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Volume 12 - 2003 - Abstracts

John Harrison

Does the Torres Straits Pilot enlighten our frontier history?

The Torres Strait region has long been part of the Australian frontier. Its long serving newspaper, the weekly *Torres Straits Pilot*, published on Thursday Island from 1887 to 1942, was not only an advocate for the area's principal industry, pearl-shelling and beche de mer fishing, but strongly opposed to the implementation of the 1897 Protection of Aborigines Act, which effectively removed Aboriginal labour from the fishery, created the system of reserves, and thus also effectively marked the closing of the frontier. This paper examines some of the attitudes revealed by the extant copies of the newspaper 1897-1914 as the north Queensland frontier closed and the era of protection began.

Bernie Brian

Treason in the Tropics: Darwin's Northern Standard, 1921-1955

Darwin is situated on the northern tip of Australia and up until the Second World War it remained an underdeveloped, underpopulated and unsophisticated, male dominated frontier town of 'wild west' type pubs, ramshackle corrugated iron and wood dwellings and mostly unsealed roads (Brian 2001). Not the sort of place to expect to find a long history of local newspapers, however, the first local paper appeared in 1873 soon after a telegraph line linking Australia to England passed through Darwin (Powell 1996: 79-83). For the next 130 years, the Darwin community was serviced by three newspapers – *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* (1873-1932); *The Northern Standard* (1921-1955) and *The Northern Territory News* (established 1952).

John Tidey

Charles Hastings Barton, colonial journalist

There was nothing in the privileged European background of C.H. Barton to suggest it would be in frontier towns of colonial Australia where he would establish his reputation as a distinguished journalist, author and scholar. In Kapunda, South Australia, he started a newspaper which survives today despite amalgamations and changes of ownership; in nearby Tanunda he was involved in launching and publishing two German language papers. Later, in Queensland, Barton was a respected journalist, scholar, author and classics master and had a long association with the *Maryborough Chronicle* where he was chief leader writer. Shortly before his death, in 1902, he was elected to the Queensland Parliament as a Labour MLA for the seat of Maryborough. This paper looks at the life and work of an unusual – in some respects remarkable – figure in 19th century Australian journalism. When he died an obituary in the *Chronicle* suggested that had Barton remained at home and kept up his university associations, his name would have ranked among the foremost of England's scholars.

Cathy Jenkins

Private lives, public interest: Did we need to know about the Kernot/Evans affair?

The media revelation of a past extra-marital relationship between two former Australian politicians, Cheryl Kernot and Gareth Evans, sparked widespread public debate about a public figure's right to privacy, and criticism of the journalist who broke the story. This paper examines the journalist's decision to publish the story of the affair, by testing it against a number of ethical theories and moral reasonings. It finds that the journalist's decision to publish is supportable, based on the public's right to know about the behaviour of figures who hold or have held public office.

Trevor Cullen

HIV/AIDS: 20 years of press coverage

More than 40 million people live with HIV/AIDS. Developing countries are worst affected with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for more than 22 million infections. The pandemic is still in its infancy and Asia, with more than 60 percent of the world's population, is destined to become the new epicentre. The disease was first identified as HIV in July 1983 and this paper examines particular areas of academic debate in regard to HIV/AIDS during the past 20 years. These include the overall pattern of reporting and how the disease was constructed and then represented through metaphors. Newsroom practices on reporting the disease are examined together with possible ways to improve coverage. 'HIV/AIDS' is used to include the two different stages of infection and the term 'Western press' covers Britain, France, US and Australia.

Susan Forde, Michael Meadows & Kerrie Foxwell

Experiencing radio: Training, education and the community radio sector

This article looks at the cultural role played by the community radio sector in providing training and education to a wide range of community institutions, including universities. Using data drawn from a three-year research project, the study concludes that virtually all community radio stations are providing training of some sort and that journalism education is deeply embedded in this array. This activity represents a strong contribution to the Australian labour market and is one that many community radio workers feel is undervalued and largely unrecognised. A significant proportion of university journalism programs rely on community radio for internships and work experience as it represents access to 'hands-on' experience. The authors argue that this is public arena activity that contributes to the very definition of community radio – and practices which might be termed community journalism.

Kaylene M. Douglas & Lynne ForsterLee

Pre-trial print publicity: Eliciting bias in juror decisions

Guided by the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) of information processing, this study investigated the impact of Pre-trial Publicity (PTP) (informational/emotional), and Crime Type (intentional/unintentional) as a measure of complexity, on mock juror decision-making. Ninety-nine (35 male, 64 female) jury eligible (aged 18-65) members from within the Queensland population participated in this study. Participants read two newspaper articles that contained either informational publicity (such as prior convictions), or emotional publicity (emotive details about the victim),

followed by a trial transcript summary before rendering verdict and sentencing decisions. Overall, the results of this study suggest that mock jurors are influenced in their information processing by extra-legal factors. The principal findings demonstrate that PTP serves as an extra-legal factor when jurors render their judgments. Participants exposed to emotional PTP rendered harsher sentencing decisions than participants exposed to informational publicity. Further, complexity, defined in this study by Crime Type, revealed that jurors tend to search for additional information in the form of a heuristic cue, PTP. Thus, the study found that mock jurors confronted with complex trial evidence and exposed to emotional PTP delivered harsher sentencing decisions. • [Back to top](#) • [Back to Home](#)

Stephen Quinn, Timothy Walters & John Whiteoak

A tale of three (media) cities

In the early years of the twenty-first century, three of the 23 Arab nations – Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt – have established media cities in the hope that media and knowledge-based industries will push their economies forward. All three cities are the direct result of government policy and planning. The intention is that a combination of media, business, technology and finance will become inexorably linked and that the resulting synergy will produce thousands of jobs. The cities offer financial benefits to companies located in the special zones created for the cities. As well as generating jobs and leapfrogging their economies into the 21st century, these cities are also meant to be shining symbols of modernity in societies that have tended to look backwards rather than forwards. This paper considers the vision behind these cities, who owns them, the business models employed and their likelihood of success. It also considers the key issue of freedom of expression and the free flow of information in these cities, in the context of societies that traditionally have restricted the flow of information and adopted a different interpretation of freedom of expression, compared with the West's approach.

Nigel Starck

Maxim and aphorism on the death beat

Mors omnia solvit (legal maxim): death dissolves all things.

Lord Copper (proprietor of the Daily Beast): "Let me see, what's the name of the place I mean? Capital of Japan? Yokohama, isn't it?"

*Mr Salter (Beast foreign editor): "Up to a point, Lord Copper."
(Waugh 1938: 23)*

The dead are unable to sue for defamation; mors omnia solvit takes care of that. This is why obituaries are frequently unfettered in expression and why posthumous character assessment enjoys a generous measure of publication freedom. But does this mean that journalists can write with impunity about the dead? The answer to that is found in a literal reading of Waugh's aphorism from *Scoop*: "Up to a point, Lord Copper" (ignoring, for the purpose enjoined here, the irony of Mr Salter's craven reply to his formidable employer). This article explores candid revelation and family affront, appraisal and betrayal, intrusion and absolution.

Ian Richards

When journalists reveal emotion

Like non-journalists, journalists are deeply affected by many of the events they become involved with as part of their job, particularly when those events are associated with injury and loss of human life. However, unlike others in a similar position, such as doctors, lawyers, nurses and emergency workers, journalists often feel it necessary to 'go public' about their deepest reactions to a particular episode. This paper explores possible explanations for this, and examines some of the implications for journalistic practice.

Elizabeth van Acker & Robyn Hollander

Fame takes over: Pauline Hanson as political celebrity

Celebrity increasingly dominates the media. While this is most evident in the coverage of sport and entertainment, politics is not exempt from the trend. Political commentary now extends beyond scrutiny of policy and prospects into areas such as personal characteristics and past experiences, previously considered outside the public sphere. Many politicians have actively participated in the construction of themselves as celebrities, hoping to use it to their political advantage. This paper argues that federal politician Pauline Hanson became a political celebrity by examining print media reporting of the 1998 and 2001 Queensland state elections. Stories in three broadsheets, the *Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Courier-Mail* are scrutinised in terms of their celebrity connotations. The paper finds that in 1998 celebrity representation was evident in a relatively small number of stories. In the 2001 coverage, however, the creation of Hanson as a celebrity was far more prominent: fans, fashion and family challenged politics, policy and party for primacy. Nevertheless, although celebrity representation gradually supplanted political scrutiny, it did not deliver Hanson political success.

Stephen Stockwell

The Hanson Factor: Content analysis of newspaper photographs of party leaders during the 1998 Australian federal election campaign

Building on previous work on the relative prominence of political leaders in newspaper photographs during the 1998 Australian federal election campaign (Stockwell 2000), this paper applies a detailed content analysis (following Moriarty et al 1986, 1991) to newspaper photos of Howard, Beazley and Hanson during that campaign. While one reading of the results would suggest that the media were biased against Hanson, another reading is suggested that highlights how Hanson used the media to show her target audience that she was different to standard politicians. This latter reading goes some way to explaining the appeal of Hanson's persona, the complexities of her relationship with the media and the implications of Hansonism for the political-media nexus.

Jacqui Ewart

Including women in the news: Does public journalism address the gender imbalance in the news sources used by journalists?

This paper explores the gender and status of sources in public journalism projects across three continents. It does so because traditional journalism has been criticised for failing to include women as news sources. Public journalism sets out to rectify the

problems caused by traditional forms of journalism. Specifically, this paper examines the gender of sources used to determine whether public journalism can address the failings of traditional journalism in relation to the latter's over-reliance on elite male sources. The paper suggests that public journalism, while leading to minor changes in source usage, may not necessarily be the answer to ingrained journalistic practices and culture which result in reliance on elite male sources.

Mark Pearson

Sensitive or sanitised? Guidelines for reporting age

Exactly when should journalists refer to age in their reporting? When is age a necessary identifier and when does it become laden with other meanings? This paper considers these questions and introduces a special Web-based toolkit for the reporting of age developed in a partnership between a university and a private foundation. It reviews the literature on the media and ageing, discusses examples where reporters have used the age factor, and explains the educational approach to the project.

John Cokley & Sally Eeles

The origin of a species: 'The distributed newsroom'

Journalism educators everywhere are coming to grips with new media newsgathering and delivery channels such as digital editing, Internet and other digital networks including mobile telephony. Major local media groups including the ABC, News Ltd, Fairfax, APN and Channel 9 (among others), have all rolled out various forms of digital and online reporting and delivery. But as Australian academics plan these new "online newsrooms", they have had to face up to budget limitations which threaten to smother professionalism and realistic industry practice. This article documents research and development in 2002 of a "distributed newsroom" at Griffith University's Nathan campuses in Brisbane and Logan. Features of the Griffith University Distributed Newsroom (or GUDNewsroom) included an economical and widely distributed network architecture, low-end equipment and processes and, most importantly, a high level of student involvement and news management, mimicking daily newsrooms in rostering, assignment of tasks and editorial responsibility. The media artifacts produced included a typical news website updated daily, SMS and email headline-and-briefs bulletins, short sound and video grabs spawning Windows media player or RealPlayer applications, PowerPoint objects and a PDF "print publication". From day one, participants were encouraged to see themselves as generic news journalists for all media.