

‘Imagine doing a journalism degree and then
being asked to write trash like this’ –
considerations in meeting the challenges of banal
journalism.

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Premier League Panel @PremLeaguePanel · Apr 23

In shocking new twist, footballer eats breakfast.

Imagine doing a journalism degree and then being asked to write trash like this.



Raheem Sterling treats himself to a spot of breakfast despite missing out on being crowned Young Player of the Year the night before at PFA awards

By Sam Mcevoy For Mailonline

11:24 EDT 23 Apr 2018, updated 12:26 EDT 23 Apr 2018



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What I will talk about:

Definitions of banal journalism

Some examples

- Mainstream journalism

- Amateur journalism

The value of engaging with Banal Journalism for educators.

Banal Journalism as problematic

Prasun Sonwalkar (2005)

Banal journalism, is like banal nationalism (Billig 1995), it is barely noticed but it there all that “reflect the priorities of the dominant power groupings” (2005: 272). the time. It is not extreme or controversial, it’s just how things are.

Banal journalism is how the news operates everyday on a set of assumptions that separate ‘us’ from ‘them’. The marginalisation of the ‘other’ appears natural.

The socio-cultural framework within which journalists operate result in a set of news values

Banal Journalism as community building

Turner (2015)

Banal pet stories: thinking beyond normative ideas of news and examining participatory potential of the everyday.

“Rather than thinking in terms of journalism then, editors often need do little more than offer the conduit and curatorial channel by which narratives of everyday, local life are sourced, assessed, and then re-broadcast to the audience” (2015: 48).

“[Hyperlocal news] leans away from a media based on professional journalism standards, communities instead benefit from forms of communication, expertise and local knowledge that resonate with discourses of the professional amateur, silly citizenship, and the everyday” (2015: 40)

Banal Activism

John Postill (2008)

“seemingly mundane issues such as traffic congestion, waste disposal and petty crime” (2008: 419).

“organized striving” (Postill 2008: 422) facilitated through networked sociality based on virtual lack of thematic restrictions

“Whereas in the truest iterations of democracy, the citizen was enabled through the public sphere, in contemporary democracy, the citizen acts politically from a private sphere of reflection, expression, and behaviour” (Papacharissi 2010a: 244).

Mainstream Banal Journalism



Greggs has revealed it has 'no plans' to open a drive-thru in Kent

Bad news for pasty lovers...

Could a Greggs drive-thru be coming to Bath?

Fancy grabbing a Greggs sausage roll from the comfort of your car?

Greggs drive-thrus are expanding and we're getting excited

Gloucestershire could be getting drive-thru Greggs

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Morrisons launches its hottest ever Volcanic Curry Bag supermarket meal deal


The Volcanic Vindaloo is part of a two-person meal deal for just a fiver

Morrisons' new super-hot curry meal deal is the fieriest ever made by a supermarket

If you fancy watching the World Cup through tears of spice-induced wincing, this £5 meal for two is just for you

Morrisons unleash 'UK's hottest ever' supermarket curry meal deal

Morrisons is selling a curry so hot it even comes with a safety warning



**“stories which are quick to write
which provide the financial support
through advertising to support the
journalism which people expect from
us, but which we have to work harder
to get people to engage with”**

Higgerson 2017

Greggs

Greggs sees window of opportunity in drive-through shops

Newcastle baker's reinvention from purveyor of sausage rolls to 'food-to-go' chain continues amid flat underlying profits





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Home > Food & Drink > We all scream for ice cream as Morrisons have released a sweet-shop...

Food & Drink

We all scream for ice cream as Morrisons have released a sweet-shop edition with bubble-gum and candy-floss flavours.

'I like coming to school because I get to eat here' - many children face not getting a meal during the summer holidays

Birmingham foodbanks will see a stark rise in the amount of parents turning to the service



FIND OUT ABOUT OUR **#BRUMFEEDS CAMPAIGN** RIGHT HERE

bit.ly/harteaje2018



Birmingham Live  @birmingham_live · 6h



Someone has discovered more photos of The Outraged Girlfriend – and she is shook



Someone has discovered more photos of The Outraged Girlfriend – a...

All it takes for a new meme to take flight is one determined Twitter user, a few stock photos, and a sense of humour...

birminghammail.co.uk

BBC Trending

Why are people sharing this photo?

By Georgina Rannard
BBC UGC and Social News

🕒 19 June 2018



🔗 Share



JUSTIN MCCLURE

Justin and Aminat McClure pose in clothes inspired by West Africa with their twin daughters and son

bit.ly/harteaje2018

Political economy of the mainstream news industry through the lens of the everyday

Mainstream news operations draws our everyday into its sphere of interest:

- Shopping, eating, engagement with other media (everyday social media use is remediated as news).
- No news is newsworthy.
- The everyday is a contested space for our attention across platforms.
- Functions to support 'real' journalism: "For many of the people who saw a version of the Greggs story, it will have been a few seconds of time spent on Facebook, from which the company I work for will have made money via advertising" (Higgerson 2017).

Amateur Banal Journalism

www.b31.org.uk

LOST **Poo emoji** **shaped purse**

Containing £6

No 22 bus towards Birmingham

Around 4pm
Saturday 5th November



1



HYPERLOCAL JOURNALISM

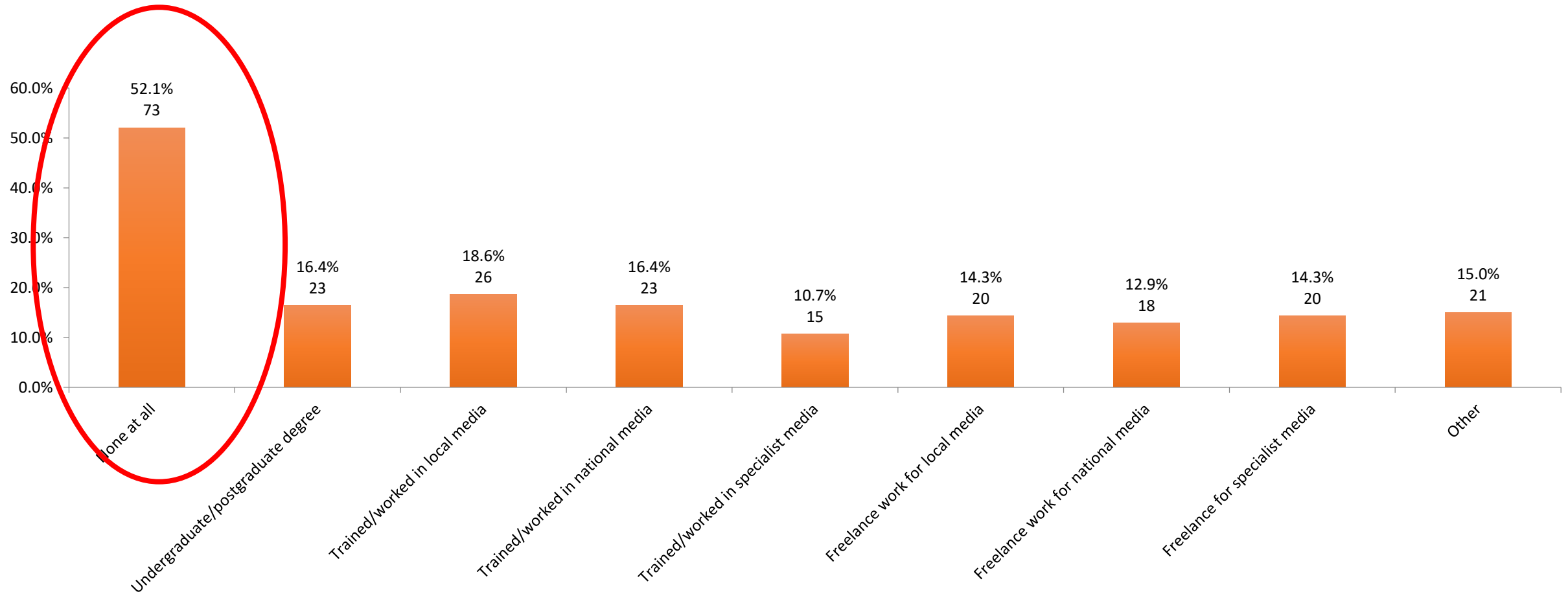
The decline of local newspapers and the rise
of online community news



David Harte, Rachel Howells
and Andy Williams



Not journalists



‘the mom-and-pop press’

“typically husband-and-wife teams in their twenties and thirties, they avoid rigid politics, support the idea of small, workable communities, and pour everything they have into intensely local, rather than personal coverage”

(Eisendrath 1979: 72)

Amateur Hour

“the content of most citizen journalism will be familiar to anybody who has ever read a church or community newsletter—it’s heartwarming and it probably adds to the store of good things in the world, but it does not mount the collective challenge to power which the traditional media are supposedly too timid to take up”

(Lemann 2006 – New Yorker
newyorker.com/magazine/2006/08/07/amateur-hour-4)



B31 Voices @B31Voices 30s

RESULT: Rubery North. JONES Claire (CON) 631, MCDONALD Peter (LAB) 1133. Turnout 69.03%



B31 Voices @B31Voices 33s

FOUND keys. Middlemore Road, Northfield



Reciprocal Journalism

Direct (i.e., exchanges between journalists and audiences in a one-to-one fashion),

Indirect (i.e., exchanges that are witnessed by others and intended for community benefit, in a more generalised one-to-many fashion)

Sustained (i.e., exchanges that occur continuously over time, suggesting future interactions and benefits).

(Lewis 2015: 2)

Reciprocal Journalism

Examining how reciprocal practices between community journalists and community members can lead to “sustained reciprocity” over time based on “lasting forms of exchange that deepen collective trust, social capital, and overall connectedness — essential components for the vitality of communities of all kinds”

(Lewis, Holton, and Coddington 2014: 230)

Reciprocal Journalism

Direct

Tendency to retweet official sources (politicians, civil servants)

“The first thing I’ll tend to do is turn to Twitter through the contacts we have, the official contacts we have who use Twitter, because they’re more reachable and they use it more in that way”

Indirect

Use of hashtags in context of ‘breaking news’ (#B31Snowwatch), good news (#B31positive), lost and found (#B31lost, #B31found)

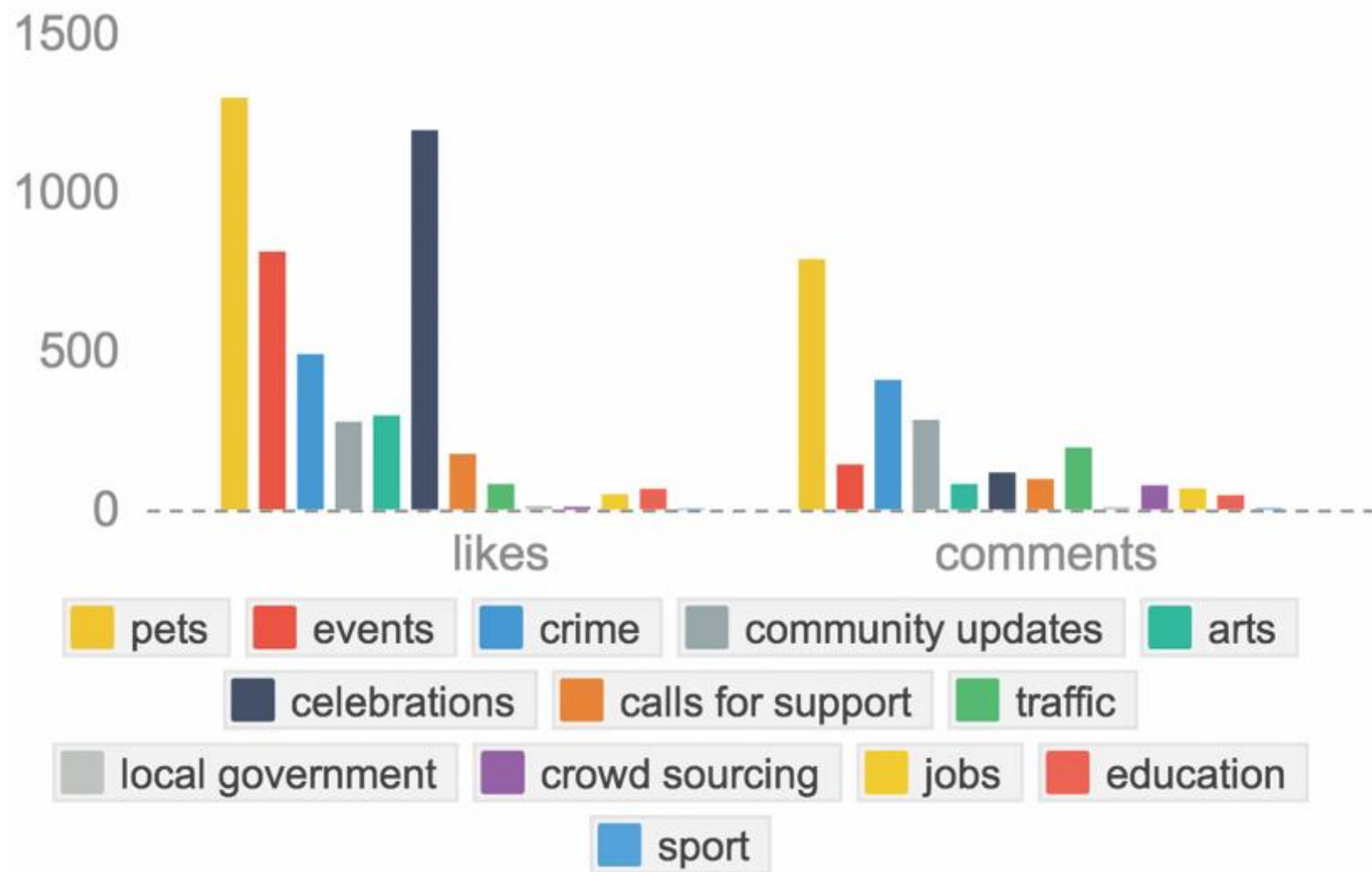
Reciprocal Journalism

Sustained reciprocity

On Facebook re-sharing anything, from anyone.

Audience as newsgathers and secondary gate-keepers.







B31 Voices @B31Voices · Nov 6

#B31LOST Purse - no 22 bus - Bartley Green

“It’s just these silly little things, but it will get hundreds of likes on a post like that. People want to hear good stuff, don’t they?” (B31 Voices)

“[It’s] just banal chat half the time, but that’s a big community-building aspect” (West Hampstead Life)

(in Harte et al. 2018: 142, 130)

Saturday 5th November



“hyperlocal media is, for many residents, key to an everyday understanding of their neighbourhood, a network of local information and events sitting outside of corporate or mainstream media that can encourage unexpected forms of civic engagement. Lost animal stories illustrate some of the more banal crises that take place in this online space, where the value to residents can be understood in terms of how they can relate on an immediate, everyday level.”

(Turner 2015: 48)

Banal Journalism

...is news that reinforces normative values of a society through a shared everyday cultural specificity.

...can act to normalise neo-liberalism and austerity OR offer routes to “organized striving” (Postill 2008: 422).

...provides a critical lens through which to examine the political economy of journalism and the nature of journalism work.

In the classroom

What value is there in teaching banal journalism? Where's the banality in student journalism work? Do journalism educators adequately prepare students for writing 'trash'?

Engaging with banal journalism can support a questioning of how normative news values ignore the "life situations of a large segment of population in any society" (Sonwalkar 2005: 261).

Can support engagement with critical theory beyond the public sphere.

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