

# **Global Trends in investigative news media**

**Dr. Mark Lee Hunter  
INSEAD/Université de Paris 2  
OECD, June 18 2009**

# The strategic issues

The news industry faces a vicious circle in most OECD countries:

**Declining credibility +  
Declining audiences +  
Declining revenues =  
Declining capacity**

# The exceptions matter

Le Canard enchaîné: profitable on only  
circulation revenue

The Economist Group: Flagship magazine plus  
added-value information services

Key factors: independence, expertise

# Credibility goes down

## Trend in Print Credibility\*

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
<i>Believe all or most of what organization says</i>	%	%	%	%	%
Wall St. Journal	41	41	33	24	26
U.S. News	—	—	26	24	21
Time	27	29	23	22	21
New York Times	—	—	—	21	20
Your daily paper	29	25	21	19	19
Newsweek	24	24	20	19	18
USA Today	23	23	19	19	18
Associated Press	18	21	17	18	17
People	10	10	9	7	8
National Enquirer	3	4	3	5	6

\* Percentages based on those who could rate each.

## Downward Trend in Credibility\*

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
<i>Believe all or most of what organization says</i>	%	%	%	%	%
CNN	42	39	37	32	28
60 Minutes	35	34	34	33	27
C-SPAN	32	33	30	27	25
Fox News Channel	—	26	24	25	25
Local TV News	34	33	27	25	23
NBC News	30	29	25	24	23
NewsHour	29	24	26	23	23
ABC News	30	30	24	24	22
CBS News	28	29	26	24	22
NPR	19	25	23	23	22
MSNBC	—	28	28	22	21
<b><i>Difference between highest and lowest</i></b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

\* Percentages based on those who could rate each.

© 2004-8 Mark Hunter

Source: Pew Center

# The general trend for watchdog journalism

- ⇒ Smaller circ., less ad revenue drive staff cutbacks, skills base erosion, closures
- ⇒ > 60% of investigative reporting in USA now funded by foundations, not media
- ⇒ Stakeholder media (like Greenpeace.org) take over watchdog role via online networks (example: [exxonlies.org](http://exxonlies.org))

# **A key new player: Emergence of stakeholder media**

**News media:**  
Primary mission is to inform  
**a general audience**

**“Stakeholder” media:**  
Primary mission is to inform a **particular  
community of insiders**

# Examples of stakeholder media

**Environmental movement:  
Linked, networked coverage beats the  
news media (Hunter 2009)**

**Extreme right:  
*Front national* print and radio mobilise  
militants (Hunter 1998)**

**Online user forums:  
User reviews trump branding (Hunter and  
Soberman 2008)**

# A new paradigm of media effects

## News media:

Tell people what matters  
("setting the agenda").



## "Stakeholder" media:

Tell people what they  
should do!



SattL

StatLink

© 2004-8 Mark Hunter

# The emerging media paradigm

Media Type	News	Stakeholder
Professional attitude	Objective	Transparent
Audience	The Public	Community
Bias	Complete/ neutral	Partial/ partisan
Function	Tell what to think about	Tell what to do

# Implications for policy

- ⇒ The news industry will continue to shrink under impact of convergent trends; “bailouts” won’t bring public back.
- ⇒ Stakeholder media will fill the void = return of partisan journalism.
- ⇒ Industry cannot support better standards in ethics, skills; policy can (support for training, legal education, etc.)

# Implications for research

- ⇒ Urgent need for new business models for watchdog journalism, esp. in services (INSEAD Social Innovation Centre, Global Investigative Journalism Network)
- ⇒ Urgent need for codes of ethics, professional standards adapted to stakeholder media

# Thanks for listening.

■ <http://markleehunter.free.fr>

■ Mark.hunter@insead.edu