

THE PROFESSION AT RISK (version 2.0)

“Journalism is a profession at risk nowadays. At risk from the vested interests of media bosses reducing the word to a mere backdrop for business and commercialising us beyond recognition. At risk, too, from the vested interests of the powerful (those who can afford their own journalists, the ones we allow to do the journalistic work for us from time to time), those big players that relieve us of responsibility when it comes to selecting the content and standing by it. The latest risk stems from the effects of digital technologies and globalisation, allowing all manner of individuals and groups in the more or less developed world to produce their own discourses, to divulge them in the public realm and to make them available to surfers online where communications of all varieties abound indiscriminately, free from the need for approval or endorsement. In this convergence of interests it is the public that really gets caught.

The decline of the serious journalist as an engaged and committed professional with his own take on events, the freedom to act (more or less) – this once-demanding, rigorous and vigilant caretaker of the public interest over the vested interests of anyone else – could prove irreversible, unless the entire profession takes a stand and insists on the responsibility to be taken and looks out for us all. Any ideas we devise along these lines must also be tailored to suit the digital age in the hope that individuals will develop their own opinions of their own free will based on what they glean from reliable sources. In the face of an Internet engulfed by a variety of messages – oftentimes at risk of being shrouded in mist and deception from those behind them – the aforementioned goal will only be reached if the output of journalism becomes indispensable in allowing us to pick out useful messages from the array of general chaos. Seeking endorsement for and firmly establishing this new journalism of the future entails ensuring we hold a position as being crucial to society owing to the quality of the work we conduct based on purpose, expertise, honour, rigour, efficiency and trust. If we give more ground and allow this part of the profession (one essential to any worthwhile communications system) to be gradually undermined, then it means we will also be surrendering what hopes we had of consolidating a democratic basis (more or less) for the whole of our society.”

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Joaquim M. Puyal

(Speaking at the “Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya”
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