

Problemi dell'Informazione
n. 1 - 2025
Special Issue: Call for Papers

Journalism beyond newsrooms. New forms, practices, and experiences of journalism beyond the institutional newsroom

Guest editors: Sergio Splendore & Elena Valentini

For a long time, studying journalism has meant studying its newsrooms. The paradigm of Newsroom Studies, sometimes also referred to as the sociology of news, precisely because it analyses how journalistically relevant information is produced and distributed, was capable of laying the foundations of journalism studies (Kunelius & Waisbord, 2023). What happens with the sociology of news is an accurate and meticulous sociological analysis of the work of journalism, where not only the mechanisms of social control attributable to editors or those in influential positions in the newsroom are taken into account but also the broader context of socialization to professionalism and the way it is exercised. With Newsroom Studies, the focus shifts from the individual choices of editors or journalists to the complex processes involved in the production of information and involving various actors. Newsroom Studies have also been able to identify the process of professionalization innovatively, considering the inclusion of objectivity and impartiality in practices and products of professional journalism a mean to make it more autonomous. On the contrary, it is argued here that those values could also be a way of strengthening dominant positions and cementing the status quo. Professionalization as a project was aimed not at increasing journalists' independence but at co-opting them.

While Newsroom Studies has been regarded as a paradigm, the field's contextual broadening and fragmentation make this approach less central. The contemporary media ecology has radically changed this context: recent work and analysis suggest that the supposed core of journalism and the assumed consistency of the inner workings of news organizations are problematic starting points for journalism studies.

Among the many terms to identify this change (hybrid journalism, convergent journalism, ambient journalism, collaborative journalism) Deuze and Witchesage (2018) talk about beyond journalism. With this locution, they precisely indicate the context of profound transformations in the professional, business, technological, and social context of journalism, which is now pervaded by the rejection of professionalism, but at the same time, the need to affirm as reliable and true the production of information from actors outside the journalistic field, through alternative ways and different types of informational flows. For example, Peters and Allan (2022) study memes as new forms of digital communication to disrupt, undermine, attack, resist or reappropriate discursive positions pertaining to public affairs narratives in the news. Moreover, the recognition of a broader arena of news production and consumption implies the need to break established routines, the start-up culture, and a radical turn towards the audience (Swart et al. 2022), shifting the focus from what counts as news use to what is experienced as informative and positing many different audiences as active agents.

The role of the public at multiple levels is at the heart of new relational approaches in journalism studies. Recent works recognize relational work as part of journalistic professionalism in different forms: from engaged reporting to collaboration with the local community to organizing journalism festivals or social events such as opening the newsroom to the public (Koliska et al., 2023). These forms contribute to repositioning the role of journalists and journalism in society.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, scholars have investigated participatory practices in newsrooms. These practices have been at the centre of journalists' meta discourses, often considered an obligation to respond to and embrace or vital for the future of journalism (Vos & Ryan, 2023). At the same time, journalistic-centric visions of the audience prevailed (Carlson & Peters, 2023), also considering the contribution and the role of other actors from the point of view of journalists. Most recently, the

discourse about participatory journalism has shifted to concerns and has declined (Vos & Ryan, 2023), opening new perspectives about audience engagement and the work beyond newsrooms.

Moreover, several scholars support an expansive view of journalism situated more broadly (Reese, 2021; Zelizer et al., 2022) and promote a decentralized vision of journalism based on experiences rather than norms, identifying the range of actors and institutions that provide people with knowledge and information about the world (Carlson & Peters, 2023).

However, it is argued here that these new perspectives do not intend to question the centrality and importance of journalism in society but aim to reflect on the redefinition of the “places” and practices of information production and consumption. This call for papers, therefore, seeks to study and analyse the production and consumption of information that does not take place in traditional contexts, which goes beyond newsrooms.

The proposed empirical and theoretical analysis needs to stress the new perspectives necessary to grasp this change (or the old one still able to reach the scope) and propose the new meaning of professionalism that arises.

This group therefore includes, but is not limited to:

- Platformized news sources and products (forms of news initiatives embedded within social media);
- Journalism initiatives beyond newsrooms (journalists or media outlets themselves which meet audiences outside the newsrooms);
- Journalism Festivals;
- Media activism projects;
- Civic Journalism, Engaged reporting and other forms of community voices’ inclusion in news reports;
- New perspectives on participatory journalism;
- Debunking and fact-checking activities;
- Information production by nonjournalist actors;
- Audience consumption concerning what publics consider and consume as informative products beyond the traditional ones;
- New perspectives on the conception of what journalism is for and its role in society.

Key dates:

- **Deadline for abstract submissions: May 30, 2024**
- Decision by issue editors sent by: June 15, 2024
- Full paper submissions: September 30, 2024
- First round of reviews completed by: November 20, 2024
- Resubmissions of papers: December 20, 2024
- Second round of reviews completed by: January 15, 2025
- Submission of final manuscripts: February 15, 2025

Abstracts (300-500 words plus references) in English or in Italian should be submitted at:

<https://submission.rivisteweb.it/index.php/pdi>

Abstracts should be proposed for the section “Saggi”. Please indicate that the proposal is for the special issue edited by *Splendore and Valentini* in the box “Comments for the editor”.

For further information about the submission process, please contact: elena.valentini@uniroma1.it, sergio.splendore@unimi.it

References

Carlson, M., & Peters, C. (2023). Journalism Studies for Realists: Decentering Journalism While Keeping Journalism Studies. *Journalism Studies*, 24(8), 1029–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2190818>.

- Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2018). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, 19(2), 165–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916688550>.
- Koliska, M., Moroney, E., & Beavers, D. (2023). Trust Through Relationships in Journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.220980>
- Kunelius, R., & Waisbord, S. (2023). The Legacy of the Sociology of News Paradigm: Continuities, Changes, and Ironies. *Journalism Studies*, April, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2192296>.
- Peters, C., & Allan, S. (2022). Weaponizing Memes: The Journalistic Mediation of Visual Politicization. *Digital Journalism*, 10 (2): 217–229, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1903958>.
- Reese, S. (2021). *The Crisis of the Institutional Press*. Cambridge, MA: Polity.
- Swart, J., Groot Kormelink, T., Costera Meijer, I., & Broersma, M. (2022). Advancing a Radical Audience Turn in Journalism. *Fundamental Dilemmas for Journalism Studies*. *Digital Journalism*, 10(1), 8–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.2024764>.
- Vos, T. P., & Thomas, R. J. (2023). “They’re Making It More Democratic”: The Normative Construction of Participatory Journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2174893>.
- Zelizer, B., Boczkowski, P. J., & Anderson, C. W. (2022). *The Journalism Manifesto*. Cambridge, MA: Polity.

About the journal:

Established in 1976, **Problemi dell’Informazione** (PdI) has been the first Italian scientific journal focusing specifically on journalism and communication studies. Since then, PdI has represented a dedicated venue for the development of a vivid debate on these topics, fueled both by academic research and by contributions from professionals. More recently PdI has expanded its aims and scope by broadly considering all forms of communication, also to keep pace with the latest transformations in the field of journalism and of journalism studies. PdI publishes contributions in Italian and in English after a rigorous double-blind peer review process.

Editor: Carlo Sorrentino (Università di Firenze).

International Scientific Committee: Olivier Baisnee (University of Toulouse), Andreu Casero Ripolles (Universitat Jaume I de Castelló), Andrew Chadwick (Royal Holloway, University of London), Mark Deuze (University of Amsterdam), Susanne Fengler (Technische Universität Dortmund), Daniel Hallin (University of California San Diego), Thomas Hanitzsch (Ludwig Maximilians Universität München), Matthew Hibberd (University of Stirling), Matthias Karmasin (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Xosé Lopez (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela), Kim C. Schroder (Roskilde University), Michael Schudson (Columbia University, School of Journalism), Slavko Splichal (University of Ljubljana), Silvio Waisbord (The George Washington University - School of Media and Public Affairs), Barry Wellman (University of Toronto), Barbie Zelizer (Annenberg School for Communication – University of Pennsylvania).

National Scientific Committee: Giovanni Bechelloni (Università di Firenze), Milly Buonanno (Sapienza Università di Roma), Dario Di Vico («Corriere della Sera»), Franca Faccioli (Sapienza Università di Roma), Claudio Giua (Gruppo Espresso), Giovanni Gozzini (Università di Siena), Giorgio Grossi (Università di Milano Bicocca), Paolo Mancini (Università di Perugia), Carlo Marletti (Università di Torino), Gianpietro Mazzoleni (Università Statale di Milano), Mario Morcellini (Sapienza Università di Roma), Franco Mosconi (Università di Parma), Peppino Ortoleva (Università di Torino), Giuseppe Richeri (Università della Svizzera italiana), Giorgio Zanchini (RAI).