

Call for Papers

The Dissolving Boundaries of Hybrid Journalism

Rethinking News Work Between Datafication, Hacking and Activism

Guest Editors

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As journalism becomes increasingly networked and datafied – produced by different actors with different backgrounds, intentions and norms – new types of hybrid journalism arise. These hybrid forms of journalism often transcend traditional conceptions as journalists increasingly engage in activism or in collaborations with whistleblowers, hackers algorithms and artificial intelligence or machine learning. While this trend challenges the binary thinking of what journalism is and what it is not, it also enables new forms of journalistic truth-telling (Baym, 2017). This call wants to explore, discuss and shed light on the different types and forms of hybrid journalism, what hybridity actually means and what consequences it entails for news work.

Scholars like Carlson (2015, 2016), Lewis (2012, see also Carlson & Lewis, 2015) have shown that the boundaries of journalism are more and more contested as journalists are forced to renegotiate the space between producers and users in a digital environment characterized by high choice (Van Aelst et al., 2017) and a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2013). The established news production with its specific set of epistemological beliefs is thus confronted with new actors and professional roles such as data journalists, hackers, cybersecurity experts, activists or whistleblowing platforms that turn journalism into a blurred term difficult to pin down. These circumstances entail tensions over definitions of journalism as cultures, role conceptions, epistemologies, norms and educational paths become increasingly heterogeneous. At the same time, however, the concept of hybridity is not immune to criticisms: Witschge et al. (2018) rightly pointed out that not every complex phenomenon that defies any immediate explanation is automatically an emergence of hybridity. We should therefore better understand what hybridity means in the first place, how its explanatory power can be fruitfully connected to other existing theoretical frameworks in journalism, and what developments are “truly” hybrid.

Hybrid journalism requires us to rethink the “limited binary dualities that have long governed our theoretical and empirical work in the field” (Witschge et al. 2018) and some of its most central notions such as autonomy, collaboration, objectivity, the separation of news and entertainment or fact and fiction. Therefore, this thematic section aims at gathering cutting-edge research on journalism and hybridity, with a specific emphasis on the role of data-driven journalism, cybersecurity, hacking and activism. In addition, we would like to explore collaborative news production between journalists and

actors outside the established journalistic field, and how they shape the culture(s) of journalism. We also encourage scholars to submit papers that cover non-Western countries. We invite contributions not only from journalism studies, but from all fields across media studies and communication sciences. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- How datafication is shaping journalistic epistemologies
- The borderline between activism and journalism
- Journalists as hackers or the perils of collaborations with hackers
- The importance of cybersecurity for and its impact on journalism
- Hybridity in human-AI collaborations in newsmaking
- The consequences of dissolving boundaries and shifting norms for journalistic authority
- Ethical challenges of hybrid journalism
- The amalgamation of pop culture and news reporting
- The consequences for newsmaking of different role conceptions of actors participating in the networked news production

Article format

The length of the articles in the thematic section should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words (including abstract and references). All submitted papers must adhere to APA6 style (www.apastyle.org).

Submission guidelines

Abstracts of 500 words should be sent to hybridjournalism2018@gmail.com by **15th March, 2019**. The abstracts should include the main idea/argument, research questions, a short literature review and/or theoretical perspectives, information on methodology and empirical findings (if relevant). The journal welcomes submissions in English, German, French, or Italian, but the abstract has to be written in English. Decision of acceptance will be given by **15th April, 2019**. Invited full paper will be due on **31st July, 2019**. The invitation to submit a full paper does not guarantee acceptance into the special issue. Final acceptance depends on a double-blind peer review process. The expected publication date of the thematic section is April 2020. The thematic section is expected to contain between 5 and 6 articles.

Please send the abstract, including your names, affiliations and contact details, to:

hybridjournalim2018@gmail.com

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