



**“THE PENDULUM SWINGS AGAINST PLATFORMS” AND WE ENTER THE ERA OF “VOICE JOURNALISM”**

Facebook, Google and Amazon were proud sponsors of the 12-year-old International Perugia Journalism Festival, but journalists from around the globe did not hesitate to “bite the hand that feeds you”. Following Mark Zuckerberg’s “Apology tour”, where Facebook promised to change its ways in the sectors of privacy, politics, selling of data and transparency, the yearly media summit ranked social media over the coals.

Cambridge Analytica harvested private data from more than 87 million Facebook users without consent; the largest data leak in Facebook history, complicating things for a company already handling criticism over the spread of Russian propaganda and “fake news.”

Journalists at the Festival noted that during his Congressional Testimony, “Zuck” said 33 times that **Artificial Intelligence** would help solve Facebook’s problem... a non-human solution for a human problem! Is this the right path? Everyone at IJF18 asked the question but few had an answer.

Regardless, IJF18 also consecrated **the debut of voice-controlled devices** for news

(Continued)



## 2018 International Journalism Festival

Bartolomeo Rossi #ijf18

### 1. Voice-controlled devices for news distribution: “50% of searches will be voice searches by 2020”

With as many as **30 million smart speakers sold worldwide**, innovative journalists are looking to **voice-controlled news distribution** as a new way to reach audiences.

Devices like **Amazon Echo** and **Google Assistant** are quickly creeping into people’s homes, playing music, making calls, setting alarms and timers, managing to-do and shopping lists, controlling compatible smart home devices, and more.

**Over 16 percent of American adults own one or more smart speakers, and 400 million devices have access to Google Assistant.**

Thus, there is an opportunity to use voice-controlled devices as an innovative way to distribute news. However, a study led by UK newspaper Telegraph showed that **news is not one of the top options people use the devices for.**

**Jane Barrett** (global head of multimedia Reuters) says: “50% of searches will be voice searches by 2020. We know how to do content in audio but we have a technology challenge... So we are seeing now a lot of technologists and journalists working very closely together to get ready for this world of research and AI”.

**Lisa-Maria Naudert** (Oxford Internet Institute) says: “...this [voice devices] is also exactly where

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gathering, with innovative journalists looking to voice-controlled news distribution to reach new audiences.

Devices like Amazon Echo and Google Home are quickly appearing in people's homes, enhancing daily lives.

Indeed, there are over 30 million units sold worldwide, with 16 percent of Americans already owning a smart speaker, and with 400 million with access to [Google Assistant](#) (let alone [Alexa](#), [Siri](#), etc.).

Thus, **voice as an entry point to news** and journalism is spreading faster than AR, VR and even wearables.

[Francesco Marconi](#), the AI Guru of [WSJ.com](#), says the world has transitioned from "point and click" to "touch base" and now to "voice". "Access can be through voice, but responses can be received in another format". Soon, we will have news voice Q+As, summaries and audio archives at our disposal.

Some other truths emerged:  
- Expertise is no longer correlated with experience in media. New professional profiles, like data journalists, are the norm.

- Media companies, growing poor, are having to do "more" with less.

- "Constant communication" is the new mantra for leaders inside companies and outside, especially in the era of **24/7 political election campaigns**.

Main sponsors of IJF18 were Facebook, Google, Amazon and ENI alongside the European Union, the Umbria Region, the Italian Government, the Italian State Railways, the City of Perugia, Nestlé, Sky, Syngenta and Wondertale.

[Dennis Redmont](#),  
Senior Executive Advisor,  
[Edelman](#)  
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the money is going, with people trying to put it to the test to become conversational, to become really smart, to become really human-like! But this creates the kind of technologies which are often developed without anyone thinking about ethical and social implications. When the technology is out of the box, you cannot put it back".

Links to the panels:

- [The future of the news](#)

- [Voice news: the consumption of news in the age of AI and vocal assistants](#)

- [Misinformation and AI, challenges and opportunities](#)

- [Cultural change in large media organisations](#)

- [Google News Initiative: a conversation about news with Madhav Chinnappa](#)

## 2. "People" push news ranking down on Facebook: "More importance to content generated by people". Does this mean less engagement for news? (the answer is probably yes)

Many of Facebook's current problems began when the company realized that people really do care about news, and not just lifestyle. The company moved away from its origins as a way for users to connect toward becoming a news organization, carrying feeds that ranked and distributed news content. As social media distribution of news – real and fake – mushroomed, government authorities neglected to carefully study these changes. And yet Facebook and its properties, which include Instagram, now reach two-thirds of America for an average of 35 minutes a day – the broadcasting power and reach of hundreds of radio and TV stations.

In December 2017, Facebook announced [another tweak](#) to the News Feed. The social network would begin **prioritizing "meaningful" conversations between friends and family over stories from publishers, brands, and businesses.**

With more than two billion users, any **change Facebook makes can be a seismic event**, with the potential to rattle organizations who rely on it to distribute content.

Facebook VP [Adam Mosseri](#) said the platform will "continue to value publisher content." But the pressure will be on publishers and brands to create content that generates conversations if they want to improve their odds of being seen in News Feed. Unsurprisingly, **businesses may be able to sidestep this shift by putting money behind their content.**

[Livia Iacolare](#) (head of media partnership Facebook, Italy) says: "The percentage of people public content in the News Feed on Facebook has always been 5 percent. We will go from 5 percent to 4 percent in the current year".

Links to the panels:

- [How journalists can build informed communities on Facebook](#)

- [Measuring the news ecosystem](#)

- [Re-connecting: Facebook and the News Feed ranking changes](#)

- [Maybe Facebook doesn't love us after all. So, what now?](#)

## 3. Explosion of "Perpetual", "always on" 24 hour election campaigns, strictly beyond the voting, influenced by social media (Italy, USA, Germany, Spain)

The quicker cadence of the news has been one of its defining features for as long as we have had mass media, from the first ticker in Times Square through to the 24-hour cable TV networks, through to Twitter.

There is more news to cover, always bigger. At last, the news business is no longer beholden to electoral news cycles: Trump's election has **pulled off the trick of making the campaign perpetual. Just like in other countries. Can journalism break from the idea that more information means being more informed?**

The most important moment in the coverage of Trump's campaign was



**UnipolSai** (an Italian insurance company) in November 2016 inaugurated **Changes**, a blog dedicated to cross-cutting themes: sustainability, mobility, new technologies, environment.

Then, in March 2018, the semi-annual "Changes" magazine appeared, debuted with an issue on climate change, discussing a popular theme without referring to the brand.

**Paolo Iabichino** (chief creative officer Ogilvy & Mather Italia) says: "Brands have to bring to their side people who will choose them, based on the content and not on the basis of the products."

when his political career was greeted with laughter. And after election night, journalists failed to put the feelings of shock and confusion to good use.

The degree of disconnect between political reality and journalism has not changed much. We can't say that it's enough to conclude that, in the business of political journalism, competency simply doesn't matter. Indeed, political news coverage didn't fail at its job of informing voters so they could perform their civic duty, but it succeeded at creating a media circus.

Links to the panels:

- [Cultural change in large media organisations](#)
- [Propaganda and social media](#)
- [The March 2018 Italian election: opinion and analysis](#)
- [Don't call it f\\*\\*\\* news ever again!](#)
- [How journalists can build informed communities on Facebook](#)
- [Online political hatred and extremism](#)
- [Is the problem of fake news overblown?](#)

#### **4. Companies are becoming comfortable with being their own publishers: "Either corporations are transparent and independent or people don't come back"**

Many large companies are investing resources and expertise in "brand journalism", taking an active role in dialogue with the media.

In fact, **almost all companies have entrusted their communication to people that come from the journalism sector**, with an intention to respect the rules according to the ethics of the journalism profession. There are also collaborations with luminaries of the academic world and international opinion leaders.

**All with the understanding that customers need specific and personalized content and that digital remains the essential tool.**

There is a wonderful book published a few years ago: **Your brand: the next media company**.

This book explains how social business strategy enables better content, smarter marketing and more effective customer relationships. To break through the noise and reach them with compelling content, you must start thinking like a media company.

Links to the panels:

- [Cultural change in large media organisations](#)
- [Brand journalism. Corporates are already media companies](#)
- [Storyfacing: from brand journalism to company storytelling](#)
- [Who's afraid of brand journalism?](#)
- [Tourism and data-driven information](#)

#### **5. Everything goes live: "We created additional services for social and there is a huge amount of engagement for live"**

Press agencies, newspapers and companies are increasing the use of live videos as a communication tool. In addition to immediate use, the videos can be downloaded by the users and - above all - can be saved by the manufacturer, divided into shorter clips and republished later with a different description.

Moreover, live videos, especially on Facebook, guarantee more views (6 times) and more comments (10 times) than offline videos. Facebook products such as **Groups** and **Facebook Live** can help journalists discover content, develop an audience and enhance their storytelling through building engaged communities.

**About 67% of Americans get news from social media platforms** (Pew Research Center/Knight Foundation, 2017), and publishers play a significant role in making these platforms more attractive to users. As such, journalists have a responsibility to

understand the ethics and potential of these platforms.

Takeaways:

- Push communities to pitch stories; don't pull from them
- Find impactful metrics based on tangible outcomes
- Package local stories with global appeal using high and low tech.

**Jane Barrett** (global head of multimedia Reuters) says: "We launched the new live service back in October and we have devised specifically a source that works for digital clients as well as for broadcast clients. We will be building additional services for social. We do see just a huge amount of engagement for live".

Links to the panels:

- [How journalists can build informed communities on Facebook](#)
- [Maybe Facebook doesn't love us after all. So, what now?](#)
- [Re-connecting: Facebook and the News Feed ranking changes](#)
- [Experimentation with Facebook Live](#)
- [Storytelling through video on Facebook](#)
- [The future of the news](#)
- [Ethics in journalism, between national rules and good personal practice](#)
- [Going digital: a roadmap for organisational transformation](#)
- [Content is a matter of technology \(and content\)](#)
- [Masterclass in data journalism tools](#)
- [14 tips to build mobile storytelling communities](#)

## 6. Used carefully, chatbots will be an asset to newsrooms

Bots are everywhere now, helping people hail Lyfts, order pizza, and choose lipstick – and the experience can range from simple and easy to befuddling and unpleasant.

The stakes are higher, though, when those bots speak for organizations that bill themselves as trustworthy sources of information. **Misleading audiences**, even accidentally or for only a moment, **can damage a newsroom's credibility**. That doesn't mean journalists shouldn't use bots, but they must pay close attention to how they're presenting them to readers.

Links to the panels:

- [The future of the news](#)
- [Misinformation and AI, challenges and opportunities](#)

## 7. Get used to the initials GDPR: companies will have a new set of rules from EU for sharing data online

From Google to Slack, companies are quietly updating terms, rewriting contracts and rolling out new personal data tools in preparation for a massive shift in the legal landscape.

**The General Data Protection Regulation is a rule** passed by the European Union in 2016, setting new rules for how companies manage and share personal data. The GDPR sets a higher bar for obtaining personal data than we've ever seen on the internet before.

The GDPR's penalties are severe enough to get the entire industry's attention.

The GDPR gives companies a hard deadline: **the new rules go into effect on May 25th, 2018** – so if you're not following the rules by then, you're in trouble. By default, any time a company collects personal data on an EU citizen, it will need explicit and informed consent from that person. Users can also request all the data a company has from them as a way to verify that consent.

### The EU standard is bound to impact on the USA and the global landscape.

We know roughly what compliance looks like. But we still don't know what enforcement will look like or how aggressive EU regulators will be. And it could still create a divide between the European Union and the rest of internet.

Links to the panels:

- [How journalists can build informed communities on Facebook](#)
- [Help define the moral imperatives that should be guiding media and platforms' decisions](#)
- [Hashtag #Europe](#)
- [EU, mobilise or throw in the towel!](#)

## 8. Videos are the future: "Half of mobile traffic consists of video"

**Livia Iacolare** (head of media partnership Facebook, Italy) says: "Video is a very powerful tool: it has the power to connect people, give rise to conversations around important issues and build communities. Indeed **50% of all mobile internet traffic is occupied by videos** and this percentage is destined to grow (it is estimated that in the next few years it will become equal to 75%)".

Links to the panels:

- [How journalists can build informed communities on Facebook](#)
- [Storytelling through video on Facebook](#)

- [The future of the news](#)
- [14 tips to build mobile storytelling communities](#)
- [Experimentation with Facebook Live](#)

## 9. “Diversify or die”

Media companies now realize they can’t sell news only.

Sometimes, they market fidget spinners, face creams and gadgets.

But other times, they create successful events which produce new revenue streams, greater visibility and, above all, young and fresh readers.

Take [Louis Dreyfus](#), CEO of [Le Monde](#): thanks to a clever slicing and dicing of the audience, he has carved out 30 events a year and even a news project for children (7/12 years old) who are starting to dabble in news with [Bayard publishing house](#).

From his workshops, Le Monde has derived 60,000 new followers, 70,000 participants and 350 speakers in five venues.

It has sectioned off publications on the economy, Africa and themes like Smart Cities.

He has enrolled partners like **Nespresso, L’Oréal, Électricité de France, Enedis, Yves Rocher, InGen and Google**. And extended partnerships to Quebec with [Le Devoir](#). He has dragged journalists to tell their reporting stories to audiences. And brought media literacy to young people in lower class neighborhoods, thanks to government subsidies.

“We must build a new relationship with the audience... **diversify or die!**”, he says. The income **comes 90 percent from the partners and ten percent from ticket sales**, and the venture makes money.

Similarly, [Live Magazine](#) of France has engaged in good journalism, organized events in 12 cities, in France, Belgium and Switzerland and makes a small profit, occasionally working with Le Monde, using celebrity endorsements and interviewing the French Prime Minister. It also organizes private shows for brands and collects government funds for media literacy.

[Zetland](#) media from Denmark does the same thing in the audio field with large scale events of 80/90 minutes and has special opera shows, also making a small profit.

Finally, the [Financial Times](#) launched “audience engagement” one and a half years ago, organizing a drink for special guests in the newsroom, selling out to 100 people each time.

Same goes for the US leading newspapers, [The New York Times](#) or [The Washington Post](#).

It has created thematic events on football, foreign policy, air pollution, millennials and their parents.

These events are different from [corporate events like the FT ones](#), which involves big names, a large corporate attendance fee and a business-directed audience.

Link to the panel:

- [When journalism goes live and on stage: can live events help build loyalty, trust - and the business?](#)

## 10. New frontiers of AI: writing and voice. “AI today is like the introduction of the typewriter in news during the 1940s and 1950s”

Artificial Intelligence has already deeply modified the news landscape. Financial results and sports news stories are already being automatically written by robots for news agencies like the Associated Press.

This may have changed the workflows, but it has given more opportunities for new jobs such as computational journalists and data scientists in newsrooms.

“But artificial intelligence is now like the introduction of the typewriter in news in the 1940s and 1950s”, says [Francesco Marconi](#).

“Voice will be as important as iPhone” says [Anne Marie Tomchak](#), the UK editor of Mashable. Already 20 percent of the Google searches are on voice.



A new research field is analysis of political leaders through their facial expressions via biometric tools and experiments in reconstituting one’s own voice digitally and synthetically.

Look forward to a “self-gathering” news world but beware of excesses. Panel members recalled that Zuckerberg is busy training Facebook’s AI to recognize its own abuses.

Links to the panels:

- [The future of the news](#)

- [Automation, augmentation, and AI in the newsroom](#)

- [Writing for robots](#)
- [Managing digital change](#)
- [What should Facebook \(et al\) do for news?](#)
- [Moral panic over technology: is it all that bad?](#)

## 11. Media companies are being battered by organizational and content change. Cultural changes within large media organizations: another disruptive year

[Google](#) conducted a study in Nov 2017 ([Lucy Keung](#)) with the [Reuters institute](#) which has become [the benchmark of the industry](#). The media companies have expanded, but many have grown poor and have stretched resources, have “techdebt”, creeping burnout by employees, and many are discovering critical knowledge at a lower and peripheral level.

“Expertise is no longer correlated with length of experience”, says Keung.

Another obstacle is the clear cultural differences between the journalism staff and the technical (engineering).

This saddles the leaders of companies to formulate clear and consistent message but above all be **constantly communicating**, through town halls, newsletters...to keep everyone aligned on goals.

Some of the new experiments are: reverse mentoring (digital natives teaching older staff) or learning new skills.



The word “digital” is being phased out from titles since it is now implicit.

Audiences are being increasingly enlisted to talk back as to their tastes and assist on newsgathering.

BBC, for example, according to [Fiona Campbell](#), detached six staff persons for one month to live daily with an audience for one month find out trends for the under-34 segment.

[Swedish TV](#) also has a program for intense audience engagement, and every seven years it has rotated its staff with **everyone reapplying for their own job**, and/or being shifted. Managers often become star reporters and it is normal to pull out of weak areas, says [Christina Johannesson](#).

Everyone is quoting Marty Barron, editor in chief of the Washington Post: “I say to people: you can’t solve problems if you don’t know how to solve your own”.

Link to the panel:

[- Cultural change in large media organisations](#)

**T**he **12th edition of the International Journalism Festival** took place in Perugia from April 11 to April 15. Five days, for the city of Perugia has become the meeting point (and melting-pot) of thousands of journalists, information experts, media practitioners and the general public.

The **2018 edition** had over **50.000** participants, **with about 2.000 accredited journalists; almost 280 events**, all free of charge

in **17 locations** in the center of Perugia; **more than 700 speakers** for a total of **1050 guests hosted** by the Festival organization. **Some social media highlights: YouTube, 45.000 views** on the Festival’s channel until May 3. All events were broadcast live. The countries that followed most of the live streaming: UK, Spain, France, USA. **Twitter: hashtag #ijf18 produced around 25.000 tweets** and it was one of the trending topics, during the 5 day-Festival, in Italy. **Facebook: more**

**than 500.000** global views of the Festival’s contents, and 150.000 between interactions, clicks, comments and shares. More than 150.000 video views, about 100.000 views with live videos. **Instagram: almost 2.000** shared pictures with hashtag #ijf18. Furthermore, **1640 downloads of the official app** of the Festival launched for the first time this year with **150.000 consultations**.

The **2019 edition** will be held in Perugia **from April 3 to April 7**.

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