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## BBC Radio in Scotland - National, Regional and Local: Mission Impossible?

Aleksandar Kocic

The way radio is set up in Scotland is significantly different from that of England. For the BBC, Scotland is a “national region”, served by the national station, BBC Radio Scotland, and a small network of local or regional stations which operate on an opt-out basis only, with very limited output ranging from a few minutes to one hour a day in selected regions and with no local news provision in major urban areas such as Glasgow, Dundee or Edinburgh. Audiences in Scotland are also served by commercial radio, whose news output is minimal, and community radio which by and large does not offer any substantial news output. This may not have mattered as much when local newspapers were read widely; but it does matter now. Radio listeners in Scotland say they place a high value on local news (Ofcom, 2018), yet its provision seems to be insufficient. While the existing literature in the field outlines various factors that have contributed to the current situation, it fails to explore the perceptions of those supplying the news – in this case BBC Radio Scotland journalists – about their role and the challenges that lie ahead. The present study is an attempt to address that gap in research by employing in-depth one-to-one interviews with journalists working for BBC Radio Scotland opt-out stations. Insight into their practices and views on their own and their stations’ roles helps us understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Scottish local public service radio model at a time when BBC local and regional radio is facing big cuts and changes to the way it operates (BBC Media Centre, 2022). After all, the journalists interviewed for the present study are not just producers of news; they are key stakeholders as well.

### ***BBC radio in Scotland***

BBC local radio was established in 1967 with the first station opening in Leicester. The output of the local stations typically consisted of local news, chat, phone-ins, programmes on local themes and educative features (Crisell 2002). Early deliberations on local radio in Scotland

focused on Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee and possibly Dumfries. In the end, BBC Scotland decided to opt out of the local radio experiments, preferring to concentrate on developing its national service, which in various forms existed since the creation by the BBC of the Regional Scheme in 1929, one part of which was Scotland. This was an autonomous decision by the BBC in Scotland whose management feared that it would have to surrender some degree of power to autonomous local stations. It was also felt that local stations would have to reflect accurately the social and cultural mix of the areas which they served, and this was contrary to the Reithian mixed programming philosophy favored by BBC Scotland (McDowell, 1992). Scotland was a nation and so radio's first remit must be to underline the national identity (Walker, 2011).

And so, instead of focusing on local radio, the BBC launched a fully stand-alone Radio Scotland in 1978. The output of the Scottish station was designed to cater for the whole of Scotland, supplemented by a very limited amount of regional broadcasting. Previously, BBC Radio Highland and Radio Aberdeen launched in 1976, to be followed by BBC Radio Orkney and BBC Radio Shetland in 1977. Two more opt-outs were launched in 1983 - BBC Radio Tweed for Selkirk and BBC Radio Solway for Dumfries. In each case, these were small operations which provided little more than extended local news bulletins within the more general diet of BBC Radio Scotland (Starkey, 2011). These stations differed from BBC regional radio in England because they operated on an opt-out, not opt-in, basis as they did not have their own separate frequencies. BBC local stations in England, on the other hand, had their own frequencies and an output of six to eight hours a day, which made them opt-in services in relation to national BBC. The Scottish community stations nevertheless provided a means of catering to some extent for the needs of listeners, including Gaelic listeners in some areas, and they demonstrated that the BBC in Scotland wished to provide some form of localized radio broadcasting (McDowell, 1992).

Today, BBC Radio Scotland runs six opt-out stations. BBC Radio Orkney and BBC Radio Shetland opt out of BBC Radio Scotland for 30 minutes each weekday to broadcast a local news programme, and during the winter months this is supplemented for both areas by an additional hour-long programme, which means that these two stations also offer non-news programming. Local news and weather bulletins are also broadcast several times a day from studios in Selkirk (for Scottish Borders), Dumfries (for Dumfries and Galloway), Aberdeen (for Aberdeenshire) and Inverness (for the Scottish Highlands) on weekdays.

## ***Journalists - a social group with a common ethos***

Research about journalists is now a reach field, with numerous studies about the theories of the profession and the place it claims in society (Deuze, 2002). However, in the literature on the place and future of local and regional media, what seems to be missing is the perspectives of the journalists themselves. There have been studies on how European journalists, mostly those working for national media, view their role (Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Statham, 2008; Weaver & Willnat, 2012) or the challenges journalists increasingly face in their work (Witschge & Nygren, 2009). Picard's (2015) study of over 500 journalists across the Western world focused on how they see the future of their work and found that they thought journalism would be a harder job with less institutional support in the future.

Several cross-national studies addressed journalists' professional identity and characteristics (Deuze, 2002; Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Weaver, 1998; Weischenberg & Scholl 1998). The way journalists see their own role in society has also been studied extensively, by Hellmueller and Mellado (2015), Zhu et al. (1997), Shoemaker and Reese (1996) or Vos (2005) amongst others. Shameer and Reddy (2019) focused on perceptions of Indian broadcast journalists on a variety of aspects of their work, while to the best of my knowledge, there have been no similar studies with radio journalists in Scotland or the UK. The present study is an attempt to help fill that gap in radio studies.

## ***Radio as public sphere***

In its effort to gain an insight into practices and understandings of the BBC radio journalists in Scotland, the present study uses the theoretical framework of media as a key ingredient in facilitation of democratic processes. Providing news has for a long time been described as one of the key roles of the media in a democratic society. By informing citizens about political processes and events, the media facilitates participation in deliberative processes. Goidel et al. (2017) believe the news media are critical to democratic governance. This is because democracy functions best when its citizens are politically informed (Aalberg et al., 2010), as informed citizenship is good for community integration and stimulates people's participation in social life (Blekesaune et al., 2012).

The second equally important function of the media is in facilitating participation in deliberative processes. For Carpentier et al. (2013) the media sphere serves as a location where citizens can voice their opinions and experiences and interact with other voices. This concept is of particular importance to the present study as local media - and local radio in particular - have traditionally played a key role in facilitating public participation in

democratic processes. It is local media that create a sense of community identity and help facilitate local political involvement through support for a public sphere within which diverse views on matters affecting local conditions could be discussed (Braman, 2007). Furthermore, awareness and sharing of stories about news and current issues is important because it integrates members of society and strengthens the community feeling (Blekesaune et al., 2012).

Within this theoretical framework, the present study aims to answer two research questions.

**RQ1:** How do BBC radio journalists in Scotland reflect on their experience of practice in meeting informational needs of their listeners?

**RQ2:** What are the journalists' views on the future of local BBC radio in Scotland?

## **Method**

The present study uses a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. As the study is primarily focused on perceptions and experiences of BBC radio journalists in Scotland, a qualitative approach has been chosen as it provides an opportunity to develop an understanding of human experience (Murray, 2014). Qualitative studies often do not claim to explain or predict events but try to give detailed descriptions of a social environment, its rules and practices, as well as the orientations and interpretations of its members (Kelle, 2014).

## **Design**

Data was obtained using semi-structured in-depth interviews with a single category of stakeholders – BBC Scotland opt-out stations' journalists – on their personal experiences and views. Interview is a flexible data collection instrument that can be controlled while still giving space for spontaneity, and where the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issues (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

## **Procedure and Participants**

All six BBC Scotland opt-out stations were approached. In the end six journalists or heads of station from five stations agreed to be interviewed, with BBC Orkney providing two journalists and all the others one each.

**Table 1.** Interviewees.

BBC Station	Journalist	Role(s)
Aberdeen	Steven Duff	Head of station
Borders	Angela Soave	Head of station
Dumfries	Debbie Muir	Journalist
Orkney	Dave Gray	Senior producer
	David Delday	Journalist
Shetland	Daniel Lawson	Journalist

All interviews were conducted as part of my PhD thesis (undergoing at the time of writing) and all the participants gave their consent to be identified by full name and station they work for. A list of all interviewees is in [Table 1](#).

All six semi-structured interviews were conducted over a video conferencing platform due to Covid19-related restrictions in place at the time. The interview schedule consisted of three main sections in which the participants were asked to describe their station and its output, reflect on the station's role in fostering a sense of community and providing a forum for discussion, and offer their thoughts on the current local radio model in Scotland and the challenges it faces. Interviews were conducted without any bias on the part of the author.

### **Data Analysis**

Each interview lasted 30–60 minutes and was transcribed automatically by MS Teams or by Otter (a free online transcription tool) and checked manually for accuracy. N-Vivo 12 was used for the thematic analysis (TA) of the interviews. TA is a flexible approach which allows for identification of key patterns (themes) in the data and their interpretation in relation to the research questions and relevant theoretical ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

### **Findings**

Given the size of their output, it was not surprising to hear that Scottish opt-out stations employ small teams, where each member might have a variety of duties. BBC Orkney's Dave Gray summed it up by saying that he is "Senior producer, assistant editor, station manager, anything you want." His colleague David Delday added:

*Journalist here is technically a producer and reporter, it's all those things rolled into one. I'm the cameraman too, so I produce stuff for radio and telly. And the web as well. (David Delday, BBC Orkney)*

The only exception to this is BBC Aberdeen with seven journalists, as it covers a large and more diverse region while also being tasked with producing output for the national BBC.

In the interviews with BBC journalists five themes emerged: “Every patch is diverse, however small”, “Everything we do is local”, “Radio still fosters a sense of community” “Being an opt-out comes with pros and cons” and “Maintaining what we have now will count as success”.

### **Theme 1: Every Patch is Diverse, However Small**

In research on local radio the terms “hyperlocal,” “local” and “regional” are often used interchangeably, depending on which station one talks about. In Scotland, this ambiguity over the right terminology is even more pronounced as opt-out stations often cover large but sparsely populated territories. BBC Orkney and BBC Shetland, for example, cover very large territories whose combined population is only about 50,000. BBC Aberdeen’s patch, on the other side, is not among the largest by size but has a much larger population and is quite diverse, as it includes several distinct areas and audiences.

*Lots of different industries, lots of different local issues. It’s actually a microcosm of Scotland because there’s a lot of deprivation in some parts, but a lot of them are pretty well-off parts as well.* (Steven Duff, BBC Aberdeen)

While most people would probably think of islands like Orkney and Shetland being fairly uniform patches, Dave Gray says that’s not the case on Orkney.

*There are 18 or 19 inhabited islands. Every island has its particular news, problems, particular issues and that type of thing. Every island is different, and you have to cover what’s happening on every island.* (Dave Gray BBC Radio Orkney)

### **Theme 2: Everything We Do is Local**

When it comes to stations’ news coverage, the focus is obviously on the news from and about the area they cover.

*What’s going on in Shetland. And also, what’s going on in the rest of the world that might affect Shetland. Or what’s happening to Shetland that’s around the rest of the world as well.* (Daniel Lawson, BBC Shetland)

For local and regional public service radio, coverage of local council affairs is expected to be its bread and butter.

*We cover every council meeting, we look at every application that goes through, we look at every paper of every committee, more or less, to dig out stories. It's similar with NHS, we dig into the Health Board papers. I think it's a responsibility of public broadcaster to do that. (Debbie Muir, BBC Dumfries)*

Furthermore, Debbie Muir highlights what she thinks is the main difference between local BBC and commercial radio.

*Local commercial stations combine national and local news. Our bulletins are completely made of local news. We have five local stories, six times a day. (Debbie Muir, BBC Dumfries)*

### **Theme 3: Radio Still Fosters a Sense of Community**

Local radio has always served to foster a sense of community and the participants in this study were asked whether opt-out stations, with their very limited output, are able to do that. Several of them said they felt their radio station is an integral part of the community.

*We're not BBC Radio Shetland, we're Radio Shetland and folk in Shetland see [...] that it's theirs somehow and that they have some ownership of it. They think fondly of it. And that's quite unusual for the wider BBC these days. (Daniel Lawson BBC Shetland)*

In some areas, local radio station is the first place people call when they need information or, as David Delday says, people see their local radio station as “hub of information” to which they come first.

For all local radio stations - public service or commercial - campaigns are a way of engaging their listeners and fostering a sense of community. Because it is a public service broadcaster, the BBC can only run its own charity fundraisers or one-off campaigns aimed at specific issues in the community. One such campaign run by BBC Orkney was to help families where one member had to leave the island for a while for cancer treatment on the mainland.

One of the ways in which radio fosters a sense of belonging to a community is as being a platform for debate. This has been one of its key roles for a long time, either through that staple of radio, the phone-in, or other types of discussion programmes. But that role is now diminished by several factors, including more choice for listeners and the popularity of social media. BBC stations in England and BBC Radio Scotland still broadcast traditional phone-ins, while the Scottish opt-outs only run debates on special occasions only. Examples include BBC Dumfries running an hour long one on floods in the area or BBC Aberdeen running one on the future of one of the main streets in the city center. Such debates require extensions to the stations' usual schedule and would often



be carried by BBC Radio Scotland as well. More regular discussion programmes on Scottish opt-outs appear only on BBC Shetland and BBC Orkney.

*Through the winter, we've got our monthly Speakeasy, which is an hour-long debate programme, which has more members of the community rather than elected people, just debating social issues or whatever's going on. (Daniel Lawson BBC Shetland)*

Interestingly, despite having regular debates, neither Shetland nor Orkney runs traditional phone-ins.

*This is a small community, people don't like so much popping their head above the parapet, and they're more inclined to burn you an email or a Facebook message or something, but generally Orcadians are quite reticent about being interviewed or being thrust into the spotlight. A phone-in wouldn't be that popular. Being put on the radio would be most Orcadians definition of torture if they were made to do that. (Dave Gray BBC Radio Orkney)*

#### **Theme 4: Being an Opt-Out Comes with Pros and Cons**

BBC local and regional radio is by and large long past its prime, while its future is uncertain. Journalists interviewed for the present study acknowledge the changes and challenges that lie ahead. Most of them agree that they now have fewer resources than before. Angela Soave says that retaining talented staff is increasingly difficult.

*I've seen people who are not from the area, who don't have the grounding and who are good but will move away quite quickly anyway. And while we do try to train people, I've trained a few freelancers here and there, they inevitably go on to do other things. (Angela Soave BBC Borders)*

Reflecting on the current model, she says that some parts of Scotland remain “under-served” by the BBC.

*Dundee is a blackhole with regard to BBC coverage, because there's 185,000 people in the city alone. You've got Perth, parts of Angus and a massive county of Perthshire. DC Thomson disproves every theory about the slump in local news and the death of local production. They're actually on the up when the rest of the country and the industry seems to be slowly dying in some cases. We don't have any presence in Ayrshire any more or Stirling. (Angela Soave BBC Borders)*

Debbie Muir would like to see opt-out teams used more by the HQ in Glasgow.

*“What they do now if there's a big enough story for television, they will deploy from Glasgow. And I think we could be much more valuable to the BBC. If we just were away from the desk and not just trying to set up for the next day and get to the next bulletin, we could really dig into stories. It would benefit the BBC nationally and*

*locally, because we could really dig into a story and come up with good case studies for national stories, and just involve a region a bit more widely.* (Debbie Muir BBC Dumfries)

Despite the challenges, Steven Duff thinks that being an opt-out with limited output can be an advantage.

*I want to see quality over quantity. It's our best stuff. It goes on our bulletins, there's no need to fill. And I think that is what the audience had become used to in Scotland. I think it's maybe the best way of delivering it, rather than a two-hour long breakfast programme from Aberdeen.* (Steven Duff, BBC Aberdeen)

### **Theme 5: Maintaining What We Have Now Will Count as Success**

All the journalists interviewed for the present study acknowledge that the future of local and regional radio is very uncertain. Dave Gray accepts that listening habits are changing and that people are moving away from linear schedules. Debbie Muir agrees and adds that local radio will have to embrace social and digital media more than it does today.

*I think the way we reach both young people and older people in this region is going to be through social media and online because FM bulletins aren't going to last forever. And I think we could do a lot more audio online, and a lot more video to go along with our audio, it could be multi-platform.* (Debbie Muir BBC Dumfries)

She does not think new opt-outs will be launched or that the existing ones will grow as the BBC, in her view, is moving toward more online content. At the same time, she says she is not worried about their imminent demise; in the current climate of great uncertainty maybe staying where you are is the best one can hope for. For Dave Gray, the fact that BBC Orkney is still there is a sign of success.

*I think we have to be realistic in a small rural community. The fact that Radio Orkney exists here at all is actually quite encouraging. I'm not entirely sure whether if BBC Radio Orkney didn't exist and you came up with a business proposal, whether it would happen nowadays, because they would say, well, hang on a minute, you've only got 22,000 people and you've already got a Radio Scotland, so [...] it would be difficult to make a case for a small local radio station like this from scratch.* (Dave Gray BBC Radio Orkney)

Daniel Lawson goes further when he says stations like his are actually an ideal model for local BBC radio.

*From a BBC point of view, and if the BBC could afford it, the best thing they could do would be to give a Radio Shetland to every 23,000 people in the country. It's hyper local and folk take ownership of it. If every region of Scotland had its*

*equivalent of Radio Shetland or Radio Orkney, then that would be fantastic. I think it's sorely missed in some parts of the country.* (Daniel Lawson BBC Shetland)

*Everybody says: Yes, we'd love to have more. And it would be great to have more resources, more staff, more everything. I think at the moment, my main ambition is to maintain what we have now.* (Dave Gray BBC Radio Orkney)

## Discussion

The present study set out to evaluate BBC journalists' perceptions of their role in local news provision. The thematic analysis of data resulted in five overarching themes, which help us gain an insight into how BBC opt-out stations in Scotland work, how their journalists see their roles and what views of the future they hold.

BBC's national and regional radio services, which include BBC Radio Scotland, remain popular with listeners, with almost one in five respondents (17%) to a recent Ofcom survey saying they regularly tune in (Ofcom Media Nations Scotland 2021). This is a slight decline from a couple of years ago when the reach was 20% (Rajar Q1 2018, cited by Ofcom, 2018), but it still looks quite healthy, given the rising popularity of streaming services and podcasting. The problem for BBC's opt-out stations in Scotland is that their audience is not measured by Rajar (the official body in charge of measuring radio audiences in the UK), so their journalists and editors have only anecdotal evidence of audience reach to go by.

Looking at the origins of the opt-out scheme in Scotland and how it has developed over time (with relatively few changes), it is clear that the BBC's strategy has always been to focus on rural and more sparsely populated areas, with the exception of Aberdeenshire. The BBC thinks the existing model works well and does not require any changes, as the strategy is for local news to be first and foremost provided on its website (Kocic & Milicev, 2019). Furthermore, BBC Scotland is mindful that by having its HQ in Glasgow and a very large team in Edinburgh, it is already "Central-belt-centric", as explained by its head of news Gary Smith (in conversation with author). Future research of BBC Radio Scotland news output might test that claim and evaluate the effectiveness of the online-first strategy for local news. For now it is clear that the current approach leaves parts of Scotland, with Dundee and Perthshire in particular, without any regional radio output. This was something recognized by BBC Borders' Angela Soave in her interview for this study. Other interviewees talked mostly about their own patches and their descriptions of those patches point toward a seemingly persistent dilemma at the heart of the BBC Radio Scotland's approach to local and regional news

provision – each patch is diverse enough to warrant more coverage but at the same time the majority of them are not big enough to justify spending on stand-alone regional opt-in radio stations of the kind the BBC runs in England.

Arguably, one of the advantages of the current setup is that opt-out stations, with their limited output, by implication have to focus on local news only. This has been confirmed in all of the interviewees, while Debbie Muir pointed out that this is what distinguishes BBC opt-outs from their commercial rivals, who in their news coverage in the form of hourly news bulletins only combine local and national or international news. But the question future studies could address is whether this is enough. In the past, the public in Scotland tended to turn to the press for news of local or Scottish events, but preferred broadcasting for information on UK matters of interest (McDowell, 1992). Now, however, local press is in decline (Mayhew, 2018) and local commercial radio, as already mentioned, heavily deregulated and largely devoid of news programming. Does this not leave audiences in Scotland with a worrying gap? BBC Aberdeen's Steven Duff does not think so when he says he wants to see quality over quantity; other interviewees in the present study, however, do not seem to share that view but are very much aware of what is realistic in the current environment. Angela Soave is worried that retaining talent in areas away from big cities is challenging, while Debbie Muir suggests the way BBC Scotland organizes division of duties between HQ and opt-out stations could be improved so that local journalists get to work more on local stories of national relevance.

One of the key roles of local media is to foster a sense of community and give members of that community a platform to express their views. Daniel Lawson sums up the relationship BBC Shetland has with its listeners when he says people on the island feel the station is theirs somehow and that they have some ownership of it. On a more practical level, some listeners see their local BBC station as a “hub of information,” as suggested by BBC Orkney's David Delday. Other interviewees in the present study offered examples of specific campaigns they occasionally run, which as a by-product seem to have a role in strengthening the relationship between stations and their listeners.

However, when it comes to providing a forum for debate, a local oral public sphere, BBC opt-out stations are very much constrained by the nature of their setup which limits their output to just a few news bulletins a day in most cases. Single-issue debates take place only occasionally while on stations where they are more regular, such as Orkney and Shetland, listeners do participate but are reluctant to speak on air. The majority of journalists interviewed for the present study say they would like to have more debates, which corresponds with recent research (Thurman et al., 2016) which says that radio journalists, rather than journalists working online, feel most strongly that their role should include letting people express their views.

Essentially, this means BBC opt-out stations fulfil their main role by providing the citizens with local news, which is a necessary - but not sufficient - ingredient for informed decision making (Goidel et al., 2017). By serving as a public representative and watchdog over government performance, the media provide critical mechanisms for democratic accountability. After all, democracy functions best when its citizens are politically informed (Aalberg et al., 2010). Also, as highlighted by journalists working for BBC Shetland and BBC Orkney, some opt out stations play a strong role in community bonding and strengthening of the community feeling. By acting as assumed information hubs they provide “mobilizing information” (Lemert, 1984) - content that goes beyond information about the political system or political actors to enable citizens to understand problems related to their communities and to engage in various forms of participatory activities. In other words, information on whom to contact, how to donate money or where to voice one’s opinion.

Following the discussion above, the answer to RQ1 is that the BBC Scotland opt-out journalists have a very good understanding of their roles and the patches they cover, while lacking data on their listeners. They understand the characteristics of the areas they serve and the challenges involved. Crucially, they are not reluctant to express sometimes critical views of their own stations as well as the wider BBC in Scotland, but are also ready to offer constructive perspectives. Public-service ideal is a powerful component of their journalistic “ideology,” which Deuze (2005) refers to as the dominant sense of what journalism is and should be.

The second research question in the present study is looking at how the BBC Scotland opt-out journalists see the future for their stations. Looking for answers to this question is important as the BBC seems to be approaching a pivotal moment in its history, with both its funding and delivery models being challenged. While the current debates on the future funding model for the BBC have not been included in the interviews for this study, the traditional and new, emerging ways the BBC reaches its audiences have informed the conversations held as part of this study.

BBC’s Director General, Tim Davie, said in a recent speech that the BBC is practically preparing to shut down its traditional TV and radio broadcasts as it becomes an online-only service over the next decade (RTS Davie, 2022). There are already numerous signs that audiences are increasingly embracing digital and on-demand delivery. Online radio listening now accounts for a fifth of listening hours in Scotland, at the expense of analogue and DAB (Ofcom 2022) and BBC Scotland has already introduced on-demand access to radio

news bulletins. The popularity of podcasts, on streaming services in particular, is also on the rise in Scotland, with listeners saying podcasts offer a lot more choice and convenience than traditional linear radio (Ofcom 2022).

BBC journalists interviewed for the present study are clearly aware of these changes and challenges, and agree that the future is uncertain. While highlighting areas for improvement, they point out that maintaining the current levels of local news provision by radio in Scotland is the best they can hope for. Future studies should look in more detail at how these uncertainties affect morale among radio journalists in Scotland.

## Conclusion

The present, small-scale study of perceptions of their role among BBC radio journalists working for opt-out stations, has tried to shed more light on an often neglected area of BBC journalism at the time the UK's national broadcaster is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The BBC in its early days embraced localism fully but then gradually moved away from it, especially in Scotland (but also in Wales and Northern Ireland) where it never set up local and regional radio as it did in England. The opt-out system established in Scotland was a compromise, introduced to allow the setting up of a strong national BBC for Scotland. The fact that it has existed for more than four decades is proof of its resilience, despite numerous challenges it has faced over the years, mainly the decline of the local press. Future studies should address several key areas surrounding this mode of local news provision, including the impact of it on participation in democratic processes, the suitability – and potential advantages – of the model in an increasingly on-demand provision of radio content and, last but not least, the challenges facing journalists in local radio, with ever more emphasis on their technical and multi-media skills.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

*Aleksandar Kocic* is a journalism lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University. His research interests are public service media, local radio and local news provision, as well as news literacy. Aleksandar has worked as a radio journalist for more than 30 years.

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