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#JASON BAINBRIDGE #NICOLA GOC #LIZ TYNAN

MEDIA AND JOURNALISM
NEW APPROACHES TO THEORY AND PRACTICE

THIRD EDITION

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Dedication

To the late Anne Dunn, broadcaster and academic, whose passion for inspiring young journalists and media workers lives on.

From Jason Bainbridge:

My father passed away during the first edition of this book and my mother passed away during this most recent one. This book is therefore dedicated to Graham and Pamela Bainbridge who first inspired a love of media in me and to all the many students, colleagues and friends who have contributed directly and indirectly to this book over the years since. I now know a great deal more about Alfred Hitchcock, action figures and *Angry Birds* then any one person possibly should—hence my urge to share it with all of you. So thanks for that.

From Nicola Goc:

To Sage Mila Goc: who knows what the media landscape will look like when you are a young woman embarking on a career in the 2030s? One thing is for certain: it will be built on the commitment and dedication of today's journalists and media workers, academics, and students of journalism and media who will continue the fight for a free and open media and the public's right to know.

From Liz Tynan:

To the many journalism students who have, over the years, made me think more clearly about my profession, made me value it more highly and inspired in me a conviction that all reports of the demise of a free media are premature. And to my little grand-nephew Alexander, born while this book was in production. May you grow up in world with a free and vibrant media.

FOREWORD

Journalism in Australia—and indeed, in most parts of the world—is considered to be in 'crisis'. It's a buzzword at the moment. National security is in crisis due to seemingly ever-present terrorism threats; global economies are in crisis; and our media is in crisis due to threats to its independence, ethics and quality from various quarters. Newspapers, which have provided journalistic leadership for as long as they have existed, face declining audiences and are challenged to prove their relevance. There are a significantly fewer journalists operating in an environment that requires even more content than ever before, faster than ever before, across a multitude of platforms. The bulk of this pressure stems from the proliferation of online news and the immediate nature of electronic communications—including social media—which now permeate our lives.

In this environment, journalism educators continue to try to inspire journalists of the future to hold tight to the ideals of crusading, probing, thorough, accurate, comprehensive journalism: journalism that can make a difference. To produce this type of journalism we must be transparent about what our industry does well, and what it does not do so well. The task of the journalism educator is not a simple one. We must be critical, but we must be practical. We must teach our students to aim high, but we must not be unrealistic about what can be achieved. We must instill hope that a future journalist can prompt a Royal Commission, expose corruption, or shine a spotlight on injustice, but temper that hope with the realisation that many of our graduates will earn their crust as public relations professionals rather than as journalists. This is the world in which we live.

The new edition of this important and lasting text from the team of Jason Bainbridge, Nicola Goc and Liz Tynan highlights these contrasts well. It facilitates university-trained journalists to learn 'how to' practise journalism while keeping a solid eye on the critiques of the profession. It encourages their self-reflective practice: Is this right? Is this good journalism? What has prompted this story? How can I cover it truthfully, accurately and fairly? New chapters and case studies on digital and social media, and on misogyny directed towards female journalists particularly through social media, ensure a necessary update on the changing environment in which journalists operate. The authors provide a way forward for the journalists of the future to coalesce their skills-based knowledge with their critical thought. In this new edition, these teachings are imparted with a full recognition of the contemporary media world in which our graduates will operate—a fast-paced, often under-resourced industry. It is an industry that combines the past requirements of what we now call 'traditional' journalism with the ever-present pressures of social media updates and 'profiles' that have become a standard part of the modern journalists' tool kit. In all of this, journalism lives as a profession upon which society relies, and from which society expects a great deal.

Susan Forde
Associate Professor
Griffith University
2015

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

Shock! Horror! Universities are teaching courses in media studies! Students are wasting their time studying *Neighbours* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*! It's a regular story in the newspapers. But let's be honest, media studies academics are just as bad. Shock! Horror! Journalists are pandering to their audiences, telling them the stories they want to hear about celebrities rather than challenging the status quo and championing a left-wing revolution.

It's a war out there. But as someone with a foot in both camps, I think it's a shame, because it's clear that the two sides have a lot in common, and that each has a lot to learn from the other. As popular media writers, we could do with understanding the history of our professions, and thinking self-reflexively about our work so we can understand its purpose and how it could be done differently. And as media studies academics, we could do with learning the skills of basic factual research, and how to write clearly.

If only somebody would write a book that would show journalists and media studies academics what they have in common. A book that would give journalists an understanding of the context in which they work, and tell media studies academics how to write properly. Oh wait. They have. This is it. It's good. Jason, Nicola and Liz have produced an audacious book that ranges from the history of the media to the skills of interviewing, from theories of how the public sphere works to basic rules of clear writing, from Habermas to Lindsay Lohan. I haven't seen a book such as this before, and I'm very glad that it exists. Buy it. Read it. Whatever job you aspire to in the knowledge professions, it will be useful for you.

Alan McKee
Professor
Queensland University of Technology
2008

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

Too often, there is seen to be a big divide between the academic study of the media and the professional skills required of job-ready journalists. The result is that a book such as this is rare. I was not expecting to find a way of providing my students with an introduction to key concepts and theoretical approaches to media studies as well as engage them with key journalism skills such as news gathering and interviewing in the same text. Yet, in the first edition of *Media and Journalism: New Approaches to Theory and Practice*, this is just what Nicola Goc, Liz Tynan and Jason Bainbridge so impressively brought together. Now with the welcome appearance of the second edition, they have again brought a range of theoretical lenses to bear on the media transformations of recent years and applied those insights to the practices of journalism.

The value of this as a way of learning is that the relationship between the academic history of the media, for example, and the current practice of a media interviewer, becomes something we can think about consciously and critically. Surely there has never been a more important time to do so. Our everyday lives are increasingly mediated. We have become more interactive and generative communicators than ever before and there is plenty of debate, considered in this volume, as to how meaningful any more is the difference between the professional and the amateur journalist or media producer. We appear

to have so much choice. Without the intellectual tools—including a language—for critical reflection on the media practices in which more of us are engaging when once they were available to only a few, we literally have no way of thinking about such crucial questions as: What do we control and what is controlled for us (by corporate interests and values, for example)? What does privacy means to us? What information do we really need and want, and who's giving it to us?

In giving readers these intellectual tools, through building knowledge of and reflection upon the histories and theories of the media and of journalism, this book encourages critical awareness of the implications of the transformations it documents and analyses, for journalism, for our personal and public lives and for society and culture. This book provides anyone working in the media and journalism or aspiring to do so with understanding and tools to do so. But to get out of it all that it offers, you the reader need to take up its challenges. Do it and you will benefit, no matter where in the media and journalism you hope to be.

Anne Dunn
Associate Professor
University of Sydney
2011

CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Jason Bainbridge is Professor and Chair of Media and Communication at Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria. He has published widely on media representation, law and popular culture, merchandising, franchising and the changing nature of news reporting. Jason has also taught journalism and media studies in Hobart and Brisbane. He has appeared as a media commentator on ABC radio and television and is currently working on a book around popular ideas of law.

Nicola Goc is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Media and Communications at the University of Tasmania. She has previously worked as a news journalist, feature writer, section editor and as a social and cultural historian. She appears regularly on ABC radio speaking about media and gender issues and cultural history. She is the author of several social history books and has also published widely on the representation of the 'deviant' woman in the media. She is the author of *Women, Infanticide and the Press 1822–1922* (2013). In 2014, she was a Fellow at the National Sound and Film Archive researching migrants in the media, and is currently working on a project on migration, the media, vernacular photography and female representation.

Liz Tynan is a Senior Lecturer at the James Cook University (JCU) Graduate Research School in Townsville, teaching academic writing and critical thinking skills to postgraduate students. She is a former journalism academic at both JCU and the University of Tasmania, and has a background in print and electronic media, and a long-standing speciality in science journalism and editing. She has worked for the ABC as a reporter and subeditor, and was later Sydney correspondent for *New Scientist*. Her research on the British nuclear tests in Australia will appear as a book in 2016.

Tim Dwyer is an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. He teaches Legal and Ethical Issues in Media Practice to Masters students and is Degree Director of the Master of Media Practice. His research focuses on the critical evaluation of media and communications industries, regulation, media ethics and policy. His research also explores how news practices are evolving in multi-platform media organisations, and analyses the implications of these transformations for media diversity and pluralism. He is the author of *Legal and Ethical Issues in the Media* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), *Media Convergence* (Open University, 2010) and the co-editor (with Virginia Nightingale) of *New Media Worlds: Challenges for Convergence* (Oxford, 2007). Before moving to academia in 2002 he worked for the ABC (1981–89), and the federal government agencies responsible for privacy rights (1990–94), and electronic media regulation in Australia (1994–2002).

Sarah Gillman has worked in the Australian media for more than three decades, including work as a political and legal reporter, news editor, producer, researcher, broadcaster and freelance journalist. Most of her career has been with ABC radio and television, although she has also worked on commercial radio and newspapers. Sarah has taught journalism and media studies in tertiary institutions in Canberra, Darwin and Hobart. Her research interests include the relationship between victims and the media, and peer support within the media industry.

Carolyn Beasley is a Lecturer and Program Director of Writing at Swinburne University of Technology in Victoria, Australia. She teaches postgraduate journalism. Her award-winning writing and journalism has been published both nationally and internationally. She is also the author of the crime novel *The Fingerprint Theif* and a collection of short stories titled *The Memory of Marble*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GUIDED TOUR

The overall structure

This book is divided into five parts. Each part is built around an overarching theme and contains a number of chapters as well as a relevant Case Study and Tools.
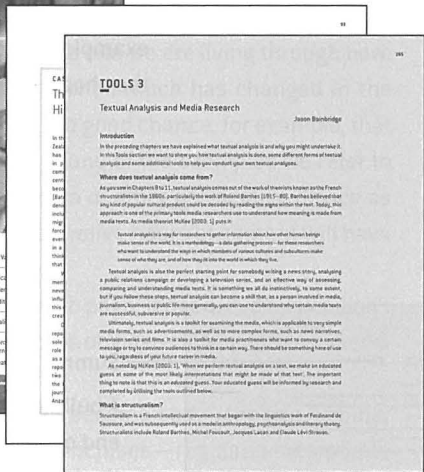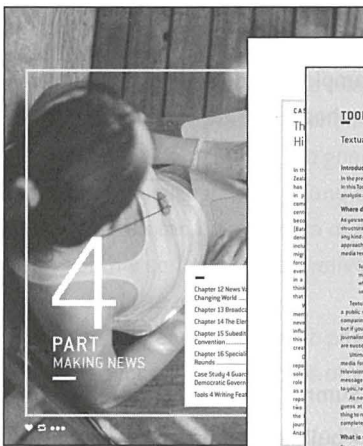
Chapters

At the start of each chapter you will find a brief introduction to the chapter topic and an outline of what you will learn by reading the chapter. Chapters also feature a Key References list at the end, which provides you with the main sources of information relevant to the chapter.

Margin notes

Key terms are defined in the margins for quick and easy reference.

Visual and digital icons

These shaded boxes provide you with digital media, film and television examples to illustrate points made in the text.
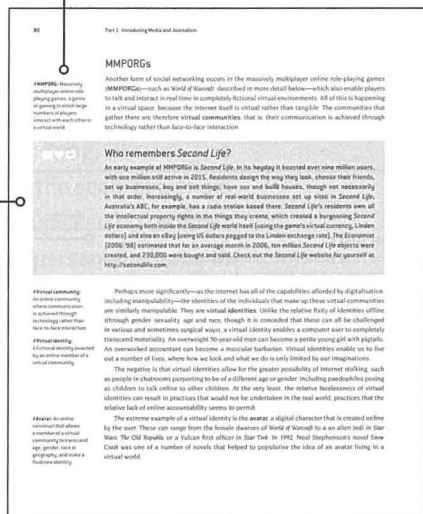
Illustrative examples

These interesting sidelines, professional tips and further examples are dotted throughout the chapter.
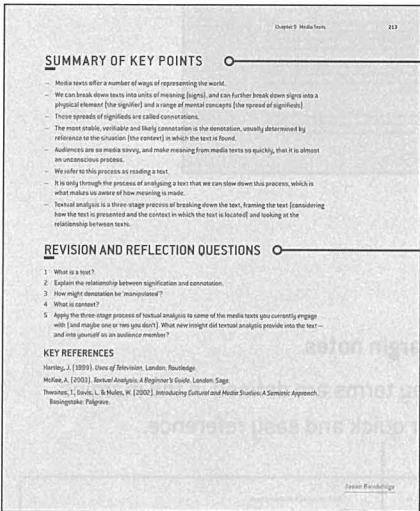
Summary of key points

A bulleted summary at the end of each chapter highlights the key points of the chapter.

Revision and reflection questions

Revision and reflection questions are included at the end of every chapter to test your understanding of the material.

Tools

These are practical how-to guides that show you how to master a particular technique or apply practical skills within the media and journalism industry.
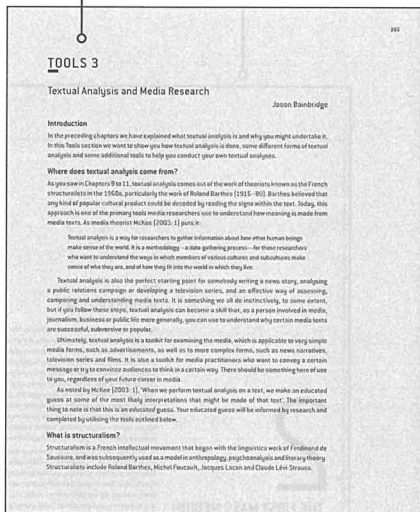
Case studies

These focused examples illustrate the application of key concepts in real life.

INTRODUCTION

Why a 3.0 edition?

As practitioners and theorists in media and journalism, we are operating in one of the most dynamic sectors of society and there have been few more dynamic eras than the one we are living through now.

In the seven years since the first edition of this book was published much has changed in the media environment—and some things have stayed the same. There is a good chance, for example, that you are now reading this book in an iBook format on your tablet, that any of the examples we refer to are only a mouse click away, that you are being monitored by a camera or other geolocative device as you read and that by the time we reach the end of this sentence, over twelve hours of content will have been uploaded to YouTube (at the rate of one hour per second).

You can now produce your own media. Every new tweet is a new web page. Indeed, even if you don't use Twitter but have a Facebook page or a blog, or ever uploaded photos or video clips, you are a media producer.

Since the second edition was published, media convergence has become commonplace. Popular cultural products—such as BBC's *Doctor Who* or Disney's *Star Wars* franchises—regularly incorporate web content, games, downloads and DVD extras into their distribution, while fans of the original series (Steven Moffat and J.J. Abrams, respectively) are now responsible for these franchises' ongoing production; the consumers have become producers. News programs, such as ABC's *Q&A*, also incorporate Twitter and Skype into their structure, creating a live, interactive audience no longer bounded by a studio.

And the changes continue as new technologies are developed and the way we use these technologies continues to push the boundaries of human communication. The rapid spread of camera-enabled mobile phones worldwide has seen the 'selfie' become a global phenomenon. In 2013 the word 'selfie' was Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year and the selfie stick voted the 'gift of the year' for Christmas 2014. 'If you don't take a selfie it didn't happen' has become a catchphrase, though those uploading selfies at the scene of the Sydney Lindt Café Siege in December 2014 were widely condemned.

We have seen the continuing use of social media as a tool for protest in Hong Kong, Ukraine and the Middle East, and its use at times of natural disaster as a way of communicating the scale of a crisis and to let loved ones know that people are safe. We have seen how media can be hijacked by terrorist organisations like ISIS, and the benefits and issues that come with the erosion of personal privacy in the all-pervasive digital space.

In the sphere of popular culture, Kim Kardashian, Marvel Studios and 'trending' have embedded themselves. *The Simpsons* has endured. Lego has become the biggest brand on the planet. Free-to-air digital television channels have proliferated, digital radio has arrived, 3D cinema has become successful and illegal downloading has become commonplace. Indeed, the ways in which we consume content have fundamentally changed with the rise of streaming services such as iView, Netflix, Amazon Instant, Hulu and HBO Go, along with the ongoing issue of piracy.

All these examples, and many more, are manifestations of the awesome Media 2.0 paradigm shift that drives consumers, producers and the products themselves to be seen, experienced, debated, assimilated, snapchatted, tagged, tweeted and streamed.

So why Media 3.0? Broadly speaking we can map media across two distinct eras. Media 1.0 (a retronym) refers to a period of time when one-to-many communication was conducted by media organisations using a select range of media (including print, film and television) to address large audiences. Media 2.0 refers to the increasing prevalence of user-generated content and the move towards many-to-many communication where every person in a media network can now broadcast and/or receive images, audio and video to as many or as few people as they like. There is no exact point in time when this changeover occurred (media always had the capacity to be participatory, as media theorist Marshall McLuhan pointed out back in the 1970s), but the shift was certainly expedited and enabled by advances in digital technology.

More recently, some academics and commentators have begun to discuss the possibility of a new shift, towards Media 3.0. At the core of this idea is the notion of the semantic web, where the algorithms underlying search engines will create relationships between separate pieces of data to provide context and meaning, and thus reflect the likes and interests of the user. Here, choice will be sacrificed for simplicity. You like Lady Gaga? Here is her entire back catalogue, glowing reviews and images of all of her fashions. You vote for the Liberal Party? Here are links to Twitter accounts for prominent party politicians, where to join, what books to read … you get the idea. Media 3.0 will place users at the centre of their own individual mediaspheres, tailored to their passions and shaped by their concerns, where everything that interests you is on demand—but *only* the things that interest you. Nothing contrary to how you think. Nothing you have already expressed a strong dislike or distaste for.

Unlike Media 2.0, Media 3.0 remains largely hypothetical at this stage. It's been talked about for almost ten years now. Indeed, there are just as many academics and commentators who decry its existence as support it. But whether you treat it as part of Media 2.0, a natural outgrowth or a paranoid concern, the traces of what we might call Media 3.0 are already here. Search engines that pre-empt your needs. Ads that match what you have previously searched for. The erosion of privacy. The splintering of mass audiences into niche audiences. The loss of the public. And as we will explore throughout this edition, this has enormous ramifications for media industries, the public sphere (and public debate) and, perhaps most significantly, journalism. For journalism is all about informing the public about issues and stories that otherwise may be unknown to them, and that challenge them or make them think differently—ideas that may necessarily be excluded (or more difficult to find) in a Media 3.0 world.

Hence the Media 3.0 edition: to map the seismic changes under way that contribute to this shift, while emphasising the timeless skills and knowledge bases that set the high-quality media and journalism practitioner apart from the dabbler or the hack—regardless of the form media will take in the future.

To an extent, this book remains based on David Gauntlett's idea of Media Studies 2.0 in the sense that we view you all as empowered users of media. That's one of the reasons we talk about media *and* journalism. In many respects, the skill sets we refer to as journalistic are active ways of putting media theories into practice. You may also notice that while there are lots of references to other media in this book, there are relatively few pictures. This is because we want you to use this book in connection with the media around you; as part of a conversation rather than a lecture. When we talk about television, see if you can stream the program. Listen to music on your iPod. Tweet your thoughts. Search magazines, newspapers and websites for the stories we discuss. We want this to be a truly immersive experience,

as individual for you as possible, and while we do point to certain key texts, we also want to encourage you to make your own links and analyse your own texts with the tools we provide you with. All of the references we make are available online and you should be able to access most media content via sites such as YouTube. Don't just passively read this text. Be active, follow connections and make links.

To that end we've upgraded all of the information herein, added new material, created new case studies and archived all of our previous case studies online. Furthermore, we have additional web content for all of our sections.

Who is this book for?

Since its launch, this book has become many things to many people and in this 3.0 edition we have sought to be just as inclusive, recognising the broad and encompassing nature of so many media and communication professions. So this third edition of *Media and Journalism: New Approaches to Theory and Practice* will be suitable for anyone interested in media and journalism and the relationship between them; for example:

— undergraduate students
— postgraduate students wanting a refresher course or an accessible introduction to new areas of study
— educators in journalism and/or media wanting to know more about the other area
— early career journalists wondering what to do, and how to do it, now that they have finished their studies
— early career media practitioners who are in a similar position
— citizen journalists and media producers wishing to better understand contemporary media practice and theory
— social media managers for companies large and small
— people already working in media who are thinking of changing their career path in some way (from print to electronic media, or journalism to PR, or magazine editor to blogger, for example)
— journalists generally
— people working in PR generally
— media practitioners generally
— people interested in communications
— people in public life who want to understand how media and journalism work.

We have written this with you in mind, making it as accessible and interesting as we can. The ideas in here may be complex, but we have set out to express them as clearly and entertainingly as possible. We hope that you will find this book not only interesting to read, but also fun.

Why should you be interested?

As media forms continue to converge, and the line between entertainment and news becomes harder to define, it is important for people working in media and journalism to have knowledge of the theories and practices that inform media as a whole. This book is designed to be an authoritative and easy-to-follow introductory text that does not abstract journalism or PR from the rest of the media, but rather considers and interrogates their roles in media through theory and practice. We want you to understand how your profession works in the larger context, and, equally, how those skills typically labelled as 'journalistic' are transferable into different jobs within media.

How is this book different from most of the other media and journalism books?

This book is about media *and* journalism, not media *or* journalism, or media with a hint of journalism, or journalism with a vague reference to the public sphere somewhere towards the end. This is because in the 21st century an 'editorial act' can be found among the millions of amateur bloggers as well as the tens of thousands of professional journalists (Deuze 2009). In the era of Media 2.0, the divisions between media and journalism have become virtually non-existent already. In Media 3.0 any such distinction will entirely disappear. So this is a book about the relationship between media and journalism, and how a study of one can inform the study of the other. Building on the work of leading theorists and practitioners, this book integrates media theory with journalistic practice, providing you with a complete introduction to media and journalism by drawing on current theories of the media as well as providing practical instruction on how to write journalistic pieces that put these theories into practice.

How is this book organised?

The book is divided into five parts—from an overview of what we mean by media and journalism, to histories and analyses of the media industries that produce them, to the tools we use for analysing media, to the ways in which we produce news and other media content, to the social contexts within which they function, now and into the future—providing a complete handbook of communication. You can therefore follow the flow of information and ideas from news production through to dissemination and negotiation, which will reveal how important media and journalism studies are to each other.

Each part is divided into chapters addressing the major areas of study, which introduce you to the theoretical debates and specialist vocabulary of each area, a case study that demonstrates some of these theories in practice and a tools section that offers practical training relevant to each area, through which you can engage with these theories yourselves, and put theory into practice. In this new edition, we have included new features, revision and reflection questions, and chapter summaries that will help you to consolidate your learning and ensure that your knowledge of the contents of each chapter can be extended and deepened. Furthermore, the chapters, case studies and tools sections are supplemented by web content, including alternative case studies, tutorial exercises, additional examples and assessments.

Built around the notion of the public sphere, the book explores how the history of journalism informs the construction of modern media practice and the democratisation of knowledge. News is the entry point of new information into the public sphere where it is negotiated, debated and exchanged. From there we follow how these ideas are disseminated and commodified (by the media industries, with particular emphasis on new media), analysed and constructed (through media analysis and journalistic writing and editing), framed and discussed (through ethical and legal frameworks) and, finally, contextualised and debated (through convergence and postmodernity).

What this textbook does differently is to bring together media and journalism studies in an interdisciplinary way that sees journalism and news texts as media products that can be considered in relation to other media products, such as television dramas, films and soap operas.

What do we mean by media?

For this book we define media as content and distribution mechanisms through which information and/ or entertainment are transmitted. They can be publicly or privately owned, developed with advances in technology and are often economically profitable.

Some things to remember about media:

— Strictly speaking, the term 'media' refers to *anything* through which *something else* can be transmitted.

— We are using the above definition because we will be looking at specific types of media: what are often referred to as *the* media or *mass media*; that is, message transmitters designed to attract the greatest number of audience members, such as newspapers, television, film, radio and the internet.

— This means that the types of media we will be looking at are all involved in *communication*. As Hirst and Harrison (2007: x) note, the crucial difference between communication and media is that 'communication is the process of sending and receiving messages … media are the means of communication and transmission'. Media are therefore the mechanisms through which we communicate with other people.

— Media are called *media* because they are literally in the middle (*media* means *middle* in Latin). They are the mechanisms that stand between the sender and the receiver of messages, the mechanisms that convey messages between the sender and receiver.

— Journalism is therefore a crucially important media form, as it is involved in the transmission of news (quite literally, 'new information'), whether that is news about the fall of a government, a terrorist bombing or about a celebrity, a new album or a sporting match.

— *Media* is the plural of *medium*: something through which something else can be transmitted. For example, a psychic medium claims to be able to transmit messages between the living and the dead, and an electrical cable is a medium of transmitting electricity to appliances in your home. Similarly, a newspaper, a Facebook page or a film transmits information and/or entertainment to an audience. Any one of these would be a medium. In total we call them media.

— In this book, when we refer to a specific type of media we will call it a *media form*, such as television or radio. In Part 3, we break down these media forms further into *media texts*, *signs* and *signifiers/ signifieds*, all of which are defined in their appropriate chapters (look out for the handy definitions in the book's margins).

— Only rarely do we refer to media as *mass media* (a term you're probably familiar with), for two reasons. First, it carries the connotation of the audience being an undifferentiated lump, whereas, in truth, the various members of 'mass audiences' can behave in very different ways, based on age, gender, race or a host of social, cultural and economic factors. Second, the era of the mass media is fragmenting, because of the rapid development and implementation of *digital media* (a term that we will define later, but which encompasses the internet, social media, games and mobile phones) and the *convergence* (also defined later) of various media forms. Whereas *mass media* was once used, quite correctly, as a term that differentiated media industries from the telecommunications industry (because the telecommunications industry was seen as a one-to-one industry and other media industries as one-to-many) during the Media 1.0 era, a combination of convergence and new media innovations has meant that media as a whole can no longer be thought of as 'mass'. Instead, person-to-person and many-to-many communication is most common, and the boundaries between

audiences and producers are less defined. These changes, which form a running theme of this book, are examined in more detail in Chapters 4 and 20.

— The importance of digital media will be made clear in Chapter 4, but you should be aware that as the advances in media (technological and otherwise, which are frequently referred to as 'new' media) are so widespread that digital and social media will be considered in most chapters throughout the book.

Who is a media practitioner?

#Media practitioner: Any person involved in the production of media.

A **media practitioner** is anyone involved in the production of media. They can include graphic designers, producers, broadcasters, actors, scriptwriters, audio technicians, public relations officers, spin doctors, bloggers, website designers and journalists.

What do we mean by 'journalism'?

#Journalism: The gathering and disseminating of new information to a wide audience about current events, trends, issues and people.

Journalism is the gathering and disseminating of new information about current events, trends, issues and people to a wide audience. Journalism academic Barbie Zelizer (2005) argues that it is unsatisfactory to define journalism as a profession, an industry, an institution or a craft. She says that journalism has to be ultimately understood as a culture. Journalism can be defined by the practice of journalists, but for those aspiring to become journalists, a definition that goes beyond 'journalism is what journalists do' is required.

Journalism came out of the creation of a public sphere in which ideas and information could be disseminated, negotiated, debated and exchanged. The Greek *agora*, the Roman Forum, and the European coffee houses all provided the space in which the basic principles of journalism evolved. Through often vigorous (and sometimes fatal) discussions that worked out the principles of checks and balances on truth-telling, point-of-view and accuracy, a consensus was reached on what the citizens would accept as accurate information upon which they could act:

— The fundamental principles of journalism are the respect for truth and the public's right to information.

— It is often said that journalism is the first draft of history, because journalists record important historical events as they are happening.

— Journalism informs a global community of current and future events that have an impact on everyone on the planet: from global warming, war or the threat of a tsunami to global economic downturn and global terrorism.

— Journalism also disseminates information about the day-to-day detail of ordinary life within our immediate community, such as changes to the bus timetables, increases in rates and taxes, the success or failure of a local sporting team and the death of a prominent citizen.

What is a journalist?

While Zelizer's cultural definition of journalism covers a wide field, those aspiring to a career as a journalist most likely want to know just what a journalist does.

A journalist is a person who practices journalism; someone who gathers and disseminates new information to a wider audience about current events, trends, people and issues. The word 'journalist' is taken from the French *journal*, which comes from the Latin term *diurnal* ('daily').

Our understanding of the role of a journalist often comes not only from news bulletins and newspapers, but also from films, novels and comics—surely the ultimate heroic journalist is the comic-strip character Clark Kent, the *Daily Planet* reporter who combats evil as Superman. We've all seen in films and television the stereotypical Hollywood journalist hero, the hard-bitten, cynical reporter up against a corrupt world. Harry Shearer's succinct tongue-in-cheek definition captures the stereotypical journalist of old: 'He's a hard-drinking, soft-spoken, burn-up-some-shoe-leather, sort of son-of-a-gun who's seen it all before, and can't wait to see it all again.'

This image is a far cry from reality. For a start, at least half of all working journalists today are female, and most journalists use telecommunications technology rather than shoe leather to gather information. They may start as bloggers, or on Twitter, or just using their Facebook page to tell stories. And occupational health and safety rules have put an end to the whisky bottle in the bottom drawer.

Unlike most other professions and trades, there is no professional body that registers journalists—so anyone can claim to be a journalist, which prompts the question: 'What is a journalist?'

The ideal journalist

Just as the fundamental principles of journalism are respect for truth and the public's right to know, a journalist's first obligation is to the truth and their loyalty is to the public. Journalists must also:
— act independently from those they report on
— operate under a value system—a code of ethics—such as the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance/Australian Journalists Association (MEAA/AJA) Code of Ethics. The MEAA/AJA Code tells us that:

> Journalists describe society to itself. They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression. Many journalists work in private enterprise, but all have these public responsibilities. They scrutinise power, but also exercise it, and should be accountable. Accountability engenders trust. Without trust, journalists do not fulfil their public responsibilities.

All journalists are writers, which is why we devote space in this book to the forms of journalistic expression and the foundations of English grammar.

Ideally, journalists are also concerned with the pursuit of objectivity, and they operate within an environment that should have in place checks and balances ensuring that their journalism is balanced, fair and accurate.

News journalists:
— work differently from the way other journalists work; they are at the front line of the Fourth Estate (see Chapter 3), and act as watchdogs over government and others who wield power
— report on the news of the day that has greatest impact on the community
— report on all levels of political and public life: police matters, the courts, health and welfare, and on financial, environmental and other social issues deemed to be of public importance
— give us the information that enables us to make decisions about the way we live: timely and accurate information that is in our interest to know.

Part 4 provides you with the essential skills you will need to work as a journalist, while there are parts of other sections of this book that will give you essential information on the role of the journalist in society and the role and impact of journalism in the 21st century.

What is the difference between hard news and soft news?

News journalists can find themselves working at two very different ends of the news spectrum, sometimes for the same organisation. A journalist may work on an infotainment-style program for the electronic media (a job that also covers hard news and investigative stories), on a newspaper that has both hard and soft news sections, or on a magazine where both styles of news are published. Hard and soft news indicate a difference in the standards for news values (see Chapter 12).

Hard news

#**Hard news:** News stories that aim to inform the community about events and happenings and to provide citizens with the information they require to be able to participate as fully informed citizens in the democratic process.

Hard news, closest to the ideal of the Fourth Estate, is associated with the notion of a free press and to the public's right to know. Hard news stories aim to inform the community about events and happenings, and provide citizens with the information they require to be able to participate in the democratic process as fully informed citizens.

Hard news journalists gather and disseminate new information to the public in the interests of animating democracy. Hard news covers topics such as politics, crime, law, environment, conflict, war, disasters, welfare, health, social justice, economics, science and technology.

Hard news needs to be conveyed in a timely manner and cover *current* events. People need to be informed about the most recent developments. The advent of twenty-four-hour-a-day news, digital media and the World Wide Web have made this imperative a lot easier to deliver.

#**New media:** The mechanisms for digitally transmitting information and entertainment.

New media (see Part 4, Case Study 5 and Tools 5) is providing new opportunities—and new challenges—for news journalists: to blog and tweet or not to blog and tweet? Should journalists use social networking services for sourcing? Journalists working in all platforms today, and even more so in the future, will need to be adept at posting stories on multiple platforms. These new demands, at a time when staff numbers are being reduced, place new pressures on journalists. But new media also offer new opportunities for collaboration between journalists and media organisations and the public in the creation of news.

News can now be broken within moments of it happening by anyone with the ability to upload images and text from their smart phone to the internet through platforms such as Twitter, Instagram or Facebook. At the most basic level we as consumers don't need traditional news platforms—newspapers, radios or televisions—to consume news. The competition for newspaper readers from online sources has, as we all know, impacted on the viability of newspapers. As the old adage goes, why pay for something that is free? This is the ideology that has devastated the music and newspaper industries.

News, like pirated music, is available for free on the internet and the creation of pay walls has to date not provided a viable business model. The irony is that it is often the online editions of traditional capital city newspapers and broadcasters that remain popular sources for news (particularly at times of important breaking news when audiences seek out traditional reliable sources) that has contributed to the destruction of the traditional news business model. This importantly also speaks to society continuing to value reliable quality journalism.

And the fact that we no longer even need to sit at a computer to access news is dramatically changing what news looks like. With a tablet or iPad, smartphone or iPhone, we can consume news anywhere there is a mobile service and the smaller mobile devices, along with the development of social media, means we want to consume news in very different formats. We are more interested in getting our news from social media and blogs than ever before. And this means professional journalists are no longer the only gatekeepers of the news and information we consume. Their privileged access to expert sources of news is being eroded by these sources now speaking directly to audiences through their own blogs and websites.

But the sheer volume of information on the web could also offer a new opportunity for journalism. We are all time-poor and look to trusted others to make sense of complex issues in all aspect of our lives. The sheer speed and volume of information that is being delivered to us through out mobile devices is overwhelming. And just as we still turn to traditional sources at times of crisis, there is an opportunity for professional journalism to sift through the tsunami of information and provide the public with fast, accurate and verifiable news in formats the public wants. Journalism also has a role to play in the delivery of digital news and information within the new model of collaborative journalism, a partnership between news journalists and consumers as producers. This model is moving beyond the simple citizen led gate-watching action, of flagging news content without adding any significant new insights, to consumers collaborating with news journalists and adding their own content, insight, knowledge and expertise.

And then along comes a phenomenon such as WikiLeaks (see Chapter 3). WikiLeaks is an organisation that solicits, vets and distributes leaked documents via the web. Through its collaboration with several influential newspapers around the world, it is providing a new model for journalism and has arguably become the most significant development in journalism to date in the 21st century. It has reinvigorated the public's interest, on a global scale, in the right to an unfettered press—free from government and industry interference—and the public's right to be informed. And it has provided optimism among those who believe in the importance of a strong and effective Fourth Estate. Indeed, many believe Julian Assange's mission to keep governments and the powerful accountable provides a way forward for journalism and the Fourth Estate in the digital, global environment.

Soft news

Soft news, generally defined as news that does not have a high priority in the news values scale, encompasses such issues as entertainment, sport, lifestyle, human interest, celebrity and the arts (although all of these issues can also be the focus of hard news stories). Soft news is also sometimes called *infotainment* (see also Chapter 2 and Part 4). Governments are rarely brought down by soft news stories, and countries do not go to war over the exposure of a sporting scandal. Soft news does not have the same imperative for timeliness as hard news, and is usually generated by the journalist's or editor's curiosity rather than an event.

#Soft news: News (sometimes called infotainment) that does not have a high priority in the news values scale, and encompasses such fields as entertainment, sport, lifestyle, human interest, celebrity and the arts.

The division between soft news and hard news has blurred significantly in recent years with the proliferation of celebrity and entertainment news entering the hard news sections of newspapers and news bulletins.

Today tension frequently exists between traditional hard news journalists and those in media management who have more of an eye on the revenue flows from delivering infotainment and soft news. By way of example, in America Mika Brzezinski, a news presenter with *Morning Joe* on MSNBC

television, refused to lead her bulletin with the latest Paris Hilton story about the celebrity socialite's release from prison before reports on Iraq and developments at the White House. In the first bulletin she screwed up the script and refused to read it; in the second bulletin she took a co-presenter's cigarette lighter and tried to burn the script; and in the third bulletin on air she took it straight to the shredder in the studio and fed it into the machine. Ms Brzezinski told viewers: 'I hate it and I don't think it should be our lead. I just don't believe in covering that story, at least not as the lead story on the newscast, when we have a day like today.' Within a day 250,000 people had viewed Ms Brzezinski's actions on YouTube. Hundreds of viewers posted positive comments, including 'This lady has some serious balls and some serious morals.'

This recent trend, which has seen soft news making its way into hard news spaces in print and in the electronic media, is called the **tabloidisation** of news. (A tabloid is a newspaper that is compact in size. Its content is usually considered to be less serious than broadsheet newspapers. Tabloid news focuses on the sensational and privileges such subjects as crime, sex, scandal and sport, with an informal vernacular delivery.) This does not mean that it is not of value to readers and viewers. While most citizens demand to be informed by a free press about matters that have an impact on their lives within a democratic state, they may also be just as interested in the sporting results or entertainment news. One person may privilege business news over entertainment news, and another may privilege lifestyle news over politics. All of this news comes together to fulfil another aim of journalism—to describe society to itself in all of its complexity.

Dan Okrent, editor of new media for *Time Inc.*, believes that journalists have to be aware of what their audiences want. He says journalists remove themselves from their audiences when they take themselves too seriously. While he believes that, as the public's eyes and ears, journalists are obliged to be honest, accurate and fair, he says that 'sometimes to be a journalist is to report on the new colours for living room sofas' or to 'report on whether the television star is really happy with his new girlfriend'. He says there are things to do with entertainment and conversation that provide a connection with readers and viewers at a different level.

J-bloggers

Are bloggers journalists? The internet enables any of us to publish our writing, but does that mean that every self-published writer is a journalist? **J-bloggers** are those who use the medium of the internet, subscribe to the journalistic ideals of an obligation to the truth and the public's right to information, act independently from those they report on, operate under a value system (such as a code of ethics), scrutinise those in power, and search, disclose, record, question and entertain. That is, they can be regarded as web journalists, whether they are paid professionals or citizen journalists (see Chapter 3).

Nicola Goc, who coined the term, argues that J-bloggers, working within new media, have reclaimed some of the old traditions of a free and independent press by reporting without fear or favour. They have brought new energy and innovation to journalism, they are breathing new life into the old practices and, along with their colleagues working in the traditional media of newspapers, television and radio, they are providing the oxygen for 21st-century democracy.

What is public relations?

Public relations (PR) is the promotion of a product, idea, event or person with the intention of creating goodwill for it. PR can be many different things, some not necessarily closely connected with marketing. A PR person might work for a charity or a non-government organisation, working to create awareness of

#Tabloidisation: News that is made as easy to read and absorb as possible, often featuring photographs accompanied by sensational news delivered in an informal style.

#J-bloggers: Internet bloggers who act in the role of journalists disseminating newsworthy information, and who subscribe to the journalistic ideals of an obligation to the truth and the public's right to know; term coined by Nicola Goc.

#Public relations (PR): The controlled release or exchange of information in various ways and through various outlets, most visibly through the news media.

a particular social or environmental issue, for example. Or a PR person might be part of the corporate communication team of a leading international company with quite a different set of priorities. In a general sense, you can say that the profession is interested in relationships: reducing conflict and improving cooperation. In the corporate sector, this can certainly serve the marketing objectives of a company to create a receptive environment for the marketing of products. In the government sector, it can help sell policies and ideas and change behaviours in various ways; for example, the various public relations campaigns around health issues or domestic violence. In the community or non-government sectors, it can establish useful social connections or spread new knowledge for the benefit of various communities. PR really deals in the flow of information, in many varieties and forms. According to the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA): 'Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.'

PR is a huge and growing part of the public sphere, a sector that (rightly or wrongly) promulgates much of the information that passes through the media. While journalists do not always feel comfortable with the proximity of PR to their own profession, the two fields do work together closely and fruitfully. Journalists regularly cross over to 'the dark side' to become PR practitioners. A significant portion of media content is generated in PR offices.

Theorists in the PR field see the rise of the profession as one way that public sphere communication has improved in recent decades, indicating that organisations large and small have recognised the importance of clear articulation of who they are and what they do. However, others feel that the influence of PR has gone too far, taking society into the murky realms of information manipulation and spin. Views on the exact place of PR in the media sphere continue to be disputed and contested.

While its reach and influence may be cause for disquiet among members of the Fourth Estate, it is possible for journalists and other media professionals to engage with public relations practitioners in positive and productive ways.

Mutual mistrust between public relations professionals and the media is unhelpful, and in many ways unnecessary. Finding ways to develop positive relationships is the theme of Chapter 8, while Chapter 17 canvasses some of the pitfalls in the relationship between journalism and public relations, and suggests ways through the ethical minefields. Tools 2 gives practical advice on how to run an effective media conference.

Academic approaches to journalism

While journalism has been taught at Australian and New Zealand universities for more than eighty years, traditionally most journalists gained their training on the job through a cadetship. Today, however, the entry-level requirement for a cadet journalist is a university degree.

Academic approaches to journalism have traditionally come from a number of disciplines, and focused on whichever aspect of journalism is most interesting to that particular discipline:

- Sociological studies of journalism tend to focus not only on the journalist's role in society, but also on the practices of journalism, from studies on the selectivity of stories and gatekeeping through to ethnographies of the newsroom and ideological studies of the institution of journalism. The ideas of *gatekeeping* and *news culture* come from this tradition.

- Historical studies of journalism tend to analyse the impact of journalism at micro, mid and macro levels, through analyses of memoirs and biographies, periods and events, and the development of the nation-state. This approach is reflected in Chapters 2 and 3.
- Language studies of journalism tend to look at journalism in the context of semiology, content analysis, framing and discourse analysis; all forms of textual analysis that are used in media studies as well. These concepts are defined in more detail in Tools 3.
- Political science studies of journalism tend to look at the relationships between journalism, politics and power, particularly around sourcing practices and the role of the journalist. To some extent, the idea of journalism as the Fourth Estate (Chapter 3) has been shaped and developed through a political science perspective.
- Cultural studies approaches to journalism tend to analyse the forms journalism can take, the ways in which journalists are represented and the relationship between journalists and audiences. Again, this clearly intersects with media studies, and directly informs our study of a variety of journalistic forms and our use of the term *representation*.

Why is it important for journalists to know about media?

In Australia, this question has been at the centre of a debate between journalists and media academics since the 1990s. The debate is popularly known as the 'media wars'. Several prominent writers have argued that media theory is of no practical use to would-be journalists (Flew & Sternberg 1999; Windschuttle 2000; Flew, Sternberg & Adams 2007). These writers point to the number of media courses offered by commercial providers that make no mention of 'theory' (see Flew 2008 for more on this) as evidence that the sector does not require knowledge of theory.

However, once you have graduated from university and are out there seeking a career in journalism or the media, you will need to be work-ready. You will need to have a very strong portfolio—and preferably one that shows skills across more than one type of media. That's why you may choose to study journalism from many different perspectives: print, radio, television, photojournalism and online. To be able to put these skills into practice, you will also need to gain an understanding of professional practice within a global media sphere, understand the ethical practice of journalism and public relations, and understand the role of journalism in contemporary society within the broader media sphere. In summary, you will need to have a comprehensive knowledge of the 21st-century media environment.

More specifically, you should know about media because:

- with the ongoing erosion between information and entertainment, news and entertainment, and hard news and soft news, it becomes conceptually important to know about *all* areas of media so you can adapt, resist or at least recognise these erosions as they occur
- you will need to understand how your profession works in the larger context of media
- you will need to understand the theories and concepts behind what you are doing in practice
- you will need to acquire knowledge of a variety of media concepts and practices to make it easy for you if you wish to change media jobs at some point in your working life (such as moving from print to electronic, journalism to PR, or journalism to dramatic scriptwriting) or if you are an academic who wishes to teach in interdisciplinary programs.

Media, journalism, culture and society: the broad relationships

How can we best study the broad relationships between media, journalism, culture and society? We study these relationships by applying theory. For the purposes of this book we define theory as the body of rules, ideas, principles and techniques that apply to a particular subject, as distinct from actual practice.

Theory is not something that is solely the province of academics. Theories range from how to find the best tomatoes, to who will win the football grand final, to how to pick up a date at a club, to Lyotard's theories of postmodernity (see Chapter 20).

Theory in itself is not an evaluative term. A taxi driver's theory that Martians killed President Kennedy can be as theoretical as Cunningham and Turner's theories regarding the operation of the media in Australia. What makes one theory better than another—or more persuasive than another, or having what we may term more academic rigour than another—are two further factors: methodology and evidence. We discuss both of these in Tools 3.

It is worth noting that not everyone defines theory in this way. Some people would reserve theory for the academy, and would claim that theory does have certain requirements that differentiate it from 'old wives' tales', 'beliefs' or 'conspiracy theories'. But we prefer to separate theory, methodology and evidence. It demystifies theory as a term, and reveals the ways in which we can all contribute theoretically, regardless of whether we are part of the academy or not.

Furthermore, we follow the lead of Gunther Kress (1997) in proposing that theory works best in combination with practice, moving away from theory as abstract critique towards a model of practice-led theory that is more interested in revealing how meaning is made through representation and design. Therefore, you shouldn't be frightened or distrustful of theory, but rather use it as a tool to develop your own work in new and innovative ways.

In this book, we teach theories of media by setting them out, using many examples, and showing how they operate in practice with case studies and tools chapters. In this way we can think of journalism as being, to use Thomas McLaughlin's term, a form of 'vernacular theory', in that it is a set of ideas that has evolved outside academia and, as you can see from the approaches listed above, has only recently been folded back into the academy, usually under the auspices of former practitioners.

In this way we hope to develop the links between media and journalism, and between theory and practice, and provide you with the most comprehensive introduction to media and journalism that we can.

We hope you enjoy the 3.0 edition of *Media and Journalism*. We hope you learn a lot and we hope you have some fun while doing it.