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Newsroom dissonance: how new digital technologies are changing professional roles in contemporary newsrooms
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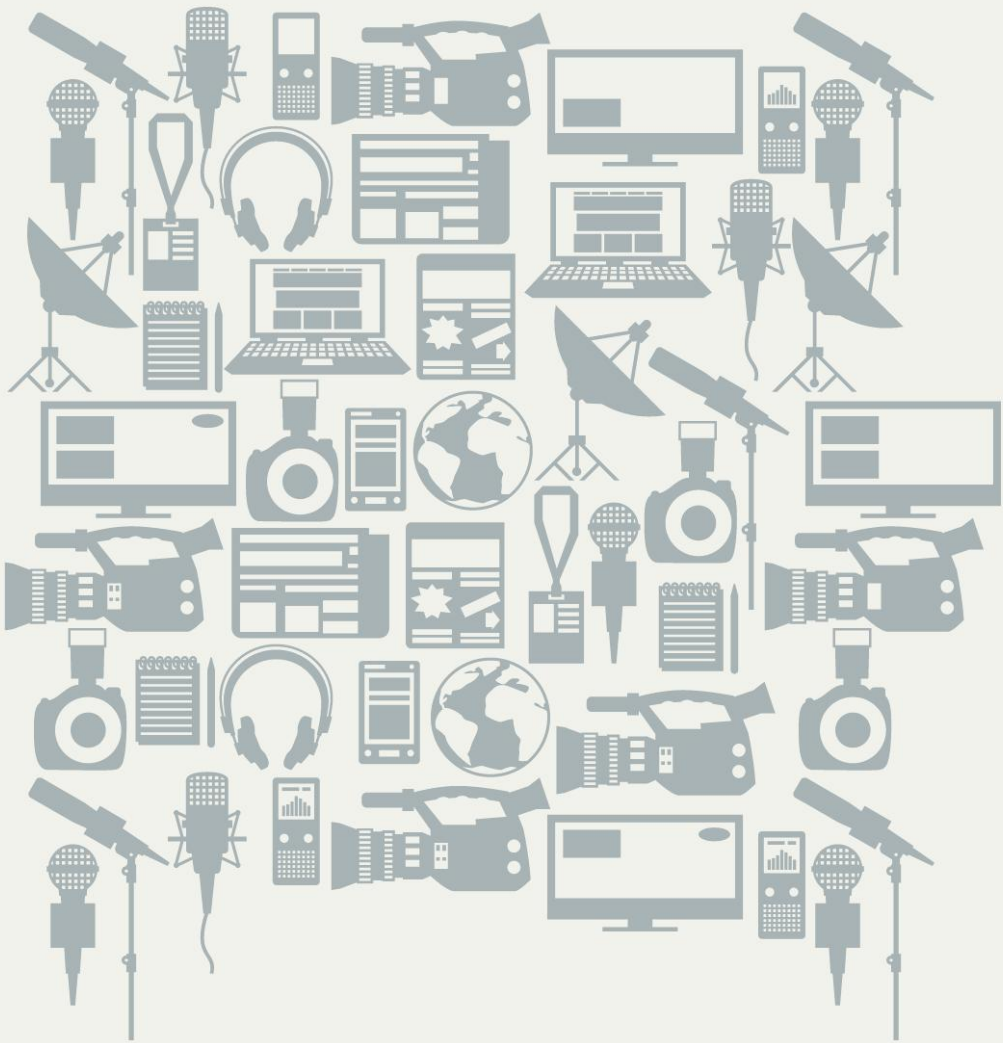
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LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

NEWSROOM DISSONANCE



How new digital technologies are changing
professional roles in contemporary newsrooms

TOMÁS DODDS

This thesis addresses how journalists' everyday practices are transformed by the introduction of new digital technologies in the newsroom. Journalism, both as a profession and as a practice, is changing rapidly. Digital journalism, which was heavily opposed by the news industry at least until the early 1990s, is now transforming the ways in which information and communication technologies are being used by media workers. Technologies inside the newsrooms are mutating, and journalistic practices, norms, and values are being reshaped with them.

In this thesis, I aim to shed some light into how journalists are appropriating digital technologies, and how these technologies are affecting the infrastructure, temporality, and platforms of the newsmaking process. Drawing on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and semi-structured interviews with newsroom workers in Chile, in this thesis I argue that the introduction of certain digital technologies has radically transformed journalists' ability to negotiate editorial values and ideals. Media professionals are increasingly feeling trapped into routines established by third-party and external platforms that dictate the way journalistic work must be done to successfully maintain a revenue model that allows the newsroom to subsist.

The conclusions of this thesis suggest that the ways in which the temporalities, infrastructures and platforms in journalism have been impacted by the introduction of new technologies has created a lack of harmony in the way journalists are expected to work, the topics they are expected to cover, and the journalistic values they hold true. As a result, media workers have started to experience a growing feeling of professional dissonance in their routines. That is, journalists are reporting a growing gap between values, or the idealized purpose of their work, and their daily practices.

These observations carry important professional and ethical implications for journalists navigating today's media ecology, and anticipate the challenges that media workers will have to deal with as the platformization of news expands across the world.