

# **MAKING THE NEWS:**

## **Print journalism and the creative process**

**Janet Michelle Fulton**

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## **Abstract**

This research applies the systems model of creativity, developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, to an investigation of the creative practices of print journalists in Australia. Rather than the traditional view of creativity, where the individual is seen as paramount, Csikszentmihalyi argues that creativity is generated through the interaction of a system of three elements at work: a domain of knowledge (the cultural structure), a field (the social structure) who understands the rules and traditions of the domain, and an individual. In applying these ideas to print journalism, it is possible to see that a journalist, as the individual in the system, acquires the knowledges and traditions existent in the domain of print journalism and uses this knowledge to produce a novel variation of this information. In the case of print journalism, this variation would be constituted by a news article. The print journalist presents their variation to the field of experts who understand the domain, seeking acknowledgement that the variation is a novel and appropriate contribution.

By using the systems model to examine the creative practices of print journalists, this thesis aims to demonstrate that the structures a journalist interacts with not only constrain but also enable production and it is through their agency, or ability to choose the possibilities within these structures, that journalists produce creative media texts. Rather than a view of creativity that focuses on the individual as the primary producer of a creative contribution, or conversely a largely deterministic view, where an individual is constrained or determined by the structures they work within, this thesis is arguing that print journalists and the structures they work within interact with each other.

The ethnographic research was conducted using a triangulated set of methods. Interviews were conducted with thirty-six journalists and editors who work in the Australian print media industry. Observation of three newsrooms was also undertaken. Document and artefact analysis was used as the third method and analysis of the data obtained from these methods, as well as an examination of creativity and journalism literature, shows that there is a link between the cultural structure, the social structure and the individual print journalist in the creation of a media text, illustrating the veracity of the systems model of creativity in action.

## Declarations

### Declaration 1:

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis generated the following publications.

### Book Chapters

Fulton, J.M. (forthcoming 2013) 'Communication joy: print journalists and the experience of flow' in *Positive communication in health and wellness*, (Eds) M. Pitts and T.J. Socha, Peter Lang, New York. (Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Peter Lang Publishing. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.)

### Journal Articles

Fulton, J.M. 2011, 'Print journalism and the creative process: examining the interplay between journalists and the social organisation of journalism, *Altitude*, 9, [http://www.thealtitudejournal.com/uploads/4/2/3/3/4233079/fulton\\_altitude\\_9\\_2011.pdf](http://www.thealtitudejournal.com/uploads/4/2/3/3/4233079/fulton_altitude_9_2011.pdf) . (This article is licensed under the under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) license.)

Fulton, J.M. 2011, 'Is print journalism creative?', *Ejournalist*, 11(2), pp. 1-20. <http://ejournalist.com.au/v11n2/Fulton.pdf>. (This journal is an open access journal and the author owns the copyright.)

### Conference Papers (Refereed)

Fulton, J.M. 2010, 'Print journalism and the creative process: the social organisation of journalism and its influence on print journalists' creative practices', paper presented at the *Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference 2010*, Old Parliament House, Canberra, Australia, 7-9 July 2010. (This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Australian License.)

Fulton, J.M. 2009, 'Print journalism and the creative process: journalists and the organisation', paper presented at the *Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference 2009*, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, 5-7 July, 2009. (This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Australian License.)

Fulton, J.M. & McIntyre, P. 2008, 'Creative journalism: what do journalists think?', Paper presented at the annual meeting of the *International Communication Association*, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 21-25 May 2009 (this paper is included in Appendix 5).

Fulton, J.M. 2008, 'Print journalism and the creative process: traditional versus digital' in: web proceedings of the *Conference on Comparative Journalism Studies 2008 (CJS2008)*, 25-27 June 2008, Hobart, Tasmania (copyright held by author).

**Conference Papers (Unrefereed)**

Fulton, J.M. 2008, 'The creative print journalist', paper presented at *JEA Annual Conference*, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW, 1-3 December 2008.

Fulton, J.M. 2008, 'Print journalism and the creative process: the field', paper presented at the *DCIT 2008 RHD Congress*, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, NSW, 13 November 2008.

Fulton, J.M. 2007, 'Print journalism and the creative process: new technology in news production', paper presented at the *DCIT 2007 RHD Congress*, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, NSW, 19 October 2007.

Fulton, J.M. 2006, 'Print journalism and the creative process: an introduction', paper presented at the *DCIT 2006 RHD Congress*, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, NSW, 29 September, 2006.

**Other**

Fulton, J.M. & McIntyre, P. 2009, 'Creativity: a keyword in print journalism', paper presented at the scholar-to-scholar plenary poster session at the *International Communication Association* conference, Chicago, Illinois, 21-25 May 2009 (copy of poster is included in Appendix 6).

**Declaration 2:**

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains one published conference paper and one poster presentation of which I am the joint author. The co-authored paper was written with my principal supervisor, Dr Phillip McIntyre, and contains some of the information used in this thesis.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Name: Janet Michelle Fulton

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Name: Dr Phillip McIntyre

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