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## Editorial

With the return to print of *Australian Studies in Journalism*, a few words of explanation are appropriate, even if only for historical purposes. The annual journal, launched in 1992 by Professor John Henningham, was published by the Department of Journalism, University of Queensland, until 2000. It did not appear in 2001, except as an incorporation in the older title, *Australian Journalism Review*. Because Professor Henningham was going on study leave in 2001 and because the Department of Journalism was becoming part of a School of Journalism and Communication, he decided to offer it to the Journalism Education Association (JEA). To the disappointment of some journalism educators, the JEA decided to incorporate *ASJ* into *Australian Journalism Review*. Later, at the initiation of JEA president Dr Kerry Green, the JEA called for expressions of interest in reviving *ASJ*. Fittingly, we believe, the University of Queensland was the successful bidder. Grant Dobinson, Steve McIlwaine and I mounted that bid and this journal is the result. Professor Henningham resigned from the University of Queensland at the conclusion of his study leave. The current editorial panel pays tribute to Professor Henningham's work in establishing *ASJ* and maintaining a journal of distinction for nine years.

We labelled this issue 'Number 10/11, 2001-2002' to avoid a perpetual search for the 'missing' 2000 issue. Although the current issue is not everything the editorial panel envisaged when members brainstormed in the final months of 2001 and early in 2002, it is as good as we could make it in the time available to us and in the context of the pressures of university life in the 21st century. We were delighted to receive 20 articles for consideration and we have used 10 of those articles. As stated in our style guide the emphasis is on research, rather than teaching, and the articles selected reflect this emphasis.

*ASJ* has a special research tradition, reinforced by publication of the Australian journalism research index (see Numbers 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). The research index returns in this issue, thanks to the hard work of University of Queensland postgraduate student, Tomoko Sakai, and editorial-panel member Grant Dobinson. Another regular feature of *ASJ*, "News Media Chronicle", does not appear in this issue. I was unable to find time to write it in the form that has become a tradition. Much of the press-related material that would have found its way into "News Media Chronicle" appears in the *Australian Newspaper History Newsletter* that now appears five times a year.

In 2003, when the bicentenary of newspaper publication in Australia will be observed, *ASJ* will give special consideration to articles with an historical theme. The editorial panel hopes that a section of the journal may be devoted to such articles. Articles on a theme of "Newspapers: Where to now?" are also invited, as are articles on the full range of general journalism themes that have been reflected in *ASJ* in the 11 years since it began publication.

– Rod Kirkpatrick  
Member, editorial panel

# Media convergence: Implications for journalism education

Stephen Quinn

Media organisations in many parts of south-east Asia, Scandinavia and the United States are evolving into multimedia publishers, initiating a form of reportage known as convergence journalism. Put simply, convergence journalism (also known as multimedia or multiple journalism) involves re-purposing material so that one piece of content appears in several forms. At the moment the story usually starts at daily newspapers because they have the largest number of journalists. After attending a news event, the reporter writes a handful of paragraphs for the organisation's Web site, then produces a radio version – and possibly a television version – and finally writes a long piece for the next day's paper. Further developments involve the story also being made available on mobile devices such as telephones and other hand-held peripherals, though these are more likely to be processed by technology. This development has profound implications for how journalism is practised, and taught, in the context of a rapidly changing world driven by changes in digital technology.

**I**n October 2000, almost 500 senior newspaper managers from more than 40 countries at a conference called "Beyond the Printed Word" enthusiastically endorsed the idea that the news business was rapidly adopting a converged approach. The managers noted that an increasing number of newspapers were pursuing multimedia strategies where the publication's content appears not only on paper but also on radio, digital television, the Web and mobile devices. The catch phrase had become "everywhere, all the time". The vice president for electronic media for the Newspaper Association of America, Randy Bennett, predicted newspapers would evolve into "truly multimedia

companies” that would provide a new range of services and products to customers. “Organisation structure and processes will change to make newspapers more nimble and responsive,” he said (Bennett 2000: 1-2). The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) and the industry research group Ifra organised the conference. IFRA represents more than 1800 publishers and technology firms worldwide, and specialises in researching the impact of technology on newspapers. It maintains its NewsOps centre as a resource for information about technology for newsgathering. (IFRA is an acronym from the INCA-FIEJ Research Association. INCA stands for the International Newspaper Colour Association and FIEJ stands for the Fédération Internationale des Editeurs de Journaux.)

At the Amsterdam conference, the editor of Norway’s *Aftenposten*, Rolf Lie, noted that the future was not about paper, and it was not about electronics. “It’s about information.” He suggested that today’s journalists should say: “I’m not working in a newspaper, I’m working in news” (Lie 2000: 1). The managing director of new media at Eastern County Newspapers in the UK, Tom Stevenson, who co-chaired the conference, said that “top-notch content” would be the key to a newspaper’s success in a multiple-media world. Quality of content in the years ahead would make or break many businesses, he said (Stevenson 2000). Most delegates agreed that for newspapers to succeed in the multiple-media world, their content had to be unique. “While there are clearly major uncertainties that will influence our business, the next several years will bring great opportunities to those newspapers that embrace change and invest to compete in this new environment. The challenge for newspaper companies is to find, recruit and retain technology-savvy personnel” (Bennett 2000: 4). The other conference chairperson, Howard Finberg, pointed out the publishing industry’s strength was its staff, and these people would be “called on more and more in this multimedia, multi-task newsroom” (Finberg 2000).

Speakers at another IFRA seminar in October 2000, on the “Newsroom for a Digital Age” in Darmstad in Germany, mentioned flexibility as the major factor in how their newsrooms were dealing with new and changing demands. Newspaper editors once wanted people to think solely of the printed product as their main source

of news and information. But editors now believed the key was to get customers to regard the company as the source of their news, regardless of the medium. Arthur Sulzberger Jr, publisher of the *New York Times*, summarised many publishers' and editors' thinking when he said: "I'm not in the newspaper business. ... Right now, many of our people want it on paper and we will try to serve that market. ... If they want it beamed directly into their minds, we will create a cerebral cortex edition." Similarly, Howard Tyner, former editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and a vice president of the Tribune Company, said the business of journalism was really about "collecting eyeballs" – in other words, getting as many people as possible to go to an organisation as the source of their news and information. The Tribune company is discussed in the next section. "We go where the audience is," Mr Tyner said. As well as multiple-journalism, the Tribune Company is doing this through cross-marketing and cross-promotion among its various media outlets (Veseling 2000: 20).

Since the year 2000, the situation has evolved to the point where industry analysts are convinced that convergence is the future for media companies. Martha Stone, senior consultant for the Innovation Group, said convergence journalism was here to stay:

On each continent, in nearly every country, you'll see mono-media companies transforming into multimedia companies, integrating editorial side operations from print, Web and broadcast divisions. ... The benefits of re-organising mono-media companies to multimedia companies is overwhelming. (Stone 2002: 1)

In 2002, Arthur Sulzberger Jr said his company's flagship must become a multimedia provider of news and information, not just a newspaper. He said the *New York Times's* long-term competition was more likely to come from Microsoft or AOL Time Warner rather than *The Washington Post* or *USA Today* (quoted in *Online Newspapers* 2002).

Convergence was the main topic of discussion at the World Association of Newspapers conference in Hong Kong in June 2001 and IFRA's PublishAsia conference in Bangkok in Thailand in March 2002. Juan Antonio Giner, founder of the Innovation International Media Consulting Group, presented the results of his company's third

*Innovations in Newspapers* report to the June 2001 conference. A survey of WAN members showed that 73 percent had reported some form of convergence was starting to happen at their companies in 2001 (2001: 4). Consultant Martha Stone said that seven out of 10 newspaper executives taking part in a separate survey reported their reporters had formal duties in at least another medium apart from the newspaper (2001: 5). Ruth de Aquino, IFRA's director of editorial strategy and the most recent president of the World Editors' Forum, told the PublishAsia conference that a "critical mass" of interest and experience in convergence was developing around the world. The audience of more than 500 news executives heard case studies from converged newsrooms at *Utusan* in Malaysia, the *Tampa Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune* in the United States, the Bertelsmann group in Germany, the Nation group in Thailand, the Hachette Filipacchi group in France, the *Globe & Mail* in Canada, the *JoongAng Ilbo* in South Korea, and the *Straits Times* in Singapore. One of the few dissenting voices in relation to convergence at WAN's June conference came from Walter Kiechel, editor of the *Harvard Business Review*. He maintained that news was much more "medium-specific" than many people believed. Television was mostly about entertainment. "What was the last big idea or complex story that you came to understand from watching TV," Kiechel asked rhetorically. People did not log onto an online service to "read" something, as they read a newspaper, he said, but rather to "do" something – for example, to check sports scores or a stock price or the weather forecast. Kiechel was skeptical about convergence:

In my experience, it's a rare print journalist who can be groomed to become an effective on-air "personality", or even as good as a merely average television journalist – maybe one in 20. There are reasons – psychological, intellectual, aesthetic – why one person may go into print and another on air. (Kiechel 2001)

Kiechel's comments may be relevant for specialist publications like his own, but for general news convergence is the likely scenario. Here are examples from different parts of the world.

## Convergence in different parts of the world

Newspaper companies in the United States are probably the most advanced in terms of adoption of convergence, along with newspaper groups in Scandinavia. This paper begins with a study of the Tribune company in the United States because it provides an apposite case study. This paper then looks at one of the most highly evolved newspapers in Finland, as an example of convergence in Scandinavia, before considering some multimedia pioneers in Singapore and Hong Kong. Late in 1997 the *American Journalism Review* commissioned Ken Auletta to write the first in a series of reports on “the state of the American newspaper”. He chose the Tribune company as the first subject. Tribune was the first US media company to embrace new media and convergence. CEO John Madigan introduced a mantra of “synergy”. “Each Tribune property sees itself as an information company, not just a newspaper,” Auletta wrote. “Each has a multimedia desk. Each has an online newspaper and a Digital City guide on AOL. ... Each has a TV broadcast partner or a 24-hour cable news partner” (Auletta 1998: 30). In Chicago, the Tribune Company has the advantage of owning the other media the newspaper works with. But this is not the case in other markets where the Tribune owns newspapers. In these areas, the papers have gone outside the company to build relationships with other organisations. Early in 2000, for the third consecutive year, the Tribune company’s peers ranked it first in *Fortune* magazine’s list of America’s most admired companies. Tribune generated \$US6 billion in revenue in 2000 – up from \$US2.7 billion in 1997 – and it employed more than 30,000 people.

The company operates three divisions: Tribune Broadcasting, Tribune Publishing and Tribune Interactive. The Tribune company reaches almost 80 percent of US households daily through those divisions. Tribune Broadcasting owns and operates 22 major market TV stations and reaches more than 75 percent of US television households. It is the largest TV group not owned by a network. Tribune Publishing is the third-largest US newspaper group in terms of circulation. The company owns 11 major newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Newsday* in New York. Tribune Interactive

is a network of local and national Web sites that rank among the top 25 news/information/entertainment networks in the United States. They operate in 18 of the top 30 markets. The company also owns a small part of America Online (AOL). Tribune Regional Programming runs two 24-hour cable news channels – CLTV News in Chicago and Central Florida News 13. The latter is a partnership with Time Warner Communications in Orlando (Web site 2000).

IFRA's technologies editor and executive director of the Centre for Advanced News Operations, Kerry Northrup, said the Tribune company had evolved three models of multiple-journalism. All had been tested at newspapers at the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Orlando Sentinel* (Florida) and the *Tampa Tribune*, respectively. Northrup pointed out that the Tribune company had a general philosophy of not imposing multi-skilling. "It is still left up to the individual reporters whether or not they want to do TV in addition to their newspaper writing. It's just sort of understood that probably in five [or] ten years the reporters who have advanced up to senior reporter and up to management positions will likely be the ones who have embraced this multiple-media thing. But it isn't like they're firing anybody because they refuse to do TV" (Northrup 2000b). At the *Chicago Tribune*, the corporation has an open policy of "seeking maximum synergy" among the various media the company owns. This had resulted in widespread sharing of content and news staff. "While the *Chicago Tribune* encourages and rewards the development of cross-media skills, individual journalists are free to opt out of the synergy effort – for now." At the *Orlando Sentinel*, individual reporters and photographers were permitted to decline involvement in media outside of their own specialty. But staff who chose to participate in the program were involved in a high level of multi-skilling. "Photographers carry both digital still and digital video cameras, shooting assignments for both print and broadcast use. And print reporters receive special training in how to present their stories on television."

The third model of newsgathering integration had appeared at the *Tampa Tribune*. Northrup noted that multiple-journalism had been "significantly more enforced" at this paper, compared with what happened in Chicago or Orlando. "News staff members are

for the most part required to work across media.” For example, print reporters covering a fire were directed to feed voice reports of live breaking news to the sister television station by mobile phone. “And when a TV news anchor’s story on a certain topic failed to get on air as scheduled one evening, she was instructed to turn her text over to the newspaper for the next morning’s edition rather than hold it for the next evening’s newscast.” In 2000, Northrup presciently predicted that publishers around the world would adopt or adapt one of these models for multiple-journalism over the next decade, which would in turn “redefine the newsroom” (Northrup 2000a: 7-9). Dr James Gentry, dean of the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas, was Tribune’s consultant during the changes in the late 1990s. He believes that the *Orlando Sentinel* offers a preview of the “newspaper of the future”. The most visible symbol of the paper’s commitment to convergence is the multimedia desk or ‘bridge’ in the centre of the newsroom. From there, six to eight editors co-ordinate the paper’s multiple-media coverage. Reporters’ desks are arranged around the bridge. Once reporters receive an assignment, they write stories for the paper and then put together Web or television or radio versions of the same piece. Video producers and editing equipment are based in the newsroom. The newspaper, Web site and Central Florida TV News 13 are within a few minutes’ walk of each other. Dr Gentry describes them as a “campus” where ideas are shared (Gentry 1999: 4). As of April 2000, about a third of the newsroom’s 360 print journalists had been cross-trained for on-air appearances (Northrup 2000d: 56).

At the *Tampa Tribune*, vice president and executive editor Gil Thelen said the newspaper newsroom led the convergence process because the paper had the “editorial muscle” – 300 journalists including 120 reporters, compared with the relatively small number of broadcast staff associated with TV station WFLA (Channel 8). The company spent \$US45 million on a new building next to the original *Tampa Tribune* office. Work on the News Centre started in July 1998 and the building opened about a year later. It was the first fully digital newsroom in the United States. Channel 8’s studios are on the first floor, TBO.com and the television newsroom occupy the second, the *Tribune* staff are on the third floor, and management and sales operate from the fourth floor.

The benefits were apparent almost immediately, Thelen said, with an “exponential” growth in collaboration for daily breaking news. The paper’s circulation had more than held steady and the TV station had experienced a “ratings boom”. “The *Tampa Tribune* is now a quicker newsroom [and] TV coverage is deeper and more contextual,” he said. Like the *Orlando Sentinel*, the converged news site has a multimedia desk at its centre. A browser-based intranet draws all news stories together and is used to distribute ideas and data. Thelen talked of a “new energy” in the building, and described journalists as “information detectives”. The move to convergence was driven by market fragmentation, growth of the Web and people’s changing lifestyles, which meant they wanted information on demand (Thelen 2000).

The *Sentinel*’s former editor John Haile – now a consultant – acknowledged that initially the decision to travel the convergent route was driven by commercial imperatives – to protect classified advertising considered vulnerable to interactive competition and searchable media. “I was on an ASNE [American Society of Newspaper Editors] new media panel in Dallas four years ago [in 1995], and I remember answering the question of ‘why do this?’ with two words: ‘classified advertising’,” Haile said. “That is our largest single source of advertising, and it is the most vulnerable to interactive, searchable media. If ad[vertising] dollars start dropping, you can bet newsroom budgets will follow. That will dramatically affect our ability to do good journalism” (quoted in Gentry 1999: 6). Tribune papers made 38 percent of their revenues from classified advertisements “and an even larger share of profits” (Auletta 1998: 21-2). Convergence became attractive because of the potential cost savings, the opportunity for cross-fertilisation, and because it seemed a logical extension of the digital revolution. Haile said that as the *Sentinel* got into new media, it became clear that media would converge with print, video and interactivity coming together to create a new form of communication. The company had realised that “eventually everything would have to be in a digital format” (quoted in Gentry 1999: 4).

At the bridge at both papers, editors exchange ideas and assign stories between the various forms of media. The *Sentinel*’s television production manager, Tom Barnes, said Channel 13 alerted the paper

about stories. “A lot happens in the other direction, too,” he said. “We tend to pass more information from the *Sentinel* to Channel 13.” But almost all of it goes through the bridge. Kevin Spear, a *Sentinel* reporter for more than a decade, is considered one of the paper’s most skilled TV journalists. He said he liked working in print and video: “I deeply believe in this coming together of newspapers and television. I really enjoy TV as a powerful story-telling tool. But I also believe it won’t be too long until you can’t tell the difference between print, TV and online. So it’s a good idea to keep your eye on each one right now” (quoted in Gentry 1999: 5).

## **Impact on staff selection**

As convergence became more ingrained in the newsrooms, so had the expectation that everyone had to participate. Initially reporters were allowed to choose whether they wanted to appear on TV. Now new recruits had to be comfortable with the idea of being on television. Said *Sentinel* managing editor Jane Healy: “The standards have slowly evolved to where we just expect it of everyone now” (quoted in Gentry 1999: 7). John Haile said that not everyone at the *Sentinel* has embraced convergence. “We’ve had some people leave,” he said. “They said this wasn’t for them. Their decision was good for both of us.” But Haile also pointed out the importance of reaching a wider audience for the paper’s survival. “We made it clear that this wasn’t a lark – that we had to try to figure out how to change the business, because if we didn’t we weren’t going to have the resources to finance this operation. If we don’t keep finding new audiences, and start losing revenues, then this news organisation is going to get crunched” (quoted in Gentry 1999: 6). Northrup noted that the Tampa model was more demanding on journalists. “What sets the *Tampa Tribune* model apart from either Chicago or Orlando is that the integration is significantly more enforced.” Journalists were expected to learn new skills and accept reporting responsibilities outside their media specialties. Yet early indications suggested that this approach “has not generated appreciably more or less workplace unrest than in Chicago or Orlando” (Northrup 2000a: 8-9).

## Convergence in Hong Kong, Singapore and Europe

In Hong Kong and Singapore, plans for multiple-journalism started in 1999 and 2000 respectively, though implementation did not start until some months later. Convergence is not an overnight process. These countries have worked hard to encourage innovation in the population, and journalists there understand and appreciate the potential of technology. The governments of both countries decided in the 1980s to invest in information technology to improve the country's economies. Co-operation is also a feature of Chinese culture compared with western cultures. Paul Cheung, chief editor of *Ming Pao* Newspapers in Hong Kong, noted that parent company Ming Pao Enterprise Corporation hired five senior journalists or photographers from TVB, Hong Kong's biggest television news station, to help with the move to multiple-journalism. The print edition of *Ming Pao* publishes seven days a week and has a circulation of 100,000. A 1999 study by the Chinese University of Hong Kong rated *Ming Pao* the most credible Chinese-language newspaper in the special administrative region. *Ming Pao's* main opposition is *Apple Daily*, another Chinese-language publication. Paul Cheung said competition was intense. The main challenge as the company moved into the multiple-media environment was in keeping all staff up-to-date, he said. With the Internet "half a year is like three years in the printed world". "In the printed world there are many things that everyone has to step up before they can change. ... It is not only a competition among newspapers because everyone is trying to get to the pipe before the others. You are competing against radio, television, etc. The time gap is so short, the investment is so huge and because things are changing so fast, those who stay ahead will come out on top" (quoted in Loh 2000: 48).

Cheung and his staff had several brainstorming sessions and visited newsrooms at the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the BBC and the *Financial Times*. Senior staff spent one and two week attachments in newsrooms. "We decided the integrated approach was more feasible in Hong Kong. It would be both cost effective in terms of saving money and it would prepare us for the future. The integrated newsroom is

the newsroom of the future.” *Ming Pao* has almost 300 editorial staff including 180 reporters, 30 photojournalists, 60 sub-editors and editors, and 15 news executives. The rest include news assistants and reporters in overseas bureaux. All 40 of the reporters on *Ming Pao*’s local desk have been working as multiple journalists since December 2000. They carry Sony digital video cameras, which range in price from \$A3000 to \$5000. The paper’s assistant editor-in-chief for multimedia news, Martin Lee, said many print journalists in Hong Kong were scared of television at first. “Mostly it was because they knew nothing about the technology.” But once they had had a chance to play with the tools, and see how relatively easy there were to use, most did not look back, he said (Lee 2001).

In Singapore, the country’s biggest publisher, Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), hired consultants from Reuters and the BBC to help prepare for multiple-journalism. A high-stakes battle for audience took place between Singapore’s two major media groups, who have each gone down the multimedia path in different directions. Until 2000, Singapore had three English-language dailies, all published by Singapore Press Holdings (SPH). SPH started two more English-language tabloid dailies for niche markets: *Project Eyeball* launched in August and was aimed at the Internet generation, while *Streets* debuted a month later and focused on commuters. *Streets* published about 230,000 copies a day and *Eyeball* about 200,000. In November the Media Corporation of Singapore (MCS) launched *Today*, a tabloid daily. MCS was previously a broadcaster: Two of its seven business units operated five TV and 10 radio channels – the bulk of Singapore’s broadcasting. MCS put up 49.9 percent of the \$S12 million for *Today*, RFP Investments (part of mass rapid transit operators SMRT Corporation) 30.2 percent and Yellow Pages 19.9 percent. About the same time, SPH decided to take MCS head on and announced it would launch two television channels, which opened in mid 2001. In the months beforehand, SPH trained many of its print journalists to supply the content for the news and current affairs programs scheduled to screen on the channels. Nine months later, the foreign editor of the SPH flagship the *Straits Times*, Felix Soh, said convergence had flourished at the company. “For journalists at *Straits Times*, multi-tasking as both print and broadcast journalists

is now routine. Stories are covered by common teams with not only laptops but also [digital] cam-corders" (Soh 2002).

Similarly converged forms of journalism are common at the *Turun Sanomat* Multimedia company in Turku in south-west Finland. An editorial staff of 160 produce content for a daily paper (the *Turun Sanomat*, which appears seven days a week), five weekly supplements, evening news and current affairs programs six days a week for the Turku TV cable television channel, a text service when television is not broadcasting, six radio stations, a web site ([www.turunsanomat.fi](http://www.turunsanomat.fi)), and a book publishing arm. At 300,000 copies a day, the *Turun Sanomat* boasts the third-highest circulation of any daily in Finland. Of the 160 editorial staff, 120 are reporters. Of these 120, 50 work in both print and broadcasting. The print group produces 9000 pages of editorial and 6000 pages of advertisements a year. Turku TV outputs 900 hours a year plus another 220 hours for other commercial channels. Four of the radio stations operate 24 hours a day. The web site produces news for a facsimile-based newspaper and outputs about 60 news updates a day. Productivity is high. Yet a tour of the building revealed a pleasant environment with relaxed staff. Managing editor Kari Vainio said staff had embraced technology and the company ensured people had the most up-to-date tools to do their work. All activities take place in one building, located near the centre of town (Vainio 2002).

## Convergence in Australia?

Could multiple-journalism emerge in Australia? It evolved at the Tribune company despite laws in the United States that forbid cross-media ownership. The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) restricts any company from owning both a newspaper and a broadcast outlet in the same market – unless the company did so before the rule came into force (as was the case with the Tribune company's ownership of WGN in Chicago), or unless the government finds a public interest in waiving the rule (as it did when Rupert Murdoch was allowed to rescue the ailing *New York Post*). Similar laws forbidding cross-media ownership operate in Australia but in the past year Coalition politicians and media owners have been lobbying hard to

have them changed. Part 5, division 5 of the *Broadcasting Services Act* prohibits anyone from controlling more than one commercial radio station or television channel or newspaper in the same licence area. Communications minister Richard Alston told *The Age* conference on media in the twenty-first century in March 2000 that the Coalition believed the law was “flawed” and “outdated”. He accused Labor and the Democrats of refusing to acknowledge the need for change. “Convergence is making a nonsense of cross-media laws” (Alston 2000: 15). The CEO of Fairfax, Fred Hilmer, has often described the cross-media laws as “ridiculous”. “We believe that as the rather constraining regulations of the Australian media industry, particularly the prohibitions in terms of cross-media ownership, are relaxed ... that will continue to open new horizons for our company (AAP 2000: 25; Gilchrist 2000: 4). Other Australian media owners have voiced their opposition to existing cross-media ownership laws.

In September 2000, Fairfax journalists went on strike over pay and conditions. A key part of the debate concerned journalists’ fear that they were being perceived as “content providers” instead of journalists (Meade 2000: 2) plus moves to require journalists to become more like multiple reporters. The history of Australian journalists’ exposure to change, particularly computerised typesetting, has generally been a process whereby technology has been imposed from above. Strikes occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s because of concerns over health issues and pay (Lloyd 1985: 277-82). Introduction of cold type technology in the early 1980s significantly affected the sub-editors’ job. Increased responsibility for the final product, formerly shared with compositors and proofreaders, increased stress and job dissatisfaction. Developments in pagination in the 1990s extended sub-editors’ tasks and responsibilities. With pagination, subs were responsible for all pre-press newspaper production up to the plate-making stage but salaries had not risen markedly (Reed 1999: 92).

All editorial staff at the national news agency, Australian Associated Press (AAP), agreed to use digital audio equipment from the middle of 2000 as part of an agreement linking productivity and pay negotiated in 1999. Editor-in-chief Tony Vermeer saw the arrangement as an adjunct to the agency’s text delivery of news. AAP wanted to be able

to offer all forms of reporting in the future. Stories would get the multimedia treatment with moving pictures on an “individual basis”, he said, with AAP’s multimedia editor and individual chiefs-of-staff helping reporters decide. Eventually reporters would make individual decisions. Selection of stories to cover on camera would be made on a project basis for issues that needed visual treatment, Vermeer said. A small group of AAP journalists with television backgrounds had learned to use digital cameras. They shot and edited in digital form, and stories were sent back to AAP’s headquarters in Sydney via an integrated digital services line. All staff were supplied a personalised Sony mini-disk digital recorder – the industry standard (Vermeer 2000).

At the time of writing, the federal government was prepared to require separate editorial streams and decision making as part of any move to convergence. Communications Minister Richard Alston told the ABC’s *Media Report* that merged companies would be required to have separate editorial decision-making processes because “that’s in fact what happens in the real world right now”. Presenter Mick O’Regan suggested it was contradictory to introduce converged media and then insist on separate news management and newsrooms. Alston replied that “... what you’ve got to ensure in a democracy is not that you have a number of different outlets, as much as that you have a diversity of views, so people don’t only get one side of the story”. The new laws were designed to ensure there were separate editorial decision-making processes “... and that’s entirely proper because that ensures that you are much more likely to get a different view of the world from those different mediums” (*Media Report* 2002). Compared with other countries, Australia may be more backward in coming to terms with convergence, but changes are inevitable. These changes have implications for journalism education.

## Implications for journalism education

What should universities do to prepare students for a changing work environment, including convergence? Northrup described journalism education as having a “chicken and an egg relationship” with the industry. “Do you train journalism students for the jobs that

exist today so that when they graduate they can be employed? Or do you train people for the skills that they're going to need in the news organisation tomorrow so that when the newspapers come along and say 'we need a new generation of journalists' they have people to pick from?" Newspapers often did not help the situation because they criticised universities for not giving journalists the skills they needed to work in the newsroom. Industry also criticised institutions for not training the new generation of journalists:

One of the first places to start is to try to make sure that journalists get training and appreciation for the strengths, the weaknesses and the interactions of all the different media in which news can be disseminated. Most journalism programs have been set up so that students focus just on print. I think that someone coming out of journalism school needs to have a wider understanding. Even if their specialty is in writing and not Web design, they've got to have an understanding of what the strengths and weaknesses of their particular medium is and the strengths and weaknesses of the associated media. So that when they approach a story they can approach it on a cross-media basis. So it's important that journalists not be uni-media dimensional in dealing with only one particular outlet. They've got to understand that a story can cross media. So I'd say dump the print specific and get much more cross media in the training. Expect a higher level of technical expertise of the typical journalist. I'm not talking about training them how to use Microsoft Access [a database program], but I am talking about training them in how to understand information management, so that when technology evolves they have the basics to understand where it's evolving. (Northrup 2000b)

As director of news for WFLA-TV in Tampa in Florida, Forrest Carr is at the vanguard of convergence journalism in the United States. He believes journalism educators need to modify their curricula to accommodate convergence:

It seems obvious to me that J-schools are going to have to change their thinking. In some state university systems [in the US], if you want to study print journalism, you go to one city, but if you want to study broadcasting, you have to go to a different campus in a different city. Students may still choose specialties but it no longer makes any sense to pretend print journalists and electronic journalists are in different professions. (Carr 2002)

Journalism academic Professor Jay Black of the University of South Florida predicted that when students graduated they would be working in careers “not yet imagined, employing skills and technology not yet invented”. Dr Black believes many of the jobs now available in journalism and related media did not exist a generation ago. Indeed, some did not exist a decade ago – in early 2002 we find advertisement for positions such as content editor, information architect and multimedia producer. Dr Edward De Bono, the internationally recognised thinker, suggested that entirely new professions that involved filtering information would emerge in the coming decade: “In the future there will emerge a series of intermediary professions – sorters, digesters, researchers – that will act as a kind of reduction valve. It is no longer possible for every user to sort through all of the information they want” (De Bono 1999: 58). The executive director of the Center for New Media at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, Professor John Pavlik, maintains that most American journalism programs rested on late-nineteenth century teaching models. Their curricula were organised along “early twentieth-century technological lines”. Professor Pavlik called for the introduction of new, integrated curricula in which students were taught the principles, practices, values and standards of news reporting that cut across all media boundaries. “Rather than learning to be newspaper, magazine, television, radio or online reporters, they should simply be taught to be journalists working in a digital age” (Pavlik 1998).

Writer David Shenk argues that journalists are more necessary than ever in an information-glutted world. Journalists had been constructing a “quilt of community understanding” since the dawn of civilisation, disseminating new information. In a world of information scarcity, the messenger-journalist performed the vital community service of “acquiring and transmitting fresh data”. But as information had become super-abundant over the past 50 years, this hunter-gatherer role had been rendered partially obsolete:

In a world with vastly more information than it can process, journalists are the most important processors we have. They help us filter information without spinning it in the direction of one company or another. Further,

as society becomes splintered, it is journalists who provide the vital social glue to keep us at least partly intact as a common unit. (1997: 166-67)

Training is a key issue if the transition to convergence journalism is to succeed, and here universities can help industry. Professor James Gentry of the University of Kansas worked as a consultant for the *Orlando Sentinel* to guide the paper through the process. Then editor John Haile hired seven television journalists to work in the newsroom, with the intention that print staff would learn from them. He also supplied all photographers with digital video cameras as well as digital still cameras. Many journalists were given extensive training in on-air presentation skills. The newspaper also established staff-led project teams to work on the key areas of content, work-flow, technology needs and training. Randy Bennett (2000: 4) and Kerry Northrup (2000b) have highlighted the importance of journalists becoming more “technology savvy” because of the increasing range of tools and opportunities. Journalism programs at universities need to make students aware of technology’s potential impact on their careers.

## **Technology as a driver**

The availability of relatively cheap digital technology is one of the drivers behind the move to multiple-journalism. One of the main developments is an enhanced version of hypertext markup language – HTML is often called the “lingua franca” of the Web – known as eXtensible Markup Language. XML permits an almost universal exchange of data from different media forms, so that content written for a newspaper, for example, can be easily converted to a form suitable for a mobile phone. Reuters launched its version, Reuters NewsML, in October 2000 and it is expected to become the news industry standard. This format will allow Reuters to pioneer the packaging and distribution of multiple-media news globally. NewsML enables journalists to produce and assemble stories using video, text, graphics, pictures and audio in any language for any platform. Reuters said NewsML would cut the time needed to assemble, manage and archive news. Reuters is the largest news and television agency in the world, with almost 1960 journalists, photographers and camera operators in

185 bureaux in 153 nations. It produces news in 24 languages (Ifra *Gazette* 2000: 10). Ifra's industry technical standards body formally ratified version 1.0 of the NewsML standard in October 2000 at its meeting in Amsterdam.

Most of the world's major news agencies – including Agence France Presse, BusinessWire, the (UK) Press Association, Reuters, UPI, and Dow Jones' WSJ.com – have declared their intention to use the new standard (Ifra 2000). Gabriella Franzini of Eidos Media, a publishing system consultant based in Italy, said the switch to XML had to be made transparent for journalists or it would languish:

Today current editorial systems are offering very nice WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editing functionalities which make journalists' editing work much easier. Obviously, as soon as a journalist sees an XML editor, the first comparison is made with current systems.... This implies that XML tools, in order to be adopted by journalists, will have to show at least the same level of functionality as the proprietary editing tools, if not even more. (Franzini 2000)

Short messaging services (SMS) on mobile phones are likely to become a major distribution medium for news in the next few years. Refinements of early experiments with things like wireless application protocol (WAP) are also likely to occur. A report for the Finnish Newspaper Association noted that the rapid expansion of mobile phones and terminals made news delivery to these devices an important service. (As of late 2001, the penetration of these devices approached 70 percent in many industrial countries.) The report said a key element was machine-readable mark-up languages, like XML, which enabled automatic tailoring of the news to suit different terminals and users, and wireless application protocol (Antikainen *et al* 1998: 38-9). The editor of the BBC's Ceefax, Paul Brannan, predicted that all information would become mobile information. The unfolding developments would be "as profound as the Industrial Revolution," he said. "Did you know that digitally encrypted phones are being used for money-less transactions? In London right now it's possible to point your phone at a Coke vending machine and get a drink. A crude example but it alludes to the wider possibilities, especially as broadband is taken up and audio and video become handheld possibilities" (Brannan 2000).

The most advanced examples are in Japan, where Nippon Telegraph and Telephone was the first company to launch mobile Internet access with its DoCoMo service in February 1999. News is the second most popular subject, after entertainment. DoCoMo went from zero to more than 14.6 million subscribers after only 16 months (Brannan 2000; Itai 2000: 1; Ries 2000: 25).

## **Conclusions**

Convergence is inevitable. Many issues need to be resolved. One of the most important among these is the increased need for training at news organisations, and the related need for a change of mindset among journalists and editorial managers. Journalists also need to be willing to embrace technology rather than react to it. We can expect the evolution of new forms of journalism brought about by changing technology and changing consumer and management needs. Training and education are paramount. Despite limited natural resources and a small population, countries like Singapore and the Scandinavian nations have managed to become world leaders through investing in intellectual capital. These countries spend more of their GDP on education than most other nations. In Singapore's case it is 20 percent, the highest in the world. Sweden allocates 6.8 percent of public spending, well above the OECD average of 5.1 percent. On a micro level, news organisations must be willing to spend money on training and educating their staff. Traditionally some publishers have been wary of doing so, fearing that competitors will lure away their better-educated people. But journalists are more likely to stay in a stimulating environment. It is the responsibility of newsroom managers to work to keep good people and to provide that environment.

Northrup concluded that to be effective in handling cross-media news, reporters needed to be able to gather news in any format. "They need training in understanding which media are most effective for which aspects of the story. They may also be expected to take a much more active role in managing news coverage from the scene, rather than passing all the decisions to newsroom-bound editors." Once the material had been assembled, news organisations needed editors

who could “think in multiple media” and who could see the story as a combination of various content elements “to create an integrated whole”. Again, training was vital, he said, but more significantly editors needed a mindset freed from any one medium:

A true multiple-media editor will be one who recognises, for instance, that breaking news reporting is no longer a staple of printed journalism, and therefore that printed newspaper content must rise to a higher level while working in concert with its online siblings. (Northrup 2000c: 33)

At the risk of resorting to a cliché, the times they are a’ changing. With the passage of time, the journalist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will need more and more skills. This means that editorial staff must be willing to embrace the concept of lifelong learning. A flexible mindset, or the ability to adjust to change, will be similarly vital:

If there is one word to describe what is being required more and more in newsrooms as journalism moves into the digital age it is flexibility. In an industry in which flexibility always has been an important element for success, it now seems to be vital for survival. (Veseling 2000: 20)

Newsrooms that will thrive in the future are going to look and operate much differently compared with today. And journalists will, likewise, need to work differently. The ancient Chinese curse says: “May you live in interesting times.” We certainly do.

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## Notes for contributors

*Australian Studies in Journalism* welcomes manuscripts from any disciplinary perspective on topics associated with Australian journalism and news media. The range of areas of interest and relevance is vast. Examples of areas in which submissions are welcome include: studies of news media performance; analysis of government policy as it affects or relates to news media; legal studies of news media; cultural studies approaches to journalism; historical or biographical notes on former journalists (including creative writers or public figures whose background was in journalism); examinations of media coverage of institutions or aspects of Australian society; historical notes on particular newspapers or broadcast organisations; studies (especially comparative) of news media content; studies of interactions between news media and media consumers; studies of news flow and newsroom environments.

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. . . Turner (1992: 45) argues "it can be misleading to expect newspapers to fit exactly into a two-press model".

All works cited should be listed alphabetically as *References* at the conclusion of the manuscript. The style is:

Lacy, Stephen, Frederick Fico & Todd F. Simon (1991), "Fairness and balance in the prestige press", *Journalism Quarterly*, 68: 363-370.

Souter, Gavin (1981), *Company of Heralds*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

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