

2 (a). Data Journalism

*Meeting summary report by syndicate chair Hille van der Kaa, Tilburg University, The Netherlands, and rapporteur Damien Van Achter, IHECS, Belgium; syndicate experts/background report by Camille Laville, IHECS, Belgium, and Sonia Virgínia Moreira and Felipe Grandin, Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil; and team members.**

This discussion centered on the need to add value to journalism with data mining via more of a mindset and digital literacy angle than a statistical skills, computing ability one. The group decided that data mining could be taught at two different levels: basic, through existing courses, and advanced, through specialized ones.

Teachers need to forget about data journalism as a buzzword and all that might imply and just focus on upgrading the average quality of student reporting through the use of data mining and data visualization.

The group agreed that basic data mining skills need to be integrated as soon as possible into the current curriculum. They should be taught in regular journalism courses as examples of important research/investigation techniques. It also agreed that students should ideally be given the option to upgrade their knowledge and practices through an advanced, specialized data mining course as well.

The group argued that teachers should not be transforming their journalism students into coders or psychologists. However, students who have a general understanding of both fields should have better job options and more opportunities to serve the public.

Recommendations

Data journalism participants concluded with three basic and four advanced data journalism class recommendations :

1. For basic data journalism skills in regular journalism classes, teachers must empower their students by offering them a chance to:

- 1) Add value to their reports by searching, finding and checking numbers in already existing open databases
- 2) Cooperate with IT guys to translate data journalism findings in the most common language
- 3) Visualize data journalism findings in simple, beautiful graphics, and share them through exciting stories using free tools readily available online

2. For advanced data journalism skills, in specialized courses, teachers must teach students to :

- 1) Dig into social patterns analysis
- 2) Explore complex statistical equations
- 3) Match huge database sets
- 4) Build student familiarity with design and graphics

**Additional Data Journalism participants: Piet Bakker, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Turo Uskali, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Niek Hietbrink, Hogeschool Windesheim, The Netherlands; Vinzenz Wyss, Zurich University, Switzerland; Katerina Spasovska, Wester Carolina University, USA; Jens Toennesmann, Wirtschafts Woche, Germany; Tom Christiaens, Quindo, Belgium; Jolique Jacobs, a student from Amsterdam, The Netherlands.*