University of Groningen

Remaking the News

Eldridge, Scott A.

Published in:
Digital Journalism

DOI:
[10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714](https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2018

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Eldridge, S. A. (2018). Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism Scholarship in the Digital Age. *Digital Journalism*, 6(5), 666-668. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism Scholarship in the Digital Age

Scott A. Eldridge II

To cite this article: Scott A. Eldridge II (2018) Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism Scholarship in the Digital Age, Digital Journalism, 6:5, 666-668, DOI: [10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714](https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714>

Published online: 20 Mar 2018.

Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Article views: 118

View Crossmark data [↗](#)

BOOK REVIEWS

Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism Scholarship in the Digital Age

PABLO J. BOCZKOWSKI and C. W. ANDERSON (Eds.)

Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017

358 pp., \$40/£32.95 (hbk), ISBN: 9780262036092

As a stock take on the field of Digital Journalism Studies, the most resonant observation in *Remaking the News* is that, for those of us working in digital journalism studies, description is no longer enough. To this observation, made throughout *Remaking the News* and most emphatically by Rodney Benson in his chapter “From Heterogeneity to Differentiation”, I say “amen”. I would wager that many readers of this journal would agree. To our intellectual pleasure, then, we can find in *Remaking the News*, edited by Pablo Boczkowski and C.W. Anderson, a collection that moves discussions in our field further forward, beyond describing and towards explaining what is going on in digital journalism.

In any nascent field, including our own, the demands of scholastic endeavor naturally begin at a descriptive point—how else to identify what it is we explore? However, this quickly tires. Noting that journalism is increasingly digital is increasingly trite, and the call for more robust theoretical explanation, as Benson makes echoes a call I made with Bob Franklin when we argued Digital Journalism Studies was a field coming into its own: “it has become clear that scholarship has progressed beyond identifying these intellectual dilemmas, and has moved towards building a rich theoretical engagement and understanding” (2017, 3). In doing so, we also need to identify “better ways of conceptualizing what journalism is and how it develops in a digital age” (Steensen and Ahva 2015, 1).

Remaking the News reflects such shared ambitions. Laudably, this is done not by shying away from the ambitions of digital journalism research, or its missteps, but by bringing both together in conversation. Divided across 4 themes, and 19 essays, the work in its pages carry seeds of ideas for future research, while noting the undelivered potential of extant approaches. Writing for the *Nieman Lab* in June 2017, the editors introduce this volume as a way to address where, in the developing field of journalism research, “the frantic pace of knowledge production had somewhat prevented scholars to engage in a collective process of sensemaking about what had been accomplished and what might lie ahead” (Anderson and Boczkowski 2017).

Remaking the News responds accordingly. The strengths here are in those essays which show a field whose growth has had pains. These illustrate as well, where developing a field with any consistency benefits from calling to account derivations from its own ambitions. As Benson calls out descriptivist tendencies, so too do colleagues in this volume who map academic blind spots (as Victor Pickard titles his essay), and those who prod necessary links with history, which are often glossed over (Anderson’s own contribution highlights just such a concern). Lest it seem this collection is an all-out critique on the field, it invigorates what promise to be fruitful research

agendas—Karin Wahl-Jorgensen's appreciation of journalistic failure is one such welcome call to action, as is Sue Robinson's thoughtful reflection on journalistic authority, weighing power and privilege within the objects of digital journalism research. Both of these recall the privilege, as well, of researchers who may imagine their spaces of study in terms of what is of immediate interest, at the risk of missing out on what is important sociologically and economically (a link Zizi Papacharissi brings back to our attention).

As with any work, not every page rings as strongly as the next or the last (what fortune, for any editor, that would be!). I found some of the essays uneven, and some of the reflections less illuminating than the status of the contributor might suggest. In part perhaps due to the scope of the endeavor, some of the conceits of journalism hewn in the essays are narrow, and there remain debates about what *else* journalism might be that feel underexplored by the end. But then, what of it? As a collected set of observations on an academic project many of us are enthusiastically a part of, *Remaking the News* fuels reflection, which is its ambition, including reflection which may lead to disagreement or leave loose threads which others can pick up on.

This collection also does something this field should welcome: It is healthy, and I would argue necessary, to see a group of scholars calling out the work of their peers, pointing out where it could be that little bit better. Here, this all takes place within the same volume. It alleviates one of the potential pains of edited collections, when groups of amiable colleagues point to each other's work in nothing but glowing praise. If one were to stop at the contributor list, this collection has the hallmarks of that "risk", from the editors through the notable scholars assembled within. Yet, pleasantly, such circular praise is rarely found. Michael Delli Carpini describes, instead, debates-as-conversations between colleagues who, "study journalism because we believe that it *matters*" (285). Even if *how* it matters varies from point to point, and even if this variety shapes work in ways which will, undoubtedly, provoke critique (or praise) in future stock taking exercises such as this, that it all *matters* to those involved seems agreed.

Remaking the News makes the compelling case through the voices of its contributors that a research field embraced by many, to interrogate and in doing so explain what's going on with digital journalism, is also one always in development. In reading this collection, I found myself mindful that a field's vibrancy requires scholars to be challenged. If in the future we respond by evidencing where, indeed, leading digital journalism research has embraced such challenge, then we can feel we have established something bold and meaningful. All the better for being prodded to do so.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, C. W., and Pablo Boczkowski. 2017. "When Certainties Fade: The Changing State of Academic Research into the Changing World of News." *Nieman Lab*. Accessed June 12. <http://www.niemanlab.org/2017/06/when-certainties-fade-the-changing-state-of-academic-research-into-the-changing-world-of-news/>
- Eldridge, Scott, and Bob Franklin. 2017. "Defining Digital Journalism Studies." In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies*, edited by Bob Franklin and Scott A. Eldridge II, 1–12. Abingdon: Routledge.

Steensen, Steen, and Laura Ahva. 2015. "Theories of Journalism in a Digital Age." *Journalism Practice* 9 (1): 1–18.

© 2018 Scott A. Eldridge II

University of Groningen

E-mail: s.a.eldridge.ii@rug.nl

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1448714>

ORCID <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2184-1509>

The Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies

Bob Franklin and Scott Eldridge II (Eds.)

London and New York: Routledge, 2017

614 pp., £175/\$240 (hbk), ISBN: 9781138887961

Reading this collection takes me back to the early 2000s, when I started to study the diffusion and social impact of online news. Although the Internet had already been heralded as a seismic revolution, things were rather simple then: digital news was primarily a desktop/laptop-based environment of top-down offerings by legacy media who, despite some decline, were still in control of their traditional business model. Few would foresee the coming of age of smart phones and tablets and the subsequent rise of news apps. Google was only starting to build a name. Twitter and YouTube were yet to be invented. It was impossible to conceive that a strange thing called Facebook, without creating any media content, would become the world's most powerful media platform and could even dictate the way news and news organisations operate. Likewise, the intrusion of algorithms, "big data" or "news robots" into the newsroom as we witness today would have sounded like science fiction.

Charting such radical and unprecedented developments in a comprehensive manner, therefore, is a grand challenge. Putting together a coherent collection that critically captures and engages with them from multiple theoretical and empirical perspectives is an even more difficult task. In that context, I congratulate Franklin and Eldridge on the timely arrival of this much needed and aptly edited collection.

The book is massive in its scale and scope, offering a total of 58 research essays over 614 pages and featuring an international roster of established and emerging authorities in digital journalism studies. While it is not unprecedented in journalism scholarship—Stuart Allan's *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism* (2010) features 61 chapters over 688 pages—a book of this size on the seemingly/deceptively narrow area of digital journalism is in itself a grand achievement. It is a concrete pronouncement of how this emergent area of scholarship has exploded in a short while to become a separate discipline in its own right, although I do not agree with the editors that it "supersedes rather than merely complements journalism studies" (1). It represents a more complicated, more diverse and more substantive picture than a decade or so ago, when research into digital journalism