listen to audiences and understand what audiences are asking for – I think that it's going to be demanded of everyone who's working in the business, so I would say that that's a critical skill to have. And then communication, written but also oral. You'd be surprised at how many people can't really communicate orally. To be able to take ideas and synthesize them and speak to their own team members, but also externally, in between teams ...

GA: Thinking of the journalism curriculum, if you had to identify one thing that journalism graduates will need that they are not now getting, or are not getting enough of, or not getting in the right way – is there one thing that you really wish journalism graduates did better, or had more of, or knew more about?

JW: I'll agree with Derek and try to push a little farther: it is really understanding the business. Not the larger business, not advertising or necessarily even revenue, but just understanding the business that we're in now. This search engine optimization, all these skills that are now held by a few people in a large organization, will, before long, have to be held by everybody and understood by everybody. So, understanding the business, understanding not just what works but why it works, how it will work better, the kinds of stories that will get an audience, all that to me would be really critical. It isn't now, and as long as there are enough new people coming in to a larger organization like ours who have that, then we can push forward. But we're not going to hire anybody in four or five years who doesn't have that understanding of how things work.

DC: A little anecdote: I was talking to someone recently, a young journalist who's trying to map out his career, and he really wants to write long-form journalism. That's what he wants to do, and he's determined to do it, which is great. But he keeps insisting that's what readers want, and I'm encouraging him in the different ways that he can be successful in doing that. But at the end of the day, in terms of understanding the business, I can probably tell you what percentage of the readers want long-form. It's

not to say that people just want light and trite necessarily. People do want good content, but different platforms have different consumer experiences; people interact with them in different ways. There's room for long-form. You could probably make part of your career doing that, but the business has moved far enough and someone at his age should be ready to understand all the tools and the different inputs where he can actually determine whether or not that's what people want. And from that he could use that information to help map out his career.

SL: A realistic world view of what they're walking into is also helpful ... I don't know if anybody's mentioned I won an NNA last night, but that was a 9,000-word story that got a ton of traffic and it was largely read on mobile. It got 82 per cent mobile readership; that went against everything we thought we knew about long-form journalism. But the week before I wrote that story, I got my biggest traffic hit story of all time when I wrote about Paulina Gretzky's boobs. It was a three-hundred-word story that was flashed on the front page and got hundreds of thousands of page views. I'm okay with both. And I think you need to understand, when you talk about all the traffic and the measurement and the engagement, there's no one way to do this and you need to be able to adapt and do all sorts of stories. So that you get to do the stories that you want to do eventually.

JW: It is a mix. For everybody who wants to celebrate – and we do celebrate investigative pieces and enterprise pieces rocketing to the most-viewed section on our own website – there are things like phallic topiary in Windsor which will also rocket up there to first place very quickly, or a four-year-old story about a guy who cut down a power pole just so someone could come and find him in the middle of a forest. It's a mix of stuff, and it kind of all has to be there or else *we're* not going to be there.

DC: I would just mention, though, that for all the different sorts of stories that you mentioned, people's interest hasn't really changed. There's "I want the gossipy, I want the rubbernecking pieces", and then there's a segment of the audience interested in the deeper investigative pieces. Now that said, there's a skill set that we also look for, that I think every media organization looks for, which is, how do we take those stories, and how do we package them in ways that are for different platforms? But also in different ways so that readers can enter into the story from different doors, let's say. Can we take this story and pull out a shorter piece that some readers might be interested in? I'm thinking about this because I just recently read about the *New York Times's* package mapper software that they developed ... It's interesting, basically it's a piece of software, internally developed software, that's allowing them in real time to see user flow on the website, so that they can optimize the traffic on the *New York Times* website. And when we talk about what sorts of skills we're looking for in the newsroom and the merging of jobs –

it's a very interesting time for media in general, for people who want to get into it and don't want to do traditional reporting necessarily, but who are interested in the business, who can come in and perhaps they can start off through the journalism stream so that they can get that foundation that is required to be successful in their careers. But they also might want to do audience analytics specifically, enjoy being able to develop innovations that will then help their organization be successful. There's lots and lots of jobs I see emerging, and it's the digital disruption that's propelling this. Some of them are within the organizations, new roles within the organizations. Some are organizations like ours, but also like Twitter and Scribblelive and CoveritLive, where they need journalists to be able to make their platform successful because it's not successful if no one is using it. So it's a tool there to be used, and they're looking for storytellers and people who can speak to news organizations, to clients essentially, and help them to use these tools to help the media organizations themselves.

SL: Heather Mallick from the *Toronto Star* is following along on Twitter and she answered the question about what journalism skills students must be taught, and she emphatically said *reading*. Students do not read.

DC: When I meet journalism students, I'm fascinated by those who say they want to get into print and then you ask them what they read and they say they don't read. They're not reading newspapers and they're not reading magazines but they want to get into newspapers and magazines. And then I ask them, why? If you don't consume those forms, why would you want to get into it? Then they're writing the stories for the *Ryersonian* [the multimedia news website of the Ryerson University School of Journalism] and I just say if you're not reading that, who's reading that? ... Invariably they're getting their news and information from social networks and apps and whatnot. And I say, then think about your career. You might want to steer it towards where your consumption behaviour is because chances are that's where your peers are and your peers' peers, and that's inherently where the industry is moving.

GA: I wanted to ask you about career patterns. Jon was saying early on that entrepreneurialism will be an important asset inside larger organizations like CBC, but I think everybody agrees that the kinds of career patterns for young journalists entering the business now are going to be very different than the ones most of us have been familiar with. I wanted to ask how you see the career patterns of journalists changing and what particular attributes they should have. We talked about knowledge of the business and flexibility and so on, but are there any other particular attributes – ability to do a start-up, for example? Or those kinds of harder business skills?

SL: Having recently left the *Globe*, one of the first questions I always get is, “Why would you leave the *Globe*?” As if this was the most prosperous time in newspaper history and it’s the most non-understandable decision ever. And then they’ll say things like, “Well, you could stay at the *Globe* a long time. My dad was at the *Ottawa Citizen* for forty-three years. Isn’t that what you want?” And all I can think is I hope to God I’m not working at Twitter three years from now. The world is changing so quickly now that I don’t want to commit to something for the next five, ten, fifteen, twenty years. I want to go where it’s interesting and I think that’s an attitude that journalists have to have now. When I left the *Globe* there was a memo sent out that I had left journalism. That was the way they phrased it, and it was kind of hissy. But I don’t think that’s true any more, the way it used to be. You need to be able to step out to understand what’s happening, step back in once you understand, and I think that’s the way it’s going to go. You build the skills and you pick up the stuff you need to know on your own, the self-learning and all the rest of it. You know you’re probably going to be changing organizations a lot ... I’ve never felt that you have to do one thing and I think that’s only accelerating now and the definition of journalism changes as well.

DC: Back to the entrepreneurial piece – one of the ingredients to success for entrepreneurs is being able to identify a problem and then finding a solution to that problem. So for some, it’s getting into an existing organization, be it large or medium or small, and a lot of the medium and small ones are the ones that are struggling and have some of the biggest problems to wrestle with. And spending some time in there and understanding how that works, and then getting out, perhaps, and then trying to find a solution that can help many.

SL: I worked at the *Peterborough Examiner*, and the pattern was you would go there for a year and then go back to Toronto and work at a Toronto paper ... But the people that stayed after I left are still there and they’re not leaving for Toronto and they’re not leaving for anywhere else. They’re leaving for the Chamber of Commerce and things like that. So that path doesn’t exist any more. So to that point about being entrepreneurial and making your own way, if you want to stay in journalism that’s going to be increasingly important, I think.

GA: I’d like to turn it over to the audience.

Question: Most of our students are women, and I was reading something recently that suggested the technical nature of many new online-related jobs means women are being shut out of these positions. Are

you seeing that? And what's the male–female ratio among those two thousand engineers and eleven journalists?

SL: On the journalism side it's probably about fifty–fifty. My boss is a woman. On the engineering side, it's no secret that Silicon Valley companies are very bad at being representative of the broader community. Google just released their stats, I think they were something like 60 per cent white, 30 per cent Asian, 80 per cent male. On the programming side, historically, that's been the way it's been. We're taking steps to correct that at Twitter. And Google is also consciously trying to hire more inclusively. But historically it hasn't been the case that a lot of women have gone into those programs. I think that's changing; there are coding academies all around Toronto that are geared specifically to teaching women how to code.

Question: We've ended up talking a lot about delivery and not very much about how news will be gathered. I noticed that when you were describing your ideals, quite a bit of time went by before Jonathan talked about gathering the news and getting information. I wanted to open that door and talk more about, how would you be doing your job? How will you be gathering the news?

JW: I'll be optimistic. As technology gets better – it's lighter, it's easier – people will be less encumbered with it and the storytelling won't suffer. I think there'll be more time to tell stories. One of the things that may be difficult for me as a person who started as a local reporter, with the cameraman and an editor who were separate people, and an assignment editor in a very traditional newsroom, is to tell people now, here, we're going this [different] way. At the same time, I try to remind people that even in the mid-1980s model it wasn't as if we were spending all day just waiting until five o'clock. You were constantly checking back with the desk, you were taking notes, you were calling your assignment editor explaining what the story is. All of that kind of work can be translated into digital, just in a different fashion. So the notes that you're taking, you might be transcribing an interview instead of holding on to that until you get an edit suite at five o'clock now. That should get pushed out all day long, and we're starting to do some of that, so that as information becomes available, it's out there ... Those discussions with the assignment desk, those things now can happen on air. Even at the beginning of the day, when you're deciding, "What do I want to find out today? What am I going to chase down? What am I going to try to learn about?" That has a value too, and maybe that's something we do in a digital sense to let people know what we're chasing. So the arc might remain the same, it's just that the destination is different. We're not aiming toward six or nine o'clock at night. As we get information, as we dig things up, [we're] delivering it immediately in different forms. And those formats will change ... So the form, at the end of the day, will

change, but the basic gathering, I hope at least, will remain just as important. And in some ways unencumbered with some of the conventions that exist, it might actually be better.

Question: We talked about all the work we no longer have to do. Everyone's obsessed about how hard it is to learn new things, without considering how much time we'll save, even on the most basic activities.

SL: Finding information has never been easier, and by 2020 it's going to be even easier. The baseline – find the person, where do they live? How do I get hold of them? All that is going to be easier than ever, that's a given ... But going to the house and knowing how to interview, and how to talk to people, is more important than ever because everybody is just pulling in data all the time. We're obsessed with data right now.

DC: Think about how we bring the reader and the audience into the newsgathering and the distribution, into the process. Writing is hard. That's why you don't have a lot of audience participation in that. What are they sharing? Videos and photos. Why? Point, shoot. Record, shoot, share. The end. And that's why Instagram, why photo sharing online is as big as it is, because it's easy. And so when CNN or any of the other broadcasters share content from the readers, what is it? Photos, videos ... So increasingly, it will be easier to do that and you'll see more audience participation in that regard, but the writing will probably be relegated to the staffers and then the contributors, the people who know how to do it, and probably some experts. Editors and writers will be going out there and finding those bits of information and taking them on. One of the best pieces, or the pieces that I enjoyed most, on the Malaysian Airlines story, for instance, was published in *Wired*. It was from a Canadian pilot who had written on Google+ his own theory on what happened to the airline, which to me was one of the most fascinating stories I had read at that point. And it's going out there and finding those pieces of information. But not everybody can write. So you'll still have some experts, some people who can do that, but there'll be a lot more of that kind of sharing with the reader. I have these sort of romantic visions or fantasies about the idea of an open portal to the newsroom, where anyone can talk to the editorial team at any time – readers – and you have this kind of conversation happening all day long. You can just check into what they're doing and there's basically a live Webcam happening in the newsroom. And you can see how boring really the newsroom is.

Question: For Steve – are the results of measurement always right? And if not, when are they wrong?

And for the broader panel, how would you respond to the suggestion that you've done a wonderful job of describing the news factory of 2020, considering Mr. Picard's assertion this morning about the role of journalism education being more than providing workers for the news factory.

DC: What do you mean by when is it not right?

Question: You've done a wonderful job of explaining the extent to which analytics are underlying everything. So is the ability to measure, and the results of that measurement, always the right answer for journalism?

DC: No.

Question: So when is it the wrong answer?

SL: There were many, many times when we went against what we thought the analytics would show us or where the analytics were trending, and we didn't use them as a reason not to do the story, but to either change the delivery or change the packaging. So if a story is tanking and the analytics are saying nobody ever wants to read that, and you can rewrite the top and do it as a video instead, and you see it rise up then – we still got the same story out, but it just wasn't reaching people the same way.

Question: Is it going to be more and more difficult to fight the argument that analytics are everything?

SL: Analytics *are* everything though, right? But it doesn't mean you have to listen to them. If you think something is important, nothing precludes you from doing that. That's the basic function of the newsroom, is to say every once in a while, okay, well, we know the analytics aren't going to love this story, but we think it's important so we're going to do it anyway. And we'll also do five Justin Bieber stories so we can bump up the rest of the site in the meantime.

DC: It depends on what you're measuring, at the end of the day. You use the number to develop insights into whatever it is, the audience behaviour or the audience trends, and you use that to inform. The numbers should not dictate what you do, they should inform. Sometimes you use the numbers and you follow through with them and you say, if we do X it will deliver Y result. But sometimes you say, "We know it's not going to be popular but we're going to do it anyway." Popularity isn't always the be-all and end-all of what we're trying to achieve ...

For a while, everyone was chasing hits ... And why was it hits? Because that's how we were measuring the traffic on a page, because the advertising industry had determined that hits and then page views were the most important metrics. I was at the ONA's [Online News Association] conference ... six years ago? At the time when it was just, "Oh, metrics, what is this?" And everyone was freaking out because they didn't understand what metrics were and why they were important. Fast-forward four years and everyone is familiar with metrics, so everyone in the room knew about them, it was part of their day-to-day. But what was really encouraging was because so many journalists now had their hands dirty on metrics, none of them wanted page views to be the determining factor on whether it was successful, whether it was quality. But nobody had the answer about what should a successful metric look like. And I think we're getting to that place now where we're starting to define what successful metrics look like for the news organization. Not so much from the monetization perspective but to determine what is quality work, and how we want to measure the performance of our teams.

SL: It's all the scale, right? Phillip Crawley [publisher of the *Globe and Mail*] freaked us all out one day by telling everybody at this conference that 40 per cent of the stories on globeandmail.com were read by fewer than a thousand people. That's a shocking number when you're sitting in the newsroom and you're saying, "Oh, well that means nobody's reading the stories, why are we doing the stories?" ... But it's a sliding scale. You're always going to get more traffic for the Toronto Maple Leafs than you're going to get for a media story. But a thousand clicks for me on a story about Postmedia [Postmedia Network Inc.] – those are the right thousand clicks, and we're willing to take that hit. So the analytics may not be as good, but there's an understanding now that we didn't have two years ago that those thousand people who are reading that story are the ones I need. They're more valuable to me than a hundred thousand cheap readers.

DC: What I also try to champion as often as possible is setting benchmarks for each of the categories. So our politics section will not necessarily have the same type of traffic as our celebrity section. But that's okay. What we're trying to do is measure the politics section's performance relative to other politics performance. You don't look at everything you produce and say, "Well, this bucket over here is more popular, so do more of this." It's, "Our politics coverage isn't doing as well as it should, what can we do to elevate it a little bit more?"

JW: And on your other question, I guess I failed miserably on the panel because I really was trying to push the idea that you should move away from the craft skills. Everything we've talked about in terms of

running a business is where it should move, and not learning how to work in a factory. Being able to run the factory and being able to build the factory are the important things to teach people ...

Question: A lot of metrics focus on counting page views and unique visitors. But are we not missing out on some other, far more important metrics? How do you measure social impact? For example, our students have done a major body of work about issues affecting the LGBTQ community, and it's come back to us that through reading one of these students' stories, someone who was on the brink of suicide decided that life was actually worth living.

JW: But isn't analytics about reaching somebody like that, reaching more people like that? It's not just about doing that story and deciding it didn't reach enough people and not doing that any more, it's about figuring out – what time of day are you going to send it? What's the headline you're going to put on the story to capture a whole bunch of people who are searching for it? ... It's the ability to find an audience and to take whatever you're doing and get it out there. It doesn't mean that if you do something and it doesn't work in quite the way you thought, you never do anything like that again. But it *is* about maximizing your audience and learning how to get more people to look at your stuff.

Question: In 2020, will technology have developed so that we have better ways to measure the impact that stories are having?

DC: To me what you're describing, though, is not analytics. It's basically setting goals for your project ... Maybe part of your measurement for success is, have we changed a piece of legislation?

JW: We use those metrics too.

DC: When you're setting out, embarking on a project, analytics can be part of it, but there are qualitative success metrics, let's just call it success measurements.

JW: For us as an organization there are multiple things. It isn't just page views, it's not just digital. But it *is* impact, in terms of making changes in society or surveys of your audience.

Question: Where do we as educators go to learn the new skills we need?

DC: The business is changing so quickly right now ... How can the curriculum keep up when the business can't even keep up? I'm sure there were lots of conversations today about ways of restructuring it, where perhaps the first year is a foundation taught to all students, and then there's the fifteen-month apprenticeship, a year and a bit. They come back in September, and then it's a laboratory type of structure where the educators are facilitators and they're bringing together developers and journalists, so that they're bringing all the latest insights from the industry back into the classroom. That's where you're learning from one another. The students are learning from the professors and vice versa, to be able to take that next step and direct toward the future. And the other thing that struck me, looking through the schedule for the day and thinking about journalism education, is – what is journalism education trying to do? Is it trying to basically deliver a group of people who have the skills necessary to work in the industry? Or is it the higher learning aspect of it, where you're preparing a group of people to go into the market and to disrupt, and to be the leaders and the innovators and the entrepreneurs and to help drive the business forward? They're two very different things, and educators and education programs need to decide what it is they want to deliver.

Question: What do you think about paywalls and ad revenue, that challenge, and what j-schools should be doing?

DC: Have you seen the Mary Meeker report [<http://www.kpcb.com/internet-trends>]? *The Atlantic* did a really good summary of it [<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/05/mobile-is-eating-the-worlds-attention-11-amazing-graphs-on-the-state-of-the-internet/371727>], but basically it's showing where people's attention is compared to two years ago, and where the ad revenue is. People's attention span is declining in print, and digital is where it's on the increase.

Question: Are there particular skills that journalism students are going to need in this context?

SL: I went to Twitter because the conversations that needed to happen about the future of journalism and monetization weren't happening in newsrooms. They're happening in places that aren't traditional newsrooms, like Twitter, like Yahoo, like Facebook. And if you close your mind off to those sorts of opportunities then you're never going to figure out these problems. [Because of] this idea that the only place to do pure journalism would be a newsroom, and you're going to do it this way and you don't care about money and you never talk to the advertising department and custom content is the devil, and all the rest. We have to get away from that mode of thinking, and that's maybe where the traction is in the education sector ... You're going to be working with ad reps, you're going to be talking to the editors

about, “We have money for a project because of this, how are we going to do that in a way that doesn’t make us feel dirty?”

DC: With the Olympics, for instance, everyone who worked on the team knew what our targets were. We shared with them what our revenue was or what advertisers were spending, but we said, “This is the traffic we need to deliver to the various parts of the site to be able to deliver on the campaigns.” And everyone buys it. On your point about attitude, everyone needs to understand this and everyone needs to be working toward this goal. Because it’s not only editorial team-based, at least at our organization – all of Yahoo Canada is successful when we are all successful together. It’s not compromising any of our principles, necessarily, in terms of what we’re trying to craft. But we are crafting a consumer experience that we think our audience wants, and we’re trying to marry that with what we need for it to be successful financially.

Question: But that doesn’t mean that your reporters stay away from stories advertisers don’t want?

SL: I would never suggest that ...

Question: But when we hear about the imperative need to break down firewalls and start turning the newsroom into a business ... it sounds a lot as if people don’t understand what it used to be like and what the motives used to be [for maintaining the separation between the newsroom and the business office].

SL: We’re in an existential moment now, where not everybody’s going to make it any more. Twenty years ago you could have this conversation and say, “Yeah, we want to make money and we don’t want to close” but, you know, only three papers were going to close over the last hundred years and it’s going to be twenty in the next five years.

Question: I wanted to ask Derek – what you said sounds to me like you’re really interested in trust in your brand, and that you’re willing to have a lot of stuff up there that is going to draw people in, and also other stuff that you consider important but may not attract people immediately. Which is very interesting to me, because one of the criticisms of legacy media is that they were not prepared to cope with the fact that people really were interested in only certain stories and that the whole idea of trust was somewhat outdated.

DC: You have to understand, our audience is very wide. Seventeen million Canadians come to the network on a monthly basis. Different properties, different channels – business news, sports news – have different audiences and they all have different interests. We try to appeal to everybody, to a wide range, and then we're also trying to appeal to specific niches. And I think to be successful in general, to grow over all, you need to pursue both. You need to pursue mass, wide interests, but also specific [ones]. So, we have a really good hockey blog, for instance, where half of the audience are dedicated readers of that blog and then maybe half, probably less than half, are just general interest. They're tourists who come through once in a while based on whatever the topic might be. We do look at ways of identifying needs of our audience and what we can fill, and we think there are opportunities to go and grow audience by filling those niches.