Print journalism and the creative process: traditional versus digital

In 1963, David Cole wrote in *The Practice of Journalism* that "the present period is the most crucial in the ever-changing history of newspapers and magazines. The problems seem more complex than previously, the dangers graver, and the demands made on every section within the industry more exacting" (Cole 1963, p. 15).

Cole's observation illustrates that the perception of the print journalism industry has changed very little on a fundamental level over the last forty years – these observations could very well describe the digital environment journalists now work in. Keeping this in mind, one can ask how has digital technology affected the way print journalists produce their work in comparison to writing for the ‘traditional’ Press?

Preliminary findings from an ethnographic study into the creative practices of the print journalist indicate that the use of digital technology has had both a positive and negative effect. This paper discusses how news practitioners believe that this technology – the computer and computer programs, the Internet, email, mobile phones, and digital cameras – has enhanced their production practices but also created new challenges.

However, it is important to recognise that rather than simply focusing on technology there are many factors that dictate changes in work practices and the research has revealed that the elements of good journalism are still regarded as important when writing in a digital environment.

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When David Cole (1963) wrote about the demands on the print industry, journalists used manual typewriters, walked the streets looking for stories, used pay telephones to file, had strict delineation in their duties and one deadline per day. Now, with digital technology, the journalist can research and interview without leaving the newsroom, may be required to be the reporter/photographer/sub-editor/layout person in the newsroom, and is expected to file a story onto a number of media platforms often several times a day. Which leads one to ask: How has this digital environment affected how the journalist produces their work?

Early indications from an ethnographic study into the creative practices of the print journalist in Australia show that while many of the respondents believe the tools of digital technology – computer and computer programs, mobile phones, digital cameras, email, and the Internet – have had a positive effect on their writing in comparison to traditional tools, there is a negative side to the digital working environment. Issues of time constraints, in particular, have been a constant theme. However, data from both interviews and secondary sources indicate that, regardless of the demands on today’s journalist, the tenets of good journalism remain important.

First of all, though, what is good journalism? Journalist Michelle Grattan said: “I define ‘first rate’ journalism as the kind that tells people what they would not otherwise know, tweaks the tails of the power wielders, turns over rocks to stir the dark life beneath” (1995, p. 2). Gardner et al, point out that the essence of any ‘good work’ can be found in the core traditional mission of the domain and note that the mission of journalism is informing the public, empowering the powerless, supporting democracy and promoting social change (Gardner, Csíkszentmihalyi & Damon 2001, pp. 165-170). The commonly understood standards of good journalism are truth and fairness ( ibid., p. 172) and to give the public the information it needs to function successfully as a society (Conley & Lamble 2006; Downie Jr & Kaiser 2003; Hargreaves 2003; Koch 1991; Ryan & Tankard 1977). According to Randall: “The good is intelligent, entertaining, reliably informative, properly set in context, honest in intent and effect, expressed in fresh language and serves no cause but the discernible truth” (Randall 1996, p. viii) and he clarifies this further by describing “bad” journalism:

“The bad is practised by those who rush faster to judgement than they do to find out, indulge themselves rather than the reader, write between the lines rather than on them, write and think in the dead terms of the formula, stereotype and cliché, regard accuracy as a bonus and exaggeration as a tool and prefer vagueness to precision, comment to information and cynicism to ideals” (ibid.).
In a practical sense, applying the rules of journalistic writing contribute to good journalism, for example, in hard news putting the most important information first, keeping the leads short and simple, using who, what, when, where, why and how to inform the lead, and writing in the active voice (Perry 2005). In short, using the structures of journalism and presenting informative, well-written articles are tenets of good journalism.

Mandy Oakham observes that regardless of the fact that “the print media is undergoing radical technological change, the rules of good journalism don’t change” (2005, p. 1) and on that observation, we can ask: What is technology in a journalism context?

Petrie defines technology within film-making as, “the ‘tools of the trade’ which enable film-makers to creatively intervene at each stage of the process” (1991, p. 27). Within journalism, ‘tools of the trade’ have included such things as shorthand and typing skills, style guides, the telephone, digital and tape recorders, typewriters, notepads and writing implements. However, to this we can now add digital tools: computer and computer programs; mobile phones; digital cameras; email; and, the Internet. Gardner, et al. list “developments in science and technology” (2001, p. 17) as the most important force operating in a cultural environment and contend that many innovations have transformed the domain of journalism. It has been argued that journalism and its practices have always been linked to technology from the printing press, to the telegraph, the telephone, radio and television (Conley & Lamble 2006). The introduction of the telegraph, for example, is one of the reasons journalists write in the inverted pyramid style with the main information in the first par, short sentences and concise language (Allan 2004, p. 18; Schultz 1994b, p. 31). Digital technologies have and will continue to change journalistic writing (Klinenberg 2005; Koch 1991; McNair 1998; Pavlik 2000; Sheridan Burns 2002), but they have also been adapted to improve and support current practices.

**Brief summary of the research**

Using Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model of creativity (1988; 1990; 1997; 2003; Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner 1994) as the main theoretical framework, the research is looking at the creative practices of the print journalist in Australia. The aim is to determine how cultural, social and individual influences affect how the journalist produces their work and how the journalist, as agent, works within structures that enable and constrain their ability to create their work.

Creativity in this sense is not the Romantic belief where creativity is thought to come from nothing, divinely inspired and created by a genius with no constraints on their production. It is the Rationalist view of creativity based on Aristotle’s investigation into ‘being’ of “whatever comes to
be is generated by the agency of something, out of something, and comes to be something” (1960, p. 142). Building on this, the definition in recent creativity research involves the concept of novelty, but adds the qualification of social validation (Amabile & Tighe 1993; Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner 1994; Gardner 1993; Sawyer 2006; Sternberg & Lubart 2003; Weisberg 1993). This research project is utilising McIntyre’s definition of creativity when he says that, “creativity is an activity whereby products, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions by the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of human knowledge” (2003, p. 202). To paraphrase the definition to suit this research, journalism is both a product and process where the journalist uses prior knowledges to write an article that is different to what has been published before and presents it to a field of experts for valuation and acceptance into the domain of journalism.

Journalism is not usually regarded as a creative profession – calling a journalist ‘creative’ can infer they are fabricating stories. However, if journalistic writing is regarded as making the news rather than making up the news (Berkowitz 1997; Harcup 2004; Manning 2001; Rosen 1999; Schudson 1997; Tuchman 1976), it can be argued that journalism is indeed a creative profession. Fiction writing is perceived as creative because the writing is seen to come out of the imagination of the writer, whereas journalism is based on factual accounts of events. This way of looking at creativity is an example of an implicit use of the Romantic definition of creativity where something is seen to come from nothing. Another reason journalism is seen as uncreative is the perception that a creative producer must be ‘free’, in this case taken to mean absence of constraint, and the limitations of the structures a journalist works within are seen to constrain the creative production of texts. Wolff (1981) argues against this proposition by stating that, rather than being limiting factors, structures actually enable people to act and it can be claimed that it is by their agency that journalists create novelty within the domain through negotiating the structures and producing work that is different in a way that is acceptable to the field. Tony Harcup also argues convincingly that:

> Within the study of journalism, agency means the extent to which individual journalists can make a difference to media practices and content … To say that journalists have agency is not to deny that journalists operate in a world of constraints, but to argue that structural forces do not totally determine individuals’ actions (Harcup 2004, p. 6, emphasis in original).

To place these ideas within the theoretical perspective used to frame this research, Csikszentmihalyi’s model proposes that creativity is systemic and can be found within a confluence of three elements – the individual, the domain and the field. The individual takes knowledge from the domain (the culture), produces a variation and presents it to the field (the social) for verification.
The variation is included in the domain’s knowledge base for other individuals to draw on. There are hundreds of domains in a culture (2001). Journalism is one such domain and print journalism is a sub-domain of this.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1 - Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model of creativity (2003, p. 315)**

The systems model is a model that has circular causality (Csikszentmihalyi 1988, p. 329) with no particular element more important and all interdependent on each other. As Csikszentmihalyi contends, “each of the three main systems … affects the others and is affected by them in turn” (ibid.).

In a journalistic context, the individual is the journalist and their background and personal qualities contribute to creativity as well as the ability to “learn the rules and the content of the domain, (and) the criteria of selection, the preferences of the field” (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 47). The domain is described as “a set of symbolic rules and procedures” (ibid. p. 27) and these must be learned before a variation can be made in it. The domain provides a set of structures and rules the journalist must work with and includes such things as the rules of writing, style guides, news values, deadlines, the inverted pyramid and the Fourth Estate ideal. Finally, the field is defined as the gatekeepers to the domain, that is, anyone who verifies the variation that is being made. Gardner, et al. list three types of practitioners in the field who act as gatekeepers: the elite, who “preside over the destiny” (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon 2001, p. 24) of the domain, in journalism’s case, editors and owners; the expert practitioners who are “authorised to perform within the domain”
(ibid., p. 25), for example, journalists and sub-editors; and, “approved apprentices or students” (ibid., emphasis in original). According to Sawyer (2006) the audience is also part of the field.

In line with these ideas, this paper argues that technology is an important part of the domain of journalism, being one of the critical structures the journalist must learn and work within. It is contended here that the journalist uses this structure, and the rules governing it, to produce work and they must know these rules and act within them. In short, the use of technology not only constrains but also enables the practice of journalism. Preliminary analysis of the data indicates that the influence of technology is so pervasive in what journalists do the respondents not only mentioned it when asked specifically, but also talked about its use within the production process itself. Further to this, time constraints are inextricably linked to the use of technology, having both a positive and negative effect on the production of journalism.

**Methodological Approach**

Ethnography, one of the traditional research methodologies used in qualitative research, was chosen as the methodology for the larger research project from which this paper is drawn. There is a tradition of using ethnography to research journalists’ practices and Simon Cottle (2007) provides an excellent overview. For this study, participant observation of a newsroom, semi-structured interviews with members of the field, and document and artefact analysis are the methods, or techniques, of choice. Furthermore, content analysis of newspapers will be used to supplement any data gathered. This strategy is considered to be a mixed-methods approach (Creswell 2003; Crotty 1998; Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Punch 2005) and using these different forms of data collection offers a broader foundation for analysis and provides triangulation, a way of enhancing the validity of the data (Denscombe 2004; Machin 2002; Punch 2005; Robson 2002).

When this paper was submitted, the participant observation and content analysis components of the research had not been conducted. Therefore, this information was elicited primarily from the interviews completed. Furthermore, the nature of the business of journalism means that certain members of the field remain out of reach – Chief Executive Officers, Managing Editors and owners are examples. For this reason, document analysis was invaluable, and will be an ongoing process. Books written by members of the print media field, speeches, lectures and interviews provided information and gave an added dimension to the findings.

The decision was made at the beginning of data collection to recruit interviewees from Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and South East Queensland. This
judgment was based on John Henningham’s contention about the geographical location of Australian journalists:

Most are in the eastern states, and six out of ten are in the south-east grouping of New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory that dominates Australia’s politics and commerce (1998, pp. 334-335).

Ethics approval stipulated that any respondents were to be approached through the editor of their publication. Over twelve months, from January 2007 to January 2008, 225 letters were sent to editors of Australian newspapers and magazines. The contact information came from Margaret Gee’s Australian Media Guide (2007). Out of these letters, 45 replies were received – 27 editors agreed to allow their staff to take part and 18 editors declined. Most of the editors canvassed their own staff and supplied names of any journalist interested in taking part in the interviews. Freelance journalists were offered the opportunity to take part through the 2007 Freelance Convention run by the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA). One of the disadvantages of interviewing as a method became obvious during this recruitment process – how representative is the sample when only editors who had both the time and the inclination responded and from there, only interested journalists? With this in mind, it is essential to access a newsroom because participant observation “directly records what people do, as distinct from that they say they do” (Denscombe 2004, p. 199, emphasis in original), thus providing a measure of triangulation of the data.

Up to the submission of this paper (March 2008), thirty-three interviews have been conducted with members of the journalism field. There have been twenty-one journalists interviewed and, at the time of interview, sixteen worked in newspapers, two worked in magazines, two were freelance and one was a student. Twelve interviewees were management, including editors and deputy editors – six each from newspapers and magazines. However, out of management ten were originally journalists so as well as answering questions as “elite” members of the field (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon 2001), these latter interviewees included information about their experience as a journalist. The respondents ranged in age from twenty to sixty-two and overall there were eighteen males and fifteen females. Because of the need for anonymity, the publications the respondents worked at cannot be named. However, there was a mix of national, metropolitan, regional, country, community and suburban newspapers published daily, weekly, bi-weekly and tri-weekly. The respondents worked for publishers including Fairfax, News Limited, Fairfax Community Newspapers, Rural Press¹, APN News and Media, and independent publishers. The different styles of magazines included weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, niche and mass

¹ In May 2007, Rural Press newspapers became part of the Fairfax stable of newspapers. However, there were a number of Rural Press publications approached before this takeover.
market and included publications from a number of publishers (naming them would jeopardise anonymity).

The interviews conducted were semi-structured and open-ended. Although a list of questions was used as a guide this style of interviewing allowed exploration of other issues that arose. The three elements of Csikszentmihalyi’s theory were covered within the interviews: the domain, the field and the individual. The questions were based on Csikszentmihalyi’s own research into creativity with his study on eminent individuals (1997), but a number of questions specific to journalism were also included. Respondents were asked about such things as the rules of journalism, the structures of their writing, how they wrote an article, how the field edited their work, rules within their workplace, how other journalists affected their work processes, how they learnt how to write, their family, educational and professional background, and what affect the audience had on their production. The interviews were conducted face-to-face (25), by telephone (4) or by email (4). The face-to-face and telephone interviews were audio recorded and ranged in length from half-an-hour to two hours after which they were fully transcribed.

This sample size of interview subjects does not pretend to represent the total journalistic population – according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the 2006 Census counted 6,304 print journalists (2008). However, Keith Punch notes, “you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything” (2005, p. 187) and as Bryman points out, “in ethnographic research, it is not just people who are being sampled but also events and contexts as well” (2001, p. 302). Robson argues that in this kind of study design it is difficult to determine sample size and quotes Morse who recommended thirty to fifty interviews as a good ‘rule of thumb’ figure for ethnographic research (2002, pp. 198-199).

**Journalism then versus now**

One of the questions asked in the study was: How has technology affected how you produce your work? Primarily, respondents answered in the positive and this is in line with Henningham’s (1995) contention that the majority of Australian journalists believe technology has improved their work quality. Henningham’s national survey of Australian journalists included two questions on technology: firstly, what impact has technology had on “the quality of the individual’s work” (1995, p. 228); and, secondly, what impact has technology had “on the time taken to perform tasks” (ibid.). For this research, the first question would seem to be more relevant – the research is, after all, looking at the production of journalism. However, while the new technologies have been seen as mostly positive, throughout the interviews there was an underlying thread of discontent with time constraints having a negative effect on the journalist’s production.
One of the reasons for less time in the workplace is the trend for multi-skilling. Michael Bromley notes this trend is “closely associated with the ‘downsizing’ of editorial departments” (1997, p. 344). Journalists interviewed from smaller newsrooms reported that they are expected to take photos, sub-edit and maintain a website as well as engage in the ‘traditional’ practices of journalism – interviewing, gathering data and writing. In larger multimedia newsrooms, although there may still be more of a demarcation between occupations, multi-skilling means the journalist is expected to produce stories, and continually update them, for the online edition of the publication as well as the print version and provide information for other news platforms such as Pay TV. To bring this into context with Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model, the rules within the domain have evolved and the individual needs to learn these changes to produce a creative product. The journalist in the print journalism domain now needs to be multi-skilled to work within the rules and structures.

During the interview process, the technological tools most discussed were the computer and computer programs, mobile phones, digital cameras, email and the Internet. The journalists have learnt how to use these technologies effectively to produce a creative product.

*The computer and computer programs*

Overall, the respondents consider the introduction of computers and computer programs into the domain to have had a positive effect and enhanced their production compared to pre-computer days. Older journalists recalled how labour-intensive the writing process was, but that the introduction of computers as a tool for writing initially caused problems for the field:

… for a long while we got paid fifteen bucks a week for the frustrations in the computer system (Extra? *my question*) Extra. Because you would write a story and you’d forget to save or something and you’d be halfway through and the system would crash and you’d have six hundred words obliterated. And I have seen experienced journalists walking down the corridor, kicking filing cabinets and swearing at the top of their voice after a story they’d spent three hours on had gone west without warning (J5 2007).

Primarily though, the introduction of computers and computer programs, word-processing in particular, enhanced the writing process. Roy Mathew (1998) noted word-processing has made production easier for both journalists and sub-editors with copy easier to manipulate and archived information able to be used. However, he also commented on the higher propensity for errors within the production process brought about by time-saving practices: the increased reliance on spellcheckers rather than having sub-editors to proof-read copy; and, using archived material verbatim without checking that can mean “repetition of errors committed in earlier reports” (1998).
The advent of the computer has also meant less staff doing more work. This need for a multi-skilled journalist has led to concern at the smaller newspapers – the individual’s “actual writing time becomes less and less and less. So to be a great journalist becomes harder and harder and harder (E2 2007). These smaller newsrooms have less staff – often only an editor and journalists. The significance of this is that, as Henningham noted:

> For print media the most profound change has been in the introduction of computerised typesetting, driving into obsolescence the crafts of linotype operating and compositing. The early, crude phototypesetting software which has sub-editors doubling as compositors has been succeeded by dazzling full-screen pagination software, giving subs total and immediate control over the creation of newspapers (1995, p. 225).

Or, as is the case in small newsrooms, the journalist or editor is required to lay out the paper. The rules of print journalism have changed and the practitioners have needed to adapt to be able to practice their craft.

**Mobile phones**

Conley and Lamble (2006) consider the mobile phone to be one of the essential tools for the modern journalist. For the most part, journalists in this study agreed that mobile phones have made their work process easier. Uses of the phone include conducting interviews and filing stories, but it is also used by the journalist to remain constantly available for call-backs from contacts when writing a story. However, the phone is especially important to keep in touch with other members of the field, particularly when out on the road. Michael Young (2007) writes about the Sydney Morning Herald’s newsroom during 9/11 in 2001. Writer-at-large, Paul McGeogh, was in New York between assignments when the Twin Towers were hit and used his mobile phone to report what was going on back to the newsroom in Sydney.

Although the reaction in this research to the mobile phone was largely positive, several respondents mentioned time issues. One respondent from a Sunday paper pointed out that “you’re never out of touch, you can be contacted 24/7” (J4 2007) although he does “turn it off Sunday morning” (ibid.). And, referring back to smaller newsrooms, time-poor editors can find it difficult to manage the demands.

> … people anticipate because they can ring you on the mobile or they can email you that you can get back to them straight away. Well, if I go out and come back I’ve got twenty messages; I can’t get back to everybody straight away … If they can’t get you on the landline, they ring you on the mobile, and if they can’t get you on the mobile they then email you. And it’s like everything isn’t instantaneous – there’s only one of me! (E2 2007).
**Digital cameras**

One journalist expertly summed up the importance of a good photo in news work:

> Newspaper journalism is rarely about just the words. I regard it as a team sport effectively. They get a great picture and my story goes from being a page seventeen to a page one (J6 2007).

Keeping this in mind, the digital camera has become increasingly important in the news-gathering process for journalists. Smaller newsrooms do not have specialist photographers – the journalists take their own photos. This, again, reduces the time spent doing ‘journalism’. However, relating it back to Csikszentmihalyi’s system model, the field (in this case, management) have changed the rules and structures of the domain by tightening budgets, downsizing newsrooms and changing news room culture, leading to a variation in the domain the individual is required to learn to produce their work: thus the need to become a multi-skilled journalist (Bromley 1997; Cottle 2007).

Regardless of this, respondents were generally positive about this aspect of news work. Even journalists from larger newsrooms who work with photographers see the digital camera as an important addition that has had positive ramifications:

> The one that changed everything was digital photography. It wasn’t even computers … I mean I remember going on jobs and you’d have a roll of film and it’d be 5.00 at night and you’d be in a country town and you couldn’t get the film processed … We could always make a phone call and someone could type your copy out. You could go anywhere and write the story but you couldn’t go anywhere and type the picture. It changed everything (J6 2007).

The digital camera also allows the audience to take part in the news production process with news rooms encouraging the audience to submit photographs along with story suggestions.

**Email**

One freelancer succinctly summed up the overall reaction to emailing:

> Bloody brilliant – I send all images and articles to my clients around the world via email (J11 2007).

Journalists use email throughout the production process and most believe it has enabled them to become more efficient in comparison to the traditional methods. Email is used by the individual to generate story ideas, conduct interviews, and keep in contact with other members of the field. Editors pass story ideas on to the journalists via email as well as provide information on editorial policy. It was also noted that public relations practitioners now use email to generate interest in
their message and audiences submit story ideas and pictures as well as provide feedback on articles that have been printed.

However, again, small newsroom editors find managing emails difficult. One country editor showed me his email ‘Inbox’ and there were over 600 emails. Further to this, the time issues inherent in a newsroom have led to time-saving techniques. When media releases come in to a news room by email, it is easy to ‘cut-and-paste’ the release directly into the publication. As one respondent said, “it saves a lot in the fact that we don’t have to retype the fax messages” (E1 2007).

**The Internet**

Pearson’s (1999) doctoral thesis on the Internet’s influence on journalism and journalism education identified 169 new tasks the Internet has introduced to the journalist’s work practices. Although he points out that “not all journalists will have adopted all new tasks and practices as part of their work” (1999, p. 315) because some of the practices “are restricted to small sections of the media” (ibid.), there would be very few journalists who are not affected by these new rules of the journalism domain. Journalists find the Internet important at different stages of their creative process: generating story ideas; researching; and, receiving audience feedback.

Respondents discussed using the Internet as a matter of course within work practices. Many of the younger journalists cannot comprehend working without it and older respondents, who remember how research was done before the Internet, marvel at the difference it has made in their production process:

… so much time (was) spent phoning someone. You might phone a bookshop and say, ‘How do you spell this author’s name? Or this character’s name? Or what month was Hawke voted in?’ It was just astonishingly hard to fact-check a story and now it’s astonishingly easy (J12 2007).

Further to this, respondents noted how the Internet brought audience feedback into the news process, with one journalist checking how many ‘hits’ his stories received from readers and another mentioning how feedback from the audience can continue the cycle and generate stories:

*(The Daily Telegraph)* wrote a story last week, the police reported it about a suburb in Sydney that had decided to set up vigilante groups because the police were ineffective and (they) got so many responses on the Internet that they wrote a second story about those responses (J2 2007).

However, the counter to this is that because of time constraints, a journalist could feasibly research and write a complete article without contacting anyone:
... a good journalist uses the Internet as just one of their tools and then digs a little deeper. But it would be entirely possible to source, and is done regularly with things that you read in other publications, are sourced almost entirely from Internet sources ... you can actually be extremely lazy and not talk to anyone in person and use the Internet (E7 2007).

Tapsall and Varley call this the "battery hen model of news" (Tapsall & Varley 2001, p. 12) and note that it is one of the trends that threaten journalism.

**Conclusion**

Digital technology has affected the way journalists produce their work and, although there have been some negative effects, particularly with the issue of time pressures, early findings indicate that the majority of respondents believe the technological advances have been positive in comparison to writing using traditional methods. It is important to recognise that the domain of journalism has always had a relationship with technology (Conley & Lamble 2006; Thurman 2005) and changes within domains are a natural progression: a domain cannot remain stagnant or unchanging or it risks becoming irrelevant within the culture. An examination of the journalist’s production in the domain of print journalism in the digital age in comparison to the pre-digital age demonstrates how the domain has evolved over time and how the journalist has adapted.

However, Gardner, et al. point out that rapid technological advances can be a major threat to a domain because old practices may be questioned and “practitioners trained in the old methods may start doubting their expertise” (2001, p. 31). Data from this research indicate practitioners in the journalism domain are willing to embrace new technology if it improves their production process.

However, a further theme to emerge from the research data is that the constraint of time pressures on the journalist is a constant issue and the digital technology tools, although improving production have also added constraints. Yet, the Press is a time-driven industry (Fagence 1963; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon 2001; Harrison 2006; Klinenberg 2005; Tuchman 1973) and always has been. Deadlines are another structure the journalist works within that enables them to produce. The deadline is a rule of the domain and it is how the journalist, as agent, manages the time constraints and utilises both the limits and opportunities digital technology provides that leads to creative media texts.

An interesting by-product of the research is that the tenets of good journalism are still a valuable factor (Alexander 1998; Hartigan & Gawenda 2007; Murdoch 2002) and journalists are an important part of the multi-media landscape. As Conley and Lamble rightfully point out: “No amount of technology will assist in asking the right questions at the right time, in assessing news
values, or in writing news” (2006, p. xvii). Katherine Fulton writes: “Journalism and journalists won't disappear. As purveyors of meaning and context amidst all the noise, they could become more essential than ever” (2000, p. 2).

To rephrase Cole’s original quote (1963, p. 15), we are in another crucial period in the ever-changing (my emphasis) history of newspapers and magazines. The problems may seem more complex than previously, the dangers graver, and the demands made on every section within the industry more exacting, but it is how the journalist learns and uses the rules and structures of the domain to produce a variation and then presents it to the field for verification that makes these technological changes a valuable contribution that has enabled the print journalism domain to continually evolve: Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model in action.
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J2 2007, Personal Interview, NSW, Australia.

J4 2007, Personal Interview, NSW, Australia.

J5 2007, Personal Interview, NSW, Australia.

J6 2007, Personal Interview, NSW, Australia.

J11 2007, Email interview, NSW, Australia.

J12 2007, Personal Interview, NSW, Australia.


