

Mirrors or Movers? III

Innovation, Intrusion and Inclusion

June 3 2015, RELX Group

Summary Report

Introduction

This is the summary of Mirrors or Movers III, a conference dedicated to exploring, inspiring and challenging debate around the content impacts of media companies. It was held at RELX Group, central London in June 2015.

The event was organised by the Media CSR Forum, with participation from its French sister forum, Forum RSE Medias. Collectively, they constitute a group of over 35 global media companies working together to address their impacts on society and the environment.

We believe that picture – the social and environmental impacts of media - is only complete when we also consider content; what is printed, broadcast or put online. As one TV executive once put it: “Our biggest emission is our programmes”.

2013 saw the publication of the report – Mirrors or Movers? Framing the debate about the impact of media content – which began to explore whether and how media content shapes society. The title was taken from one of the arguments advanced against this idea: media doesn't change society it just reflects it back to itself as it is – it is a mirror, not a mover. But the report set out five distinct 'modes' by which media does 'move' society (explained on the following page).

At the same time, the Mirrors or Movers report also acknowledged the important questions this raises: the need to preserve editorial independence from corporate interests, the democratic legitimacy of private media companies, and the fearsome difficulties of measuring and managing these impacts. It acknowledged the delicacy and difficulty of these questions, but suggested that this was a topic which couldn't be ignored.

All of those positions and more were confirmed by the 2013 and 2014 Mirrors or Movers conferences. They gave us a clear sense that we were 'on to something'.

In 2015 we continued the conversation with a slight twist. We wanted to focus on three key challenges that we believe hold the potential to 'make or break' a successful media company – and perhaps even the sector as a whole – in the long term. This led us to the three themes of *Innovation*, *Intrusion* and *Inclusion* rather than the five modes themselves. We explored the three themes through a mix of keynotes and panel sessions, featuring distinguished speakers and followed by time for lively discussion. We also ran quick audience polls throughout the day, the results of which formed the basis of the closing session.

The Media CSR Forums would like to thank the speakers who rose to the challenge and gave us all something to think about.

we welcome inputs from all interested parties; via Twitter (#MirrorsOrMovers) and by email (mediacsrforum@carnstone.com). We hope you enjoy the report as much as we enjoyed the event.

The conference in numbers

- 1 day of presentations and debate
- 2 panel sessions
- 2 keynotes
- 8 speakers
- 80 delegates from 30 media companies

The speakers

We were fortunate to have 11 experts share their views on the state of the debate related to the subjects up for discussion. They were...

Session 1

Women and media



Tracy Corrigan
Digital Editor
The Wall Street
Journal



Tami Hoffman
Interviews Editor
Sky News



Harriet Minter
Head/Editor of
Women in Leadership
The Guardian

Session 2

Environment and media



Arlo Brady
Managing Director of
Corporate
The Brewery at freuds



Emily Shuckburgh
Head of Open Oceans
British Antarctic
Survey



John Vidal
Environment Editor
The Guardian

Session 3

Privacy and media



Rachel Oldroyd
Deputy Editor
The Bureau of
Investigative Journalism



Javier Ruiz Diaz
Policy Director
Open Rights Group



Matt Rogerson
Head of Public Policy
The Guardian Media
Group

Insights session

Measuring media impacts



Caroline Nursey
Executive Director
BBC Media Action



Jonathan Simon
Director
Inflection Point

The modes

The speakers' insights often reflected one or more of the five modes outlined in the 'Mirrors or Movers' report. Below is a recap of the modes and we've included the icons in the summaries that follow to indicate where they featured in the discussion. Silencing and amplifying are two sides of the same mode.



Questioning

Challenging existing practices and structures in society, highlighting adverse effects and bringing to light hidden information which leads to subsequent changes in policy or behaviour.



Silencing

Ignoring or restricting voices on certain topics, events or groups, knowingly or not with the effect of creating a particular representation of society which differs from the reality...



Campaigning

Deliberately taking a partisan stance on an issue, topic or product with the explicit aim of selling, changing behaviour or raising money.



Amplifying

...or, conversely, giving disproportionate voice to or coverage of certain topics, events or groups, again creating a particular representation of society which differs from the reality.



Inspiring

Stimulating action via changed perspectives, alternative futures or by highlighting different ways of behaving.



Normalising

Introducing or legitimising forms of behaviour that may otherwise be unknown or marginal.

Innovation and media



Gender representation in media is certainly not a new subject of debate. Since second-wave feminism in the 60s much has changed, but women remain under-represented in many areas of public life.

This panel brought together women from behind the news on-air, online and in print.

Redefine expertise



Huge under-representation of women in many fields is a real barrier to having women 'experts' on screen, for example a debate on the budget pits a male chancellor against a male shadow chancellor. A piece on air travel can only draw from 4% women pilots. We need to be imaginative to bring in women's voices to these stories, perhaps looking instead at people affected by the issue or with a different type of 'expertise'.

Women often turn down invitations to appear (even on their subject of expertise) more often than male equivalents.
- Tami Hoffman

At the current rate of progress it'll be 14 more elections or 70 years before Parliament has an even mix of men and women.
- Tami Hoffman

Embrace personality diversity



It's not just a gender diversity challenge, it's a personality and background diversity challenge. Does the culture in media companies allow for a range of personality traits to thrive? Why shouldn't media companies tap the non-university educated labour market and train them up?

One of the biggest shortcomings is a failure to get women back on the career ladder after maternity leave.
- Harriet Minter

Front page news

- 84% of news quotes are from men
- Men represent 84% of people referred to, and of the 16% women, most were victims
- 78% of by-lines from men

'Seen but not heard: how women make front page news' (2012), Women in Journalism

(Some) change is here



We're starting to see some of the powerful ways in which social media shapes the way stories are reported. Two recent examples: Jill Abramson's sacking from the New York Times became a debate about the description of female management styles by the media; the Santa Barbara shootings in the US became a debate about violence against women. The stories developed with a gender focus in ways that they might not have before the social media age.

Did you know?

We tend to see anything above about 30% representation of women in a group as 'equal' or balanced. It clearly isn't!
- Harriet Minter

Intrusion and media



Media faces a number of challenges when covering the environment: the complexity of science reporting, perceived lack of interest from audiences, the challenge of providing balance, and choosing how best to frame the subject.

This panel brought together a climate change scientist, a journalist and a marketer.

A mirror of the future



All the scientific evidence points towards a future deeply affected by climate change. But science also tells us that despite time running out, we do have a choice, as nations and individuals. Media is very good at connecting us to distant worlds, so why isn't it harnessing that creativity to connect us to our possible futures? If the media was able to simply reflect back to us the consequences of our choices today it would affect behaviour without needing to take a moral or editorial position. The media should point its mirrors towards the future.

The media needs to engage us on climate change, not because of a moral imperative, but simply to remain relevant to its audience.

- Dr Emily Shuckburgh

By shining its mirror towards the future, it can help connect people with the actions they need to take @emilyshuckburgh #MirrorsOrMovers

- @Hkingaby

It's intertwined with every essential media subject area

Environmental reporting is an all-encompassing subject: it reaches to the heart of politics, culture, science and economics. Media companies should focus on the opportunities it brings to enrich their content, rather than delivering negative headlines casting doubt on the scientific facts. Journalists, we lead the debate and we hold it back.



Environmental challenges will be tackled by technology rather than media-led behavioural change.

- Arlo Brady

Mainstream media risks becoming irrelevant



The future promises ever-increasing data flows – who is seizing the opportunity to curate it? Self-curation is set to become the norm with technology companies as the media titans of the future. In this world the most creative stories will be the ones that get heard, regardless of where from or their accuracy. Huge datasets give unparalleled opportunity for environmentally smarter lifestyles.

Journalists are hardwired not to think about the future even though it's their job to do so. It's an abnegation of duty but this in part explains the lack of coverage on environment.

- John Vidal

Inclusion and media



The issue of privacy affects not just media content but also how that content is made. Conventional media business models are under pressure and the sector's response is to explore new revenue streams, often based on holding and using consumer data. But society's views on this topic are unformed and changing fast. Even if these models are legal is the sector bleeding its most precious commodity – the trust of audiences?

The panel included a privacy campaigner, an investigative journalist and a head of corporate affairs.

Enemies at the gate



Why does the media do such a bad job covering the issue of privacy? Is it too complex to explain? Are the media and privacy in fact natural enemies? Is the industry already too complicit in the data economy to be impartial? It is worth considering whether media could play a role in providing a mechanism for greater transparency around this issue.

This topic is exploding. The media needs to prepare for explosions if they are not looking.
- Javier Ruiz Diaz

#MirrorsOrMovers Javier Ruiz Diaz, Open Rights Group: "No common agreement on definition of privacy"
pic.twitter.com/gUJC1L1tSq
- @HamishPringle

Trust is the issue. Corporations need to focus on this more. We will request more transparency on this topic.
- Rachel Oldroyd

Risks and revelations



The value we as individuals place on privacy is changing. We are increasingly prepared to exchange our data for immediate gain, though do not fully know what our data is being used for, nor aware that our own governments use this data. This has an impact on the level of trust between user and the media company, and thus poses a business risk. Online surveillance is a huge threat to independent journalism. There's a strong case to say journalists should be protected from 'collect it all' surveillance.

The right to be forgotten ruling will have profound effect on govts & organisations says @Raoldroyd in #privacy debate #MirrorsOrMovers
- @WIJ_UK

Surveillance and spies



The response to the Snowden revelations in the UK has been relatively muted. Is this an inherent trust in our government? A sense that surveillance stops terrorism? Or even a romantic view of spies thanks to James Bond? Though users may not react to increased use of data and surveillance, Brussels and the EU will. Media users benefit from tailored content based upon our online profiles. But the flip side is that increasingly we are shown content we like, instead of content that challenges us.

The reaction to Snowden was that 'our boys' crossed the line. This debate goes to the heart of democracy.
- Matt Rogerson

Reactions

Caroline Nursey: Measuring the impact of the BBC's international charity

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/aboutthebbc/posts/Measuring-the-impact-of-the-BBCs-international-charity>

Rebecca Myers: Should the media mirror society or try to move it

<http://wannabehacks.co.uk/2014/06/10/should-the-media-mirror-society-or-try-to-move-it/>

Victoria Knowles: Could the imposter syndrome be responsible for the lack of women in media?

<https://www.2degreesnetwork.com/groups/2degrees-community/resources/could-imposter-syndrome-be-responsible-lack-women-media/>

Promoting Women in Culture: Vivendi's cross-cutting ambition

<http://www.vivendi.com/press/news/promoting-women-in-culture-vivendis-cross-cutting-ambition/>

The Media CSR Forum

The Media CSR Forum is a partnership between 24 leading media companies, spanning the full range of the media spectrum, from scientific publishers to advertisers.

Established in 2001, the Forum provides a platform for members to share and promote best practice around social and environmental performance, through meeting with stakeholders, joint research and other sector initiatives. Sister forums also exist in France (Media RSE Forum) and the Nordic countries (Nordic Media CR Forum).

www.mediacsforum.org