

# “Post-Industrial” Journalism as a Creative Industry

Lynette Sheridan Burns, Benjamin J. Matthews

**Abstract**—The context of post-industrial journalism is one in which the material circumstances of mechanical publication have been displaced by digital technologies, increasing the distance between the orthodoxy of the newsroom and the culture of journalistic writing. Content is, with growing frequency, created for delivery via the internet, publication on web-based ‘platforms’ and consumption on screen media. In this environment, the question is not ‘who is a journalist?’ but ‘what is journalism?’ today. The changes bring into sharp relief new distinctions between journalistic work and journalistic labor, providing a key insight into the current transition between the industrial journalism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the post-industrial journalism of the present. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the work of journalists and journalistic labor went hand-in-hand as most journalists were employees of news organizations, whilst in the 21<sup>st</sup> century evidence of a decoupling of ‘acts of journalism’ (work) and journalistic employment (labor) is beginning to appear. This ‘decoupling’ of the work and labor that underpins journalism practice is far reaching in its implications, not least for institutional structures. Under these conditions we are witnessing the emergence of expanded ‘entrepreneurial’ journalism, based on smaller, more independent and agile - if less stable - enterprise constructs that are a feature of creative industries. Entrepreneurial journalism is realized in a range of organizational forms from social enterprise, through to profit driven start-ups and hybrids of the two. In all instances, however, the primary motif of the organization is an ideological definition of journalism. An example is the Scoop Foundation for Public Interest Journalism in New Zealand, which owns and operates Scoop Publishing Limited, a not for profit company and social enterprise that publishes an independent news site that claims to have over 500,000 monthly users. Our paper demonstrates that this journalistic work meets the ideological definition of journalism; conducted within the creative industries using an innovative organizational structure that offers a new, viable post-industrial future for journalism.

**Keywords**—Creative industries, digital communication, journalism, post-industrial.

## I. INTRODUCTION

WHEN Steve Jobs introduced the first iPhone in January 2007, he focused on the way in which it could be used to access the Internet, and told the assembled crowd that Apple was making history [1] and that media and communication would be transformed by the new technology. Just over a decade on, the way we consume, produce, and pay for journalism has been irrevocably changed. Mobility can be seen as part of a pattern of convergence that has generated the broad uptake and use of social media, and the smartphone’s

facilitation of access to social platforms, especially Facebook, has become the main source of news for most people. These changes have exerted unprecedented pressure on the industrial model of journalism, wherein dissemination of journalism is controlled by those who also control the means of production. This control previously allowed the mass media to monopolize advertising revenue but in the last 15 years, that revenue has increasingly moved away from news media to social media.

By 2022, there will be 6.1 billion mobile subscribers using smartphones, for many of whom they provide the only means of access to the Internet [2]. The iOS 9 mobile operating system released in September 2015 included Apple News, an RSS based news aggregation app that employs algorithms to tailor feed style content for the individual user, and to present it in the aesthetically pleasing “Apple News Format” [3]. The app reviewed poorly, and was criticized for lacking functionality [4]. In September 2016 iOS 10 was released, including an updated news app that is made available via a single right swipe gesture from the home screen of the interface. This newer, more sophisticated app allows for greater personalization, and includes a capacity to learn from your interactions and update feed content accordingly, whilst permitting subscription based access to paid news services and perhaps most importantly, allowing publishers to push breaking news notifications to mobile devices [5]. In the post-industrial era, the full impact of people using news apps over traditional media is still emerging, but there are already clear indications that the way journalism is created and presented has changed. For example, the particular affordances of digital communication have led to the emergence of a plethora of news aggregation sites, where content is curated from other media or contributed by users. The presentation of this journalistic work is also strongly influenced by the medium of delivery with a tendency toward article summaries linked to original articles. The introduction of mobile access to the Internet created an environment in which audiences could access news without recourse to commercial legacy media (newspapers, television and radio). This development destroyed the historical interdependence between legacy news media and the advertising that paid for its production, which in turn has led to a worldwide reduction in traditional media outlets, and a consequent reduction in employment opportunities for journalists at a scale not seen before [6]. The precarity that now characterizes journalism employment is a new phenomenon, where the journalists’ privileged access to the means of production has been irrevocably lost.

Perhaps most significantly, open access to digital dissemination platforms has allowed for a rise in entrepreneurial, social journalism where producers are not constrained by commercial imperatives. This space has also seen the development of new ways of organizing journalism

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work, based around emerging organizational models that are collaborative rather than commercial, and have the professional and ideological features associated with a longer history of journalism labor. For example, the expanding prevalence of “entrepreneurial” journalism is based on smaller, more independent and agile - if less stable - enterprise constructs that are a feature of the creative industries [7]-[9]. Whether social enterprise, profit driven start-ups or a hybrid of the two, the primary motif of these organizations is an ideological definition of journalism; and the journalistic work produced by these new organizations meets the “professional” requirements of verification, transparency and public interest. These developments shed new light on the issue of labor precarity and test the usefulness of “post-industrialism” as a way of thinking about journalism. Such an approach overlooks responses to precarity that take advantage of another industrial context: that commonly described in policy and research as “creative industries”. This phrase allows for the introduction of novel labor contexts for the practice and production of journalistic work, realized through a combination of the market pragmatism of entrepreneurial journalism and the philanthropic motif that marks social enterprise. The last employs both an entrepreneurial approach and charitable institutional structures that attract funding from a variety of sources, including donations from private citizens, and private and public institutions. These changes shine new light on assumptions we continue to make about journalism in scholarly research, where the pendulum of change is currently swinging toward a somewhat utopian view of “innovation” as a resolution to a range of crises; real and imagined. While the matter is far from settled, we are at risk of repeating the past by basing assessments of the future on old assumptions about markets and audiences. Therefore, we map the broad contours of what might be considered post-industrial, increasingly entrepreneurial journalism, with the caveat that this phrase should not be considered a catchall for a new paradigm, so much as an attempt to grapple with an emergent set of labor conditions.

## II. REDEFINING JOURNALISM & JOURNALIST

One of the complexities of the post-industrial landscape is that definitions of journalism, more or less stable since the introduction of the newspaper as a commercial enterprise in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have lost their relevance. As the division widens between journalistic work and journalism labor, the question “Who is a journalist?” becomes complicated because journalism could be produced by anyone. At the same time, merely engaging in journalistic activity, such as taking a photograph at the scene of an incident or posting to a blog, does not necessarily produce journalism. This difference prompts the question: Is a journalist defined by their output, or their intent? In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a journalist was easily defined as someone who was employed by a media organization to gather and report “news”; but the relevance of this definition is now in question because important journalism is being created and disseminated without recourse to media organizations. Indeed, definitions of journalism that rely on

access to the structures and practices of 20<sup>th</sup> century media are increasingly irrelevant. Reference [9]’s review of scholarly, legal and industry publications that sought to define the term “journalist” exhibited this trend. They developed a definition reflecting how a journalist is commonly understood, which they reduced to: “[S]omeone employed to regularly engage in gathering, processing, and disseminating news and information to serve the public interest.” They concluded that such definitions “fail to recognize the legion of unpaid citizens who gather, process, and disseminate news and information on matters of public concern, making them largely obsolete.” [9, p. 61]. However, this “industrial” definition continues to inform such vital processes as policy formulation, and as recently as September 2016, the US Senate reinforced its definition of a journalist as an employee in a proposed “shield law” designed to protect the confidentiality of journalistic sources. Here, a journalist is defined as “an employee, independent contractor or agent of an entity that disseminates news or information ... [who has been] employed for one year within the last 20 years or three months within the last five years” [9, p. 61]. While broader than previous definitions that privileged current employment, this articulation still assumes that journalism must be mediated through an institutional structure before reaching an audience. Opponents argue the proposed law should protect the practice of journalism, not the occupational group “journalists” [9, p. 62]

### A. Journalism as Labor and Work

The journalist, under this definition, is therefore someone employed by one of these institutions to produce journalism. The definition of a journalist as a member of an occupational group is now unsatisfactory because it fails to account for the increasing dislocation of journalism work from journalism labor. Journalistic outputs can be produced by anyone working within the normative ideological frame of journalism, which has remained relatively stable despite the many material changes outlined here. Journalism labor, on the other hand, can be seen as exposed to a new experience of precarity [7]. It is no longer, and perhaps has never been, adequate to define journalism only in terms of the processes used to produce it. A second abiding definition suggested that a journalist is defined by the qualities of the work they produce. The limits of this way of thinking about journalism are evidenced by a recent proposition in *The Huffington Post* [10] that five tests distinguish journalism from other forms of communication. These are:

“Is the product intended for the general public? Is the work creative and analytical rather than a simple relay of raw information? Is the reporting based on verified information? Does the product convey multiple points of view? Does the author acknowledge any conflicts of interest?”[10, p. 1]

Using these criteria, journalism can be produced by anyone and without recourse to institutional support. However, the reliance on a 20<sup>th</sup> century view of “objectivity” in these criteria means that they could also be applied to many forms of promotion and advertising that do not serve the public

interest. Reference [11] described the frames of journalism as labor and/or work as the dominant means of defining journalist from “non-journalists” until the 1990s. They proposed that journalism was more accurately described as a profession because journalists answered to higher calling - “to seek the truth” - than mere employees [11, p. 36]. Professionalism, defined by acceptance of this ideology, was the dominant model for describing throughout the 1990s.

The US Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists still reflects a professional ideology that distinguishes between advocacy and reporting, suggesting that the former is not journalism, and positing public interest as the primary motivator of journalists. The Australian Journalists Association, which is part of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, publishes a Code of Ethics for its members. The code describes the professional journalist as “employed in private enterprise, but with public responsibilities” [12]:

“Journalists describe society to itself. They seek truth.

They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression. Many journalists work for private enterprise, but all these have public responsibilities. MEAA members engaged in journalism commit themselves to honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others.” [12, p.15]

The code reinforces the professional definition of a journalist as a person who has a measure of independence in their exercise of their duties and must accept personal accountability for their work because of the power they exercise [12, p. 3]. The idea of journalism as a profession, self-regulated by its own industrial unions and codes of practice, is under constant challenge. The MEAA has no power to compel workers to join or adhere to its code of ethics. The strengths and weaknesses of journalism unions vary from country to country, but generally such organizations offer only guidance to members, not regulation. In addition, codes fail to take account of social journalism and not-for-profit journalism, where the transparent presentation of a political, social or ethical position of the journalist is a feature.

### *B. Journalism as Ideology*

This way of thinking presupposes that journalists are defined by their acceptance of an ideology that emphasizes the accountability that comes with power and privilege. Under the professional model, a journalist is defined by their integrity, measured by the degree of commitment to truth over personal gain. Journalistic integrity is defined compliance with the social obligations that come with a privileged position in society to disseminate information. Specifically, integrity is interpreted to mean that a journalist places the public good ahead of personal advancement and profit [19].

Reference [13] describes the professionalization of journalists in the period 1960s-1990s as an ideological development, where the emerging ideology was used to refine and reinforce consensus about who a “real” journalist was.

Deuze examined a wide range of literature that attempted to define the essential qualities of a journalist and identified core values or beliefs suggested in these studies: these values emphasize that journalists perform a public service, that they are fair, autonomous and ethical. This he states is the basis of the journalist’s claim to being a “legitimate source of information” [13, p. 447]. He then argued that the definitions found in literature about journalism fail when tested in the actual conditions under which commercial journalism is produced. These concerns are not new; in fact, the negative impact of the rise of market-driven journalism in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been shown to significantly hamper the capacity of journalists to reveal hidden matters of public interest, or to expand the variety of perspectives voiced in the media [14]-[18]. Reference [16] found that facts were not elusive, but the path to identifying the truth was incompatible with the demands of market-driven journalism that did not allow time to check and double-check the veracity of information. Similarly, reference [18] found that where the primary objective of a news organization was efficiency in the gathering, describing and transmitting of news, the result was frequent reliance on official sources, and high levels of homogeneity in reporting. Reference [19] described how reliance on news sources to increase the efficiency of news production affects the news agenda. Under pressure, journalists tend to select those news items that are the easiest to find and edit such as items provided by public relations companies. She found the daily reality of journalists as employees contradicts the assumption of individual independence that is at the center of the professional model. Reference [14] puts it bluntly:

“A reporter or editor in a profit-maximizing media firm who subordinates market standards to those of journalism may be tolerated about as long as a counter clerk at McDonalds who refuses to sell fried food.” [15, p. 23]

Reference [13]’s critique of abiding definitions did not consider the emergence of journalism created outside the industrial model though his more recent work does [20]. Reference [21] proposed a framework that moves past individualist and institutional approaches, allowing for a broader definition and understanding of the practices and processes that make up contemporary journalism:

“It is crucial to recognize that the supposed core of journalism as well as the assumed consistency of the inner workings of news organizations is anything but consensual, nor is it necessarily the norm. At the same time, it would be a mistake to assume that the types of journalism emerging outside and alongside legacy news organizations are necessarily different or oppositional to the core values, ideals, and practices of the profession. We propose to widen journalistic conceptualizations beyond the false core-periphery dichotomy, understanding that the core is no more homogeneous than the so-called periphery, while neither necessarily represents the other’s antithesis” [21, p. 4].

The definition of what constitutes journalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is still contestable, especially in light of transformative changes in journalism work and journalism labor, the effect of which is not yet clear. It is clear however that journalism can no longer be described simply in terms of employment status, nor limited to the processes used in creating journalism work. Such descriptions attach no social obligations to the power that individual journalists exercise in framing the world for audiences and also fails to account for new media forms that have already emerged during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Considered as an ideology, what distinguishes journalism from other media activities is the notion of service to the public interest; the journalist can be anyone, but only if they adhere to the normative principles and processes prescribed by the ideological frame for journalism that emerged alongside its professionalization during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This frame remains dominant despite the pressures and failings of the last 25 years and in this sense journalism may still be defined as bringing to public attention the material importance of something that someone, somewhere, would prefer was not exposed to scrutiny.

### III. POST-INDUSTRIAL JOURNALISM

#### A. Context of Post-Industrial Journalism

In December 2014, the Tow Centre for Digital Journalism - a research center of the Columbia Journalism School - published their USA focused report, "Post-Industrial Journalism: Adapting to the Present" [22]. The phrase "post-industrial" is appropriated from the writings of reference [23], who first used the concept in October 2001 on his blog to describe his frustration at the difference between inexpert opinion journalism published in the week following 9/11, and the 'blog world':

"Out here where personal journalism lives, nobody's pumping content. Everybody's seeking and sharing. Here we're more motivated by *the need to know* and *the need to share* than by the need to tell a finished story, or to embellish the prevailing one with more tendentious facts and opinions" [23].

The author argues that the distance between the world of "personal journalism" and the domain of opinion journalism such as editorials, reviews and op-ed essays is understood in terms of proximity to the influence of the publishing industry, where writing is "essentially an industrial process, like extruding rails at a steel mill", that generates "finished products in the information production process" [23]. He concludes that content is the goal, and expertise is irrelevant in the face of an industrial imperative to fill publications and generate attention. Thus, post-industrial journalism is understood as lying beyond the direct influence of mechanistic industrial processes that move forward irrespective of social, cultural and political implication.

Reference [23] qualifies his definition as "journalism no longer organized around the norms of proximity to the machinery of production" [23]. It is a relationship that is understood broadly by to translate to a newsroom governed by

a practical, rather than managerial, rationale where "the people producing the words had to be close to the machine, often in the basement, that would reproduce their words" [23, p. 12]. The context of post-industrial journalism, then, is one in which the determining material circumstances of mechanical publication have been displaced by digital technologies, creating a growing distance between the orthodoxy of the newsroom and the culture of journalistic writing that is with growing frequency created for delivery and consumption on web "platforms" via screen media and the Internet. To examine this context in more detail, we explored the key features of post-industrial journalism, and its impacts on journalistic "work" and "labor". The distinction between journalism work and journalism labor is important [24], because work is the "physical or creative effort that produces a deliverable product or accomplishes a task", and labor the "delivery of services/work by an individual for payment" [24, p. 6]. This division translates into a key insight around the transition we are witnessing between the industrial journalism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the post-industrial journalism of the present:

"In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalism in most countries developed in a fashion where the work of journalists and journalistic labor went hand-in-hand as most journalists were salaried employees of news organizations. The 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, is beginning to show evidence of a decoupling of 'acts of journalism' (work) and journalistic employment (labor)" [24, p. 6].

This "decoupling" of the work and labor that underpins the practice of journalism is far reaching in its implications, not least among which is the reconstitution of the institutionally defined structures and practices it had relied upon during the industrial era. Here, for instance, we are witnessing the emergence of expanded "entrepreneurial" journalism, based on smaller, more independent and agile - if less stable - enterprise constructs. We expand on the features of post-industrial journalism below.

#### B. Features of Post-Industrial Journalism

Post-industrial journalism takes on an ideological dimension in reference [22], which is entitled a "report" but described by the authors as an "essay" that is also "part survey and part manifesto", designed to intervene in an emergent "news ecosystem" in the USA [22, p. 1-2]. This is a move that seems to be in keeping with reference [23]'s initial designation of the term as associated with a "personal" process of expression driven by the "need" to share and exchange knowledge and ideas about the world in real-time via such autonomous platforms as independent weblogs. Specifically, the authors begin from the basis of five core beliefs. These are:

"That journalism matters; that good has always been subsidized; that the Internet wrecks advertising subsidy; that restructuring is, therefore, a forced move and that there are many opportunities for doing good work in new ways." [22, p. 2]

In sum, the authors argue that journalism is important, and needs to be protected from the market whilst being subsidized by an alternative revenue stream, and that the monoculture of news production linked to advertising has broken down. Organizations that adopt hybrid approaches to journalism based on partnering with and participating or collaborating with a range of organizations and entities (down to the level of the individual) are springing up, and they are better positioned to survive as they are not embedded in the old paradigm, and the legacy of assumptions and skills it entailed. We align our discussion with this perspective and these values, and set out to investigate the fifth of the core beliefs described here, which is both ideological and structural, institutional and pragmatic. We ask: What opportunities are presently being exploited, and what can be done to achieve the goal of doing good work in new ways? This discussion is therefore less about the future of the industry, and more about engaging with how it is that the practice of journalism has already shifted with the creative industries to occupy a more dispersed location in a broader range of formal and informal settings that are, by extension, variously institutionalized and realized across diverse organizational constructs. Such an endeavor cannot address “the future of the news industry,” for two reasons the Tow Center report identifies: “the future is already here”, and “there is no such thing as the news industry anymore” [22]. Under these (already) destabilized conditions, we are seeing a recalibration of journalism on a global scale, and in New Zealand and Australia there is significant evidence of this. The emergence of entrepreneurial journalism is a good example, but in all instances, the primary motif of the organization in question is an ideological definition of journalism, aligned with the one adopted in this essay.

### C. Impact on Journalism Labor and Work

Entrepreneurial journalism [25] exhibits the decoupling of journalistic work and labor in an industrial context where the uptake of new communication technologies plays a key role. Here, the Internet and digital media create the possibility for a move beyond the “freelance” model where labor is contracted to multiple organizations simultaneously, and toward the establishment of small to medium sized enterprises (SME) based on the creation of content to be distributed through websites and blogs, or syndicated through other businesses. Importantly, this pattern of enterprise supports “one or a small cooperative of journalists and provide[s] coverage of local communities or specific topics” [25, p. 4]. Thus, a key influence of entrepreneurial journalism on journalism labor is the generation of locative and special interest expertise in collective contexts of practice, such that the experience, identity and professional focus of individual journalists is being altered. The effects of this shift away from institutional employment as part of large scale enterprise and toward an entrepreneurial model are far reaching, with the cooperative activity of individual journalists in the SME scope of activity not representing a suitable scale of operation to replace the traditional, large-scale media outlets they would supersede. This is a format of ‘forced entrepreneurship’ that generates

greater worker precarity in less stable contexts of labor that require journalists to take on greater financial risk and to conduct a range of activities previously executed by employers [25, p. 18]. The established role of freelancers will clearly continue, and potentially expand, but the broader impacts of this move toward greater labor precarity are likely to be marked over the coming years as career journalists leave the workforce, and future practitioners attempt to balance competing contexts of labor.

“[I]t is inconceivable that they will not have some impact on decisions about career trajectories, family timing, and indeed whether or not to become a journalist. Perhaps most importantly for those who are self-employed, many journalists are no longer journalists alone; other activities – notably consulting, public relations, and communications – supplement journalistic activities and incomes” [25, p. 18].

The effects of this mixing of contexts raises important questions around the likely impacts of a shift toward consultancy roles for individuals who had previously been engaged solely in journalistic roles, inviting new challenges to the integrity of the ideological definition of journalism. This may be the least of journalism’s concerns, given that the would-be careerist may be dissuaded by the prospect of growing labor precarity, and the elevated demand for journalism to be considered a calling, rather than a stable plan for the future.

Reference [7] notes the rise in the discourse of entrepreneurial journalism amongst scholars, journalists and commentators (in North America in particular) as an optimistic “vision [that] sees the very technologies used by corporations to destabilize journalistic employment as solutions for a flailing industry” [7, p. 513]. For her, the concept holds the danger of focusing discussions on the profit motif, overlooking the implications of precarity for the experience of and output from journalism, and “narrowing the space necessary to consider alternative ways of organizing media production and journalistic labor” [7, p. 528]. We seek to address this prospect by considering the particular circumstances of creative industries as a setting for journalism to be conducted under a new paradigm where smaller firms exhibit a number of advantages over large institutions, and cooperative contexts of labor can enable journalism and journalists in ways that exceed the hierarchical construct of large enterprise. Reference [7] argues that at present, “little attention is being paid to working conditions and attendant power relations” [p. 528] of precarious journalism labor is an important one, and indicates the need for an expanded and ongoing project of ethnographic investigation of particular situations of journalism labor.

### IV. ALTERNATE MODEL: SCOOP FOUNDATION

As we have shown, these “crisis trends” have certainly had a significant impact on recent journalism, and scholars have mapped how fragmented audiences and reduced advertising revenue have led to shifted modes of professionalism as tabloidization and marketization expand in their influence, and

work practices move accordingly toward multi-skilling [21]-[22], [26]-[30]. Recent research from US-based organs including the Knight Foundation, the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, and Harvard's Nieman Foundation has focused on the potential for journalism work to be conducted in broadening contexts, leaving some cause for optimism about the post-industrial epoch. Reference [25] argues that this and other similar recent offerings on the topic of the future of journalism fall back on "innovation" as the escape route from "questions of digital journalism's democratic aspirations in favor of market-oriented solutions", such that the detail of the relationship between the elements in emergent socio-technical systems have not been subjected to effective scrutiny. Innovation, they argue, "has come to operate as an ambiguous signifier in much of the discourse surrounding the future of journalism, open for interpretation and often used to forward visions of journalism that adhere to the market dynamics defined by Internet and technology companies" [25, p. 1]. They point toward the 2016 Tow Center for Digital Journalism's investigation that concludes: "Journalistic innovation now often means keeping pace with the largest and most agile of the social media companies" [p. 2]. The detail of this fluid context of journalism labor and work is unclear, so any account that attempts a comprehensive perspective on a contemporaneous and future paradigm of journalism is bound to become mired in the competition between the orthodoxy established by those dedicated to the history of journalism as a field of study, and the detail of the present and emerging future. Reference [21] sees this as generating two trends in the literature: one in which scholars attempt to stabilize the field by "producing impressive handbooks, canonical anthologies, readers, and companion volumes (and corresponding special issues of scholarly journals and conferences)" that dedicate themselves to a narrow definition of journalism, while the second trend involves diving "head first, into the chaos" [21, p. 2]. The last investigates particular emerging contexts of practice, generating growing ethnographic fieldwork that pays particular attention to the workplace, and theory that tests the boundaries of the field. Reference [21] responds to this bifurcation via a "dialectic attempt to move beyond journalism" [21, p. 2], that seeks to broaden, and to "soften" the definition of the field of journalism. They suggest we presuppose "permanent instability inside the news industry as well as the structural and structured nature of people committing acts of journalism outside of it", and that our accounts be grounded "more solidly in the lived experience of journalists and doing journalism" (21, p. 13). Reference [24] similarly argues that "empirical research on the changing nature of journalistic work and journalistic labor is still limited" (p. 21), suggesting there is virtue in ethnographic investigation of the "work" and "labor" of journalists in emergent structures, and particularly those that appear to have attained some stability over time. Such stability indicates the presence of a more enduring instance of an emerging context of journalism work, and perhaps the opportunity to moderate a plunge into the "chaos" [21].

The Scoop Foundation for Public Interest Journalism in New Zealand is a salient example of a novel, hybrid organization that is dedicated to fostering journalism and located in the creative industries. This is a not for profit organization "dedicated to supporting the publication of trustworthy, relevant, public interest information, freely accessible to all New Zealanders, so that they can participate in democratic processes" [31]. The Foundation owns and operates Scoop Publishing Limited, a not for profit company and social enterprise that publishes *Scoop*, an independent news site that claims to have over 500,000 monthly users [31]. Scoop.co.nz has been in operation since 1999 [32], but only began to receive support via The Scoop Foundation in September of 2015, when it was first incorporated as a charitable trust [33]. The Scoop Foundation operates Scoop Publishing Limited to raise funds with the goal of building "a sustainable financial base", and achieving "broad distribution of public interest journalism content" as part of an ongoing brief to participate in "the future of news media in New Zealand by creating an independent, sustainable and participatory model for news publishing" [33]. It is clear from the language employed throughout Scoop's published materials that the orientation of their layered organizational structure is reflexive of the need for institutional stability to underpin journalism, which is assumed to perform a vital social function as part of a sensibility that is future oriented, and politically motivated. Here, the instrumental democratic facility of journalism is located as a moral potential, and as requiring an ethical framework that is provided via institutional forms in a manner that is collectively (democratically) articulated. This participatory model of institutional development is clearly set down in the stated goals of the Foundation cited above, and the problems it sets out address are aligned with broader symptoms and pathology diagnosed by the scholarly literature.

"New Zealand media is in a state of crisis – disruption of advertising markets has led to mass layoffs and a vicious cycle of quality and credibility deterioration. Advertising and trivia is increasingly disguised as news, while many important stories and perspectives are missing from news feeds. Funding and forums for quality independent 'public interest' journalism are absent. Especially here in New Zealand." [32]

These issues are located within the frame of an ideological definition for journalism as independent work that serves the public interest. Their values, as stated on the website of the Foundation, are certainly apropos to an ideological definition of journalism: "seek truth and report it; minimize harm; act independently and honestly; be accountable and transparent" [32]. The organization is at pains, where the market threatens to intrude on these values, to advertise the mechanisms employed to stabilize journalistic autonomy. For instance, having indicated the market pragmatism of their layered structure, the Foundation claims that the "editorial independence of the Scoop Publishing company is enshrined in our trust deed" [33]. Support for Scoop Publishing Limited to "transition to a sustainable business model", is based on

“selling ethical pay-wall commercial use licenses” that “secure continued free public access to Scoop’s complete database” [32]. The public face of this institution strives to present a context in which journalists are empowered by agency that comes with professional prestige maintained with relative autonomy that is realized via funding achieved and maintained in a suitably ethical fashion.

The cultural features of Scoop, therefore, include the necessity for market pragmatism that is ethically framed, but also underpinned by philanthropic funding. For instance, they employ the New Zealand based crowd funding platform Pledge Me, to raise moneys for particular projects such as the “Open the Election” campaign to enhance coverage of the approaching 2017 New Zealand Federal Election [34]. The details of this funding are interesting in their focus; of the funding:

“\$10,000 was used to build and implement technology tools to open the election; \$10,000 to fund quality journalism on issues that matter to subscribers and \$10,000 for Scoop production, publishing and editorial costs” [34].

The breakdown of the funding includes support for a range of socio-technical systems, where communication technologies play a central role. This reveals a further vital feature of the case study, in that alongside the use of language and strategies that are future oriented, is an approach that is reflexive of the network effect and operative within a fluid, digitally mediated environment. This sensibility is evident in the stated goals of Scoop, which include taking advantage of peer-to-peer relations by seeking “to open source the learning and technological tools developed in the process to assist other organizations to follow this path and form an ecosystem of independent news and media publishers” [33]. This phrase is derived from the *Enspiral Handbook*, a wiki-style digital publication hosted on the web and advertised as articulating the structure and values of the Enspiral Network, a collective organization that originated in Wellington, New Zealand in 2010. It is constituted by a “horizontally” structured, decentralized organization governed by its more than 300 participants, working primarily in a variety of social enterprise and creative industries. The organization is interesting for its capacity to maintain stability in the absence of strong hierarchy by using socio-technical systems that are constructed around digital communication technologies; and in particular, the infrastructure of the Internet. The Enspiral Network provides non-financial support to Scoop by including it in their network, presenting it on their website and providing a “highly visible platform for posting Enspiral or Enspiral Venture blogs and press releases” [33].

The sustainability of Scoop appears to be strong, and likely to be maintained via the benefits associated with these network organizational strategies. The achievements of the Foundation over their initial period of operation are not inconsiderable, and as stated on their website are as follows:

“In our first year we reached our target of finding over 1000 members. We raised over \$72,855.17 in donations from the public. We have funded our first investigative

journalism project – a series by Alison McCulloch focusing on Post Natal Depression in New Zealand. We have lent Scoop Publishing funds to help its transition to a fully subscription and ethical pay-wall-based sustainable business model. The company has met 90% of its monthly overheads for the past six months from commercial sales and forecasts it will reach full commercial sustainability early in 2017. Completing the transition to profitability is the primary objective of the Scoop Publishing Company. Scoop.co.nz will continue to publish its timely and complete high-quality independent news and commentary service for New Zealanders”. [34]

It is of interest that a key measure of success for the Scoop Foundation is understood in terms of market pragmatism: the primary objective of their intervention as a layered organization is profitability. This entrepreneurial motif involves far more than the blind innovation identified in the literature that posits optimism for the future of journalism, but is instead part of a sophisticated, multi-faceted strategic approach to creating a future proofed organizational response to the post-industrial context of journalism.

There is no doubt that fieldwork will yield ethnographic richness that reveals the usual complications that challenge and constrain the activities of all human organizations. However, when viewed discursively and at a distance via their public facing communications, the Scoop Foundation and its sub-entities exhibit a relatively novel set of characteristics that are reflexive of the contemporaneous situation and function of journalism in New Zealand. It does so in a manner that exhibits the utility of developing a richer understanding of the creative industries as a context for post-industrial journalism. This can be observed in two ways: firstly, they act to participate in a network of agents that rely on socio-technical systems that constitute the creative industries to produce and distribute ethically framed journalism with a particular emphasis on the use of digital communication technologies; secondly, this participation is structured in terms of the combined institutional strategies of “social” entrepreneurship and fundraising that appeals to philanthropic supporters via a range of channels. This dual pronged approach permits the network of practitioners associated with the Scoop Foundation to leverage the combination of digital literacies, networked effects and hybrid institutional structures to ground ideologically framed journalistic work in a fluid labor context to achieve highly focused strategic communication goals.

## V. CONCLUSION

Recent literature has made much of the comprehensive changes created for journalism practice by the uptake of digital technology, which has generated a separation of production from access to industrial means of production. These changes have rendered inadequate definitions of journalism as labor and/or work that remained stable throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We found that the definitions of contemporary journalist cannot be restricted to employment, which has become obsolete in an environment constituted by a range of new contexts. However, the definition of journalism

as an ideology - audience focused and seeking to reveal otherwise hidden information of public importance and interest - remains stable due to the adoption of this ideology by those identifying as journalists. In our critique of this literature, we consider the current debate about whether media contexts are industrial or post-industrial to be a reflexive response to the term used by [23] more than a decade ago. While seeking to illuminate the difference between two eras, the debate actually obfuscates an important detail of the new paradigm: that it is in fact still industrial.

It is clear that there has been a far-reaching de-coupling of journalism work and journalism labor as a result of the affordances of digital communication. However, we have not focused on the future of the journalism industry, but on how the practice of journalism has already shifted with the creative industries to occupy a more dispersed location in a broader range of formal and informal settings. We have found a recalibration of journalism on a global scale, and significant evidence of this in new models emerging in Australia and New Zealand. Entrepreneurial journalism is being conducted in small to medium enterprises (SME) based on the creation of content to be distributed through websites and blogs, or syndicated through other businesses that are not related to commercial news media. For example Scoop, funded partly through philanthropy and partly through subscriptions, has a clearly articulated mission to provide ethical journalism. As a structure within the Scoop Foundation, this model demonstrates a sustainable context in which journalists are empowered to resist market pressures and retain relative autonomy.

Further research is required to investigate the lived experience of journalists working in the new paradigm and reveal the affective dimensions of this form of organization. This fieldwork will likely reveal complications that challenge the utopic qualities of the vision presented by organizations such as Scoop [34]. However, on the face of it, the Scoop foundation and its sub-entities exhibit characteristics that are reflexive of the contemporaneous situation of journalism and demonstrate the utility of considering the creative industries as a context for journalism in the post-industrial era. These new industrial organizations offer a form of institutional stability that allows independent journalism to be produced despite the growing precarity experienced by freelance journalists.

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