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Essential Shared Values
and 21st Century Journalism

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If anyone can be a publisher, then who is a journalist? The town square of the past is global today. Individuals and groups have unparalleled ability to capture and broadcast images and events. The Web allows unprecedented access to the opinions of others and to information from credible (and incredible) sources. The start of the 21st century has found American consumers adrift in a flood of visual and textual messages.

Here I argue that technology has, once again, caused a paradigm shift for journalism. While some suggest that the accessibility of information has made journalists unnecessary, I argue that professional journalists, with commitment to the essential shared values of the practice, are necessary to the development and sustenance of democratic process. Commitment to essential shared values allows for journalism to fulfill its social responsibility despite paradigm shift.

Paradigm shifts create confusion. One hallmark of paradigm shift, as described by scholar Thomas Kuhn (1962) who first coined the term, is that a significant number of relevant parties realize that old assumptions for content and process in the social institution under examination no longer hold. Yet, even as the new paradigm is clashing with the old, practitioners in the field need to keep functioning. The "pre-paradigm" period—the time in which new understandings and conventions are in development—is notable for its lack of consensus. During this time, "competing schools of thought possess differing procedures, theories, even metaphysical presuppositions" (Stanford University, 2007).

Yet, some things within the social institution endure, even during paradigm shift. For example, scientific revolutions shake basic assumptions about what citizens and practitioners believe. But, the need for scientists to develop and test new knowledge for the good of society continues. The social responsibility of journalists, at least in democracies, is to notice and report the important events and issues that citizens need to know so that they can effectively govern themselves (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Elliott, 1986). That remains true despite paradigm shifts. Essential shared values are those values that directly support journalists fulfilling their unique social responsibility (Elliott, 1988, pp. 29–30).

FORCES OPPOSING TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

Four forces rise to the top as opposing the traditional journalistic practices that developed in the early 20th century:

1. Affordable satellite technology allows for instant transmission of messages by anyone;
2. The Web allows for instant access to information, as well as providing an instant podium and microphone in the virtual, global town-square;
3. Cable and satellite television, along with the Web, has created a 24-hour expectation for information flow, with the destruction of a space- and time-limited news hole; and
4. A lack of hard borders between types of mass communication—news, entertainment, advertising, and opinion—has resulted in a mixed bag of messages that defy easy classification.

Traditional journalism required that visual and text reporters recognize newsworthy events and record details to share with a mass audience. Now, breaking news is as likely to come from the cell phone camera of a participant or an accidental observer as it is from a journalist employed by a news organization. This input has given rise to the term *citizen journalist* as a label for those who are gathering information for news stories without the sanction of a recognized news organization. The collection of information for journalistic products from a large pool of information and information givers is called open sourcing. Citizens at large have gained greater credibility as sources of information.

But, according to long-time editor Robert Giles, "[M]astery of [new technology] is not a substitute for journalistic skills and values" (2001, p. 5). The ability to witness and collect data does not make one a journalist.

Traditional journalism took time. It took time to fact check a story. It took time for editors to review stories and determine placement in newspapers and broadcast news programs. But, every technological advance, from the Guttenberg press to computer to satellite, has cut down the time that journalists thought that they needed to do their work.

For generations, there was more information that a news organization had print or broadcast space to use. In addition, journalists had facts that they believed to be true, but that they could not report (yet) due to a lack of hard evidence or verification.

But, that has changed. According to Bryon Calame, *Times* Public Editor,

> For more than a century, *New York Times* reporters covering the newsworthy developments of the day typically focused on having the stories ready by the evening deadlines for the next morning's paper.... More and more, *Times* staffers are expected to deliver breaking news stories to the Web version of the paper 24 hours a day—as soon as the articles are ready. That means more editors are constantly balancing speed against completeness to decide when an article is good enough to carry The Times' respected brand. (Calame, 2006a, November 19)

Calame notes that the result is a different mindset for journalists along with an explosion of "multimedia and video presentations, audio, blogs and interactive graphics" (2006a, November 19). The ability to transmit instantly has created the expectation of instant transmission. The concept of a limited news hole has dissolved.

Traditionally, journalism involved a group of like-minded practitioners, choosing among topics and details, gate keeping and fact checking their way to the creation of a news story.

Reporters and photographers, designers and editors, producers and news directors huddled in separate newsrooms, adhering to common values, each seeking to develop similar news products first.

Now, instead of information givers all being journalists, who operate with similar conventions of practice, print and broadcast tabloids have become players. Bloggers are claiming turf as are citizens. These information givers do not respect the same rules as traditional journalists, but they influence traditional reporting.

Today "Internet journalism, according to those who produce manifestos on its behalf, represents a world historical development—not so much because of the expressive power of the new medium as because of its accessibility to producers and consumers" (Lemann, 2006, 44). Everyone, in turn, can be a producer and consumer of news.

K. Daniel Glover, editor of National Journal's *Technology Daily* and graphic designer Mike Essl call bloggers, "the pamphleteers of the 21st century, revolutionary 'citizen journalists' motivated by personal idealism and an unwavering confidence that they can reform American politics" (Glover and Essl, 2006, p. 13).

But, bloggers have a different role to play from journalists. "They exist to engage citizens in the obligations and magic of politics. They draw people into the fight. They have made millions of people feel that their voices will be heard somewhere and, when aggregated together, can have a real influence on the outcome of policy debates and elections" (Dionne, 2006, p. 34).

The capability of audience members to control collection and dissemination of news, collectively and individually, has led some to conclude that consumer judgment can substitute for news judgment.

> Disintermediated news is…not selected by editors. [It is news based on the assumption that] markets are capable of making better decisions about news than editors. We're getting this from two sides. First, there are the Web people, who have ingeniously figured out how to decide what's important by tabulating the collective wisdom of online readers. How galling for us—to be replaced by algorithm. Second, we're getting it from our own corporate leaders, who believe in market research. Why not just edit by referendum? They wonder. Why not just ask people what they want and give it to them? (Carroll, 2006, p. 5)

The short answer to that rhetorical question is that what is in the public interest and what the public is interested in are very different concepts. Essentially, journalists have the responsibility to seek the former.

Journalism, in the early 21st century, is a practice seeking definition,

> [I]t appears that there are two contrasting theories of journalism…. One consists of established standards and practices that emanate from print and broadcast journalism and the belief that journalism has a social responsibility to inform citizens and nurture democracy, while the other is informed by suspicion of centrally managed, traditional media conglomerates and a belief, inspired by the open architecture of the Internet and flexibility of Web publishing, that citizens can participate in democracy by creating their own journalism. (Berkman and Shumway, 2003, p. 67)

Traditional news was once easy to distinguish from other forms of mass communication. The boundaries between news and opinion, news and entertainment, news and advertising have softened for a variety of reasons, but just whether a particular informational product ought to count as news, reality, analysis, opinion, or parody is sometimes difficult to judge.

Consider two fake news shows that have been shown to be "just as substantive as network television news during the 2004 election" (Dowd, 2006). John Stewart, host of Comedy Central's

"The Daily Show" (TDS), and Stephen Colbert, of "The Colbert Report" (TCR), are 21st century cultural icons that deconstruct the idea of traditional news.

Yet, as ethics scholars Sandra Borden and Chad Tew point out, real news and the 'fake' news of the two comedy shows are deeply intertwined.

> [B]y relying on raw material that has been "vetted" by journalists, TDS and TCR implicitly buy into factuality—and its associated rules of evidence—as a key norm for good journalism.... At the same time, "fake" news demonstrates how the same set of "facts" can be interpreted differently and contextualized more thoroughly. (Borden and Tew, 2007, pp. 10–11)

Rather than concluding that such shows make it difficult for audience members to differentiate news from other products, Borden and Tew argue that TDS provides a critical perspective, by which true news can be judged.

> Journalists can learn some valuable lessons from their encounter and interaction with 'fake' news, especially since the traditional values serve as the basis behind the critique of journalism. Both mainstream journalists and media critics from entertainment who perform news work within the system. Yet Stewart is ultimately an idealist in the sense that he uses traditional values to make judgments about whether the system can work better. (2007, p. 28)

This easily understood press criticism lets citizens in on the humorous, but value-based, analysis of news coverage.

MOVING FROM THE 20TH CENTURY TRADITIONAL PARADIGM TO THE NEW PARADIGM

Under the traditional paradigm of news reporting, journalists should:

1. Seek external discoverable truth or, if there is no clear single truth, present two opposing sides of the story;
2. Use sources with recognized expertise or authority;
3. Present that material objectively;
4. For consumption by a general mass audience;
5. Through one-way communication.

The new paradigm of journalism, in contrast, looks like this:

1. Notice issue and events;
2. Use own reporting as well as open sourcing;
3. Filter that through journalistic perspective;
4. For consumption by targeted audiences;
5. Who then provide feedback.

This section explores clashes between these two paradigms. However, it important to remember that what is here called the "traditional" paradigm developed through a clash with a paradigm based on the partisan press.

According to Dionne,

From the beginning of our republic in the 1790s until the turn of the [20th] century, American newspapers were, for the most part, the organs of political parties. There was no ideal of objectivity.... [But, then r]eformers who looked for professionalism, as against bossism, in politics eventually turned to seeking professionalism in journalism.

Walter Lippmann...led the way to a redefinition of journalism's role and the journalist's responsibilities. The notion that newspapers should be objective rather than partisan was the product of Lippman's admiration for the scientific method, his skepticism of ideology, and, some of his critics would argue, his less than full-hearted faith in democracy. (2006, p. 34)

History shows us that new technology loosens old conventions and transforms the way that big stories are covered. In the 19th century, telegraph, the wire service, and the other technological developments created the ability to move a single story or picture to thousands of news outlets at a time. At the same time that these technologies were in development, the industrial revolution and an unending series of scientific discoveries were giving people a new sense of control over their environment. Causes and effects, and solutions to problems could all be discovered if only enough talent and resources were dedicated to the problem. Philosophers and scientists and the lay public agreed: the truth could be known.

These beliefs about human ability to know and control the world reverberated in the 20th century journalistic paradigm. Information could come from a common source, such as the team of Associated Press reporters at the scene of a catastrophe. Text and visual journalistic accounts that resulted were distributed to the thousands of news outlets that subscribed to wire services. News, produced to provide the truth to a broad audience of Americans seemed to exist independent of the age, ethnicity, politics, or geography of its consumer.

An early U.S. journalistic code of ethics adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 1923 (Illinois Institute of Technology, 2007) reflected the technological, political, and scientific understandings of the new century. For example, journalists were told to exhibit "natural and trained powers of observation and reasoning."

But, technology threatened the status quo.

Two hundred years ago, James Gorden Bennett of the *New York Herald* was one of many who thought the telegraph would put newspapers out of business. It was a logical conclusion, he said, because "it would eliminate the competitive advantage he had over his rivals. All that would be left to newspapers was commentary and analysis." (Giles, 2001, p. 3)

"In newsrooms of the early 19th century, timeliness was not a priority. Newspapers were almost exclusively local" (Giles, 2001, p. 2). The telegraph changed all of that. Newspapers survived and the journalistic value of timeliness was born. Marketing values had a hand in the development of the non-partisan paradigm as well. Dionne notes: "By being nonpartisan and objective, newspapers did not offend half or more of their potential audience" (2006, p. 36).

But objective reporting was often that which didn't threaten the commonly held values of the audience. American journalism's coverage of World War II provides a good example. This was a non-controversial war from the point of view of most U.S. news consumers. Emerging technology, in the form of radio coverage, seemed to reinforce the notion that objective truth consisted of external reality that journalism helped citizens to experience.

From the time that Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941, journalists rallied to give American audiences the American truth and show off new technology. The war was a radio news exclusive from the 2:22 p.m. Eastern Standard Time wire service report the day of the attack until the morning newspapers hit the stands at daybreak Monday.

CBS correspondent Edward R. Murrow gave listeners minute-by-minute descriptions of life

in the war zone and experimented with new reporting techniques. For the first time ever, listeners had what we now call "natural sound"—they could hear for themselves what was going on at the scene while it was being reported (Edwards, 2004, pp. 51–52).

Purported objectivity was easy to achieve when it was believed by the audience that there was only one right side. In reality, there were other stories that were barely told or not told at all. For example, information that the U.S. government consistently denied assistance to Jewish families seeking escape from German genocide did not make its way into mainstream coverage of the day (*Jewish Virtual Library*, January 13, 1944). Nationalistic coverage was mistakenly believed to be objective coverage.

Within a decade of the war's end, however, objectivity and the understanding of what counted as news came under serious attack. The United States returned to peacetime comfortable in its military strength, but not as sure of the country's ability to withstand the more subtle threat of anti-democratic politics.

According to contemporary journalist Bob Edwards (2004), U.S. Senator Joe McCarthy, who fanned the fear of Communists in our midst, was a careful student of objective reporting in the early 1950s. Day after day, the Senator waved his new set of allegations too close to the conventional late-afternoon deadline for journalists to find an equally believable source who could give the other side of the story. The news convention of the day dictated that journalists report only what they were told. The Senator, as named source, provided an illusion of expertise. Denials, if published at all, came too late to gain the attention given to the initial claims.

Thoughtful journalists at the time were troubled that their objective, verifiable, named source reporting of external events did not reflect *truth*. But, it took the maverick television reporting of Edward R. Murrow to provide context for McCarthy's allegations. The just-born television documentary had not yet developed norms of conduct. It was different enough from the printed news story that it didn't follow the same rules. The content was controlled by its producer, not its sources. Producers sought to give complete stories rather than simply echo the pronouncements of authoritative sources. The "See It Now" piece, so devastating to Senator McCarthy, was aired in early March, 1954.

Bound by the Federal Communication Commission's requirement of fairness, Senator McCarthy was given an opportunity to produce a response that was later broadcast in the same time slot. But, in the end, McCarthy fell victim to the process that he had himself exploited. The "See It Now" television documentary provoked public disgust over McCarthy's misuse of his power and of news media. McCarthy's denial and explanations, four weeks later, could not rally equal attention or belief (Edwards, 2004, pp. 105–123).

On the face of it, it seemed that 20th-century technology conformed to the traditional paradigm technique of journalists channeling objective information. During that century, technology first, provided still images in addition to text so that citizens could see how something really looked; then audio let people know how events sounded, then video showed them how the event happened, and finally satellite technology put audiences in events as the story was still developing. And, from the beginning of that century, journalists worked to transmit the accounts of sources and story subjects with dispassionate accuracy. But, rather than reinforce the belief of a single Enlightenment-style truth, slice-of-life journalistic reporting ultimately revealed that stories have multiple perspectives rather than a single infallible truth.

Reporting on later 20th century stories such as the U.S. civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and Watergate could not have happened through exclusive reliance on authoritative sources contributing in traditional ways.

Consider, for example, the reporting on Watergate. Then veteran *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward and novice reporter Carl Bernstein did not wait for official pronouncements or

for on-the-record credible sources to tell the nation what was happening and why. Woodward and Bernstein obtained information however they could, tricking telephone company clerks and pressuring witnesses called before the grand jury into the disclosure of information. Rather than searching for, finding, and then reporting some indisputable truth, the Watergate reporting included a confluence of perspectives emerging from White House statements, leaked tapes, leaked grand jury testimony, Congressional testimony, stolen files, insiders seeking to expose corruption, those seeking to cover it up, and those changing sides. Woodward and Bernstein drew conclusions from a conglomerate of sources "close to the matter" and provided a narrative that best fit the pieces they were able to collect (Woodward and Bernstein, 1974).

However, the myth of objective reporting continued in the public mind and in journalism schools until the reporting on a new Presidential scandal 14 years later. The coverage of President Bill Clinton and his affair with a White House intern illustrates even more clearly the clash between paradigms.

From the beginning of this scandal, Web communication competed with traditional journalistic process. When Matt Drudge, publisher of the Web-based Drudge Report, told his e-mail recipients and Web-browser audience in January 1998 that *Newsweek* had decided to sit on a story about allegations of a Presidential sex scandal (McClintick, 1998, p. 113) the newsmagazine's editors responded by dumping the story onto online publication immediately rather than waiting additional days to first publish the story in the hard copy magazine.

Here was a story developed by traditional journalists that was force-fed to the public by a Web-based gossip columnist. According to McClintick (1998), that act of Matt Drudge foreshadowed

> the role of the Internet as a new and different journalism medium—and as a catalyst of broader trends in America toward democratization and devolution of the power of big institutions, especially in the media worlds of New York and Washington. In that sense, Drudge can be seen as a modern Tom Paine, a possible precursor to millions of town criers using the Internet to invade the turf of bigfoot journalists. (p. 114)

The reporting on Clinton-Lewinsky also provided an early example of how political leaders could bypass news media. Independent Prosecutor Kenneth Starr released his report simultaneously to journalists in hard copy and to citizens by posting it on the Web. In 2006, it is not surprising that candidates for the 2008 U.S. Presidential run would hold their own Web-based voter communications and, thus, bypass journalistic gatekeepers. But, in 1998, going around the journalistic gatekeepers was highly unusual.

Giles says,

> Posting the Starr Report gave the public an unfiltered version. It did not need a journalist to sort out the lead, to provide the context, to interpret the independent counsel's conclusions. To some it was a splendid example of democracy. For journalists, it was a revealing moment. The capacity to post documents and reports on the Web gave the public a vital point of comparison.... As documents and transcripts on the Web became a potential check against truthful reporting, they raise the bar in newsrooms everywhere for accuracy, balance and fairness. (2006, p. 9)

A final example from the Clinton-Lewinsky coverage illustrates how journalists staying wedded to the traditional paradigm of dutifully reporting what sources say failed to meet the journalistic responsibility of telling citizens what they need to know for self-governance. The faulty adherence to the old paradigm was more noticeable because so many of the old paradigm conventions had been violated in the reporting of the story.

On March 5, 1998, *The Washington Post* published a detailed account of President Clinton's deposition in the Paula Jones case. At the time, the deposition was sealed by court order. The *Post's* report was not attributed, but the ultimate sources for the leak were few. The sealed deposition could have been leaked by Clinton's defense team, by Jones's lawyers, or by Ken Starr's office (Baker, 1998). *Post* reporter Peter Baker, who received and published the information, knew the source of the report. If traditional paradigm holds, at least one *Post* editor also knew the source as well or knew enough about the source to agree that the information supplied was likely to be accurate.

In the published story, the *Post* allowed each potential source to deny the leak. Clinton attorneys called the leak illegal, reprehensible, and unethical. They promised to track down the leaker's identity. Jones' lawyers said that any suggestion that they were responsible for the leak was "erroneous, reprehensible and fallacious." Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr categorically denied that his office was the direct or indirect source of the story (Baker, 1998).

However, logically, someone in the Clinton, Jones, or Starr camps was indeed responsible for the leaked information, and the *Post* reporter and editor knew the identity of that person. The printed denials were probably accurate presentations of these named source's denials, but at least one of them was false. While it was certainly important for readers to know that the various players in the case denied having leaked the information, they also needed to know who was being truthful and why *The Washington Post* knowingly allowed one or more of these sources to lie in the news columns. The citizens were not told. "[P]ure nonpartisanship, in the sense of bending over too far to seem to be fair, can mislead reporters" (Dionne, 2006, p. 37).

As late as journalistic disclosures at the perjury and obstruction of justice trial of White House official Lewis "Scooter" Libby in March 2007, journalists were being exposed for aiding governmental manipulators at the expense of serving them rather than the public. According to media columnist Tim Rutten, most of the 10 journalists who testified a the Libby trial, "had made themselves willing tools of an administration bent on discrediting a guy whose offense was to inform people about how the White House had misled the country about its reasons for invading Iraq" (Rutten, 2007, p. E16).

PROBLEMS WITH THE OLD PARADIGM AND PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW

Adherence to the traditional paradigm of news reporting can fail to help journalists fulfill their social responsibility to citizens. An objective press is a powerless press that can be exploited by sources. McCarthy's manipulation of journalistic process, which horrified journalists and citizens in the 1950s, had morphed into an accepted method of political survival by the 1990s called *spin*. News organizations should not knowingly report falsehoods or trial balloons without labeling them as such for their readers. Allowing those with power to "spin" a story in the name of objectivity may meet the needs of sources but fails to meet the needs of citizens.

Next, under the old paradigm, students are taught to get "both sides of a story." Most stories have one side or many sides. Natural disasters and house fires generally have one side. Earthquakes have no "side" of the story to tell. The story is what happens to people affected by the disaster. If the story becomes one of how well individuals and social institutions are coping with the disaster, the story becomes one of multiple perspectives. Journalists must choose among the many sides to provide focus for their stories, but when they choose only two, to give a polarized either/or perspective, they lose the nuances that citizens need to understand before they can make educated decisions for self-governance.

Last of all, the old paradigm was built on the idea that journalists were expected to find

external news. But, discoverable news is a myth. News is what happens when journalists choose to pay attention to some event or issue, always at the expense of others. Visual journalists have always known that a photograph doesn't mirror what is out there, but shows pieces of reality, selected by the brain and its filters functioning in the photographer behind the camera. Images are given meaning by singling them out, choosing angle, composition, and frame.

Although these pillars of objectivity, two sides to the story, and external news were standards of 20th century American journalism, they more strongly reflect marketing strategies rather than ethical principles. They reflected the technological possibilities of the time and reflected news consortiums' development of an audience and advertising base larger than a community limited by geography or politics. Ultimately, they reflected news organizations' interest in cheap purchase of news products that fit the needs of every person.

But, the new paradigm has its problems as well. The pillars upon which it rests in this development phase are interactivity, multiple source perspectives, and targeted audiences.

Interactivity and multiple perspectives have resulted in Wikiality—the mistaken belief that open participation in providing and editing information results in truth. "The millions of bloggers who are constantly watching, fact-checking and exposing mistakes are a powerful example of 'the wisdom of crowds' being assisted by a technology that is as open and omnipresent as we are" (Naim, 2006, p. 31). Unfortunately, inter-subjective agreement does not equal truth. The crowd can be wrong.

Suspicion of corporate control of traditional news media has led some to bestow greater credibility on the independent blogger. According to journalist Hope Crystal (2002), "Readers may find blogs more credible than traditional media because blogs have no corporate interest to serve" (p. 8).

However, advertisers have infiltrated blogs, paying bloggers to build buzz for their clients' products (Friedman, 2007, p. C1). No reader can be sure if what they are reading is the "true" blogger opinion regarding a movie, book, or restaurant, or whether it is a blog-ad, inserted into the script for a fee.

Careful targeting of audiences and the shaping of news product to fit the individual consumer can lead to less-informed citizens. Individuals who take in information because it fits their comfort zone or because what they are interested in was determined by previous purchasing or online searching, experience life with blinders. Nineteenth century British philosopher John Stuart Mill contended that very few people really know what they think because of what we would call today "selective exposure." He says that most people "…have never thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them, and consider what such persons may have to say; and consequently they do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess" (1859, pp. 42–43).

ESSENTIAL SHARED VALUES

Journalism, like other important social institutions draws on essential shared values for its identification. It would be easy to draw the erroneous conclusion that journalists are relativists—adherents to a philosophical theory that holds that there is no objective standard for judging right and wrong. However, I will argue here that journalists do hold moral standards by which they judge professional behavior. Indeed, without such standards, journalism would not be recognizable as a discrete industry (Elliott, 1988, p. 28).

This author identified three shared values that are sustained across culture and time, and paradigm shifts as well:

1. Journalists should strive to publish news accounts that are balanced, accurate, relevant and complete (BARC).
2. Journalists should strive to publish news accounts that are BARC without causing harm that could be prevented.
3. Journalists should strive to give citizens information that they need for self-governance. This principle is the defining principle for the practice of journalism and the one that justifies causing harm in the production of news stories. If citizens need to have that information, it is justified to publish it, even if the information causes harm to some individual or group. (pp. 29–30)

"The essential shared values of journalism provide the criteria by which reporters and editors judge the adequacy of their actions and the adequacy of their peers' actions" (p. 30): Ultimately, the essential shared values of journalism are those that support the development and maintenance of democracy: "When news meets journalistic standards of excellence, it empowers citizens to perform...civic functions necessary for full participation in community life" (Borden, 2006, pp. 14–15).

According to Lemann (2006),

Reporting—meaning the tradition by which a member of a distinct occupational category gets to cross the usual bounds of geography and class, to go where important things are happening, to ask powerful people blunt and impertinent questions, and to report back, reliably and in plain language, to a general audience—is a distinctive, fairly recent invention.... It has spread—and it continues to spread—around the world. It is a powerful social tool, because it provides citizens with an independent source of information about the state and other holders of power. (p. 49)

The Internet reinforces the journalistic role in bringing up and sustaining citizen self-governance,

1. The Internet has become a powerful weapon in the fight for freedom. 2. In many countries, where dictatorships or totalitarian governments want to control the flow of information, courageous journalists are getting their stories out on the Web in ways that are not possible over government-controlled radio and television or in some newspapers whose owners are friendly to the government. (Giles, 2006, pp. 6–7)

Essential shared values are the ethical principles that support journalists fulfilling their special social responsibility. The current paradigm of journalism describes the conventions of practice, determined by technology and influenced by marketing considerations.

THE NEW PARADIGM CAN REINFORCE ESSENTIAL SHARED VALUES OF THE PRESS

Technology allows for the development of a more active and engaged citizenry, so the new paradigm holds the promise of better journalism than ever. For example, the input of citizen journalists and satellite technology has expanded the coverage of newsworthy events. News has to be noticed before it can exist.

The presence of multiple sources and the ability of citizens to seek a variety of information provide a justification for journalistic perspective. Journalists need to maintain voices that are separate from the powerful individuals and groups that would manipulate them and the pull of public opinion as well. Only journalists have the special responsibility of providing information

to citizens for self-governance. Journalists are those who are motivated to sift through the mountains of information to provide citizens what they need.

Bloggers, as the new partisan media, play an important role in stimulating active citizenry, but do not substitute for independent journalism.

> There is an enormous need for information that is developed outside the confines of political struggles. Honest debate requires at least some consensus on what the facts are, and honesty, not obfuscation, where there is genuine confusion over the nature of the facts…. What we need, in other words, is to welcome the new partisan and participatory outlets while finding ways to nurture and improve independent journalism. (Dionne, 2006, p. 41)

The Web offers a powerful new tool for good journalism. Newsassignments.net, administered by New York University professor and journalism critic, Jay Rosen (2007) is an impressive hybrid of new and old paradigm journalism. The site "tries to spark innovation in journalism by showing that open collaboration over the Internet among reporters, editors, and large groups of users can produce high-quality work that serves the public interest, holds up under scrutiny, and builds trust."

> The site uses open source methods to develop good assignments and help bring them to completion. It pays professional journalists to carry the project home and set high standards; they work closely with users who have something to contribute…. It does stories that the regular news media doesn't do, can't do, wouldn't do, or already screwed up. (Rosen, 2006)

But the Web is improving journalism in less ambitious ways as well:

> In their Internet versions, most traditional news organizations make their reporters available to answer readers' questions and, often, permit readers to post their own material. Being able to see this as the advent of true democracy in what had been a media oligarchy makes it much easier to argue that Internet journalism has already achieved great things. (Lehman, 2006, p. 48)

A sign that the new paradigm is moving past its infancy is that practitioners of the "new" journalism are working to articulate standards. Professional groups, such as the *Media Bloggers Association*, are establishing ethical standards, correction policies, and professional identity. These bloggers are moving closer to their traditional print and electronic journalism counterparts and are gaining access to coverage of newsworthy events in the process. For the first time in Federal Court, two of the press seats reserved at the January 2007 trial of White House advisor Lewis Libby were held for bloggers (Sipress, 2007, p. D1).

Good journalistic practice, whatever the paradigm of the moment, is that which upholds the essential shared values of the profession.

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