Missing the Target and Spurning the Prize

Tim Luckhurst argues that the main question facing British policymakers is not how to prevent the hacking of telephones – nor even how to limit the political influence of an octogenarian media magnate who has already lost the confidence of several major shareholders. It is how to finance an ethical future

Stripped of the ideological dimensions that have given it such salience in parliament, the mainstream media and the blogosphere, the combination of events we know as Hackgate raises pressing questions about two issues of importance to the future of professional journalism: journalism ethics and journalism finance. This chapter argues that the financial crisis facing journalism is paramount. Without practical and enduring solutions to the profession's acute shortage of revenue and investment, the liberal-capitalist model upon which journalism's relationship with representative

democracy depends will wither. Talking about ethics in a world with too few profitable, professional, independent news providers would be largely futile.

Ethics and Reporting

The ethical questions raised by the hacking of telephones belonging to celebrities, politicians and victims of crime include what should be enshrined in a code of ethics for reporters engaged in public interest journalism. Among the plainest lessons of Hackgate is that journalists under pressure circumnavigate rules-based systems. The BBC Editorial Guidelines, a fine set of ethical benchmarks for journalists, acknowledges candidly the key flaw in such detailed guidance. The Director General, Mark Thompson (2011), writes: "In a perfect world the BBC Editorial Guidelines would consist of one sentence: use your own best judgment. No set of rules or guidelines can ever replace the need for producers, editors and managers to use the wisdom that comes from experience, commonsense and a clear set of editorial and ethical values…"

This chapter seeks to identify elements that might be included in a principles-based code of ethics applicable to all platforms in a multimedia environment. It does not pretend to be the first such attempt – both the BBC Editorial Guidelines and the newspaper and periodical industry's Code of Practice set out ethical guidelines to which journalists should conform – rather it attempts to steer Mark Thompson's "best judgment".

Phillips, Couldry and Freedman (2010) offer a trio of core journalism ethics for the multimedia age: accuracy, sincerity and hospitality. Accuracy and sincerity are

established liberal values. To do Michael Schudson's "things news can do for democracy" (2008: 11-27), journalists must make sure that what they say is not false and they must say what they actually believe. They are also relevant to investigation. To reveal information that is valuable to the public sphere, reporters must make every effort to ensure that their discoveries are true. They must report them sincerely, which in this context means completely, in context and without malice.

Absence of malice is crucial and it relates to the third part of the trio: hospitality. Philips, Couldry and Freedman (ibid) define this as the journalist's duty to take account of how what they do affects the conditions for dialogue between cultures and peoples. Stephen Ward (2010) advances a comparable ideal. He believes journalism should promote dialogue "with liberal and humanitarian forms of thought from all and any cultures".

Promoting such dialogue need not be reserved for global issues. It applies as neatly to domestic reporting and investigation. The *Guardian*'s exposures regarding Hackgate clearly promote dialogue with liberal and humanitarian forms of thought in that they invite compassion for innocent victims of hacking, encourage debate about the liberal purposes of journalism and promote the interests of the weak and vulnerable. But our acceptance of this principle should be subject to one caveat: to make complete sense, it requires a definition of liberalism as it should apply to journalism. An appropriate definition has existed since 1859 in John Stuart Mill's essay *On Liberty* – a core text for all interested in the purposes journalism serves in representative democracies and for students who wish to become journalists. Mill wrote that:

The peculiar evil of silencing an expression of opinion is that it is robbing the human race: posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

A basic code for ethical reporting should encompass understanding that, while facts are sacred (accuracy), no opinion based upon them should be censored or silenced. Hospitality should work alongside the idea that we may disapprove of what a sincere journalist says but we should defend robustly their right to say it. While ethical journalism should always be wary of causing harm, it should not be as cautious about causing offence. As David Leigh (2006), investigations editor of the *Guardian*, explains: "Investigative journalism is not a dinner party, particularly in a secretive country like ours where the privacy cards are stacked in favour of the rich and powerful."

A code encompassing accuracy, sincerity and hospitality to liberal dialogue plainly does not condone the conduct of the *News of the World* journalists and hirelings who hacked Milly Dowler's mobile telephone. Hacking as a practice can accomplish accuracy, but that does not appear to have been the primary purpose of its extensive use by the *News of the World*. The newspaper did not always hack telephones to confirm or expand evidence acquired by conventional reporting. It appears to have engaged in widespread speculative hacking to gather information devoid of context which might then be presented as sensation. For these reasons its use of hacking – and

any similar deployment by other titles – also fails the sincerity test and it is inhospitable. Sometimes it is a distortion of truth, the absence of which robs humanity of nothing worth possessing.

Accuracy, sincerity and hospitality are robust and valuable measures of journalism's worth, but they might be applied to entertaining, inconsequential reporting of the type that amuses without aspiring to Schudson's democratic purposes or attempting to speak truth to power. There can be no serious ethical objection to such journalism; ethical conduct can never become popular if it is defined as austere and sanctimonious, but a further test is required to set the ethical standard for public interest reporting and investigations. It is essentially the one John Birt and Peter Jay set out in a series of three articles published in *The Times* in 1974 condemning a "bias against understanding" in television journalism and arguing for a "mission to explain". Birt would later refine these arguments to argue the case for "significance".

Significance, Hackgate and the "Bias Against Understanding"
Birt defined significance in news broadcasting as the means by which explanation and analysis of public affairs would replace the "bias against understanding". Diligently applied to public interest reporting and investigation, it eliminates reductive narratives such as the "He Said, She Said" formula – which Jay Rosen (2009) has condemned for producing false balance and leaving the reader clueless as to where truth lies.

Significance is relevant to the controversy over telephone hacking because, no matter how blatantly hacking fails other ethical tests, it is hard to demonstrate that the practice itself is intrinsically significant. Just as it can serve ethical or unethical

journalism according to the purpose for which it is employed, hacking can also function as effectively in the service of trivial investigations as significant ones. The moral panic we have come to know as Hackgate often fails to distinguish between hacking as a mechanism for invading a celebrity's privacy and hacking to expose wrongdoing.

In the absence of a serious and consistent mission to explain, Hackgate has produced a bias against understanding. Britons have been invited to accept that telephone hacking is intrinsically threatening to ethical, public interest journalism when it isn't. Parliamentary and other informed opinion has focused hard on a problem that poses no great threat to the public sphere while ignoring the tyrannosaur in the nursery.

The Real Threat to Journalism

In September 2011, I wrote in *Times Higher Education* that the phone hacking scandal could hardly have been less well timed (Luckhurst 2011). Professional journalism's survival is threatened by the economic impact of digital technologies. The plurality and diversity of voice upon which representative democracy depends is in jeopardy. Needed urgently is debate about how well-resourced, professional newsgathering can be sustained. Instead, tired concerns about the ethics and ownership of popular newspapers are diverting attention from critical twenty-first century realities.

The hacking of Milly Dowler's mobile telephone generated a moral panic that was seized upon by a curious alliance of elite establishment and left-progressive opinion. At the same time it diverted attention from a crucial debate. That discussion, about

whether professionally edited, fact-based journalism can continue to play the role of an estate in the multimedia age, will remain important after those responsible for phone hacking have been punished.

There is a crisis in journalism that has nothing to do with hacking and relates directly to the conduct of public affairs. It started with recognition that the internet has weakened the authority of large-scale professional media organisations and progressed to predictions that it will destroy it. Many thinkers in the field of journalism and media studies believe this and find it irresistible. They cherish the possibility that the power of big-media may be shattered by what laymen call blogging and they grace with the oxymoronic title "citizen journalism".

The essential difference between the two is that much blogging is an amateur activity carried out by people with no understanding of journalism's social purpose who operate with scant regard for facts (see, *inter alia*, Keen 2007: 16). Like the activists who, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, published illegal newspapers seething with radical ideology, they prefer opinion to evidence. Liberated by broadband from a free market in which their ideas have no traction because too few find them interesting, they bleat – and tweet – wild rumours, half-truths and conspiracies. That such freedom of expression is welcomed by people no editor would pay to provide copy is neither surprising nor objectionable. That it might replace professional journalism is troubling. As the news cycle accelerates, propelled by digital technology, the need for expert journalism that can distinguish fact from fiction and privilege objectivity over ideology grows too. Partnership with audiences is essential: they now possess the digital, mobile technology to send words, images

and opinions to newsrooms at lightning speed. But they need professional journalists to sift and curate that information.

Citizens intrigued by events in Libya, Syria or Greece or interested in the death of Amy Winehouse do, certainly, pay attention to what is trending on Twitter. They take note also of peer-to-peer recommendations on Facebook and other social networking sites. But they do not rely on these horizontal communications to check facts. Once alerted by their friends, many of them follow links to reliable news sites curated by professional journalists.

Audiences have learned to follow this path from amateur information sharing to professional news reporting. They understand that professionally edited mass media has the authority and power to inform and enlighten. They appreciate that there can be a symbiotic relationship between social recommendation and fact-based, professional journalism. Regrettably, they do not yet understand that the expansion of online and social media is undermining the economic foundations upon which professional newsgathering rests.

Circulations Began to Decline – And they have not Stopped

News has never been more accessible or less well funded. A large chunk of blame lies with newspaper proprietors. When the internet was new they chose to offer free access online to editorial content for which they had always charged in their printed editions. Readers saw no compelling reason to pay for content they could read free on their computer screens. Circulations began to decline and they have not stopped. Audit Bureau of Circulations figures (2011) show that in September 2011 the 232,566

daily purchasers of the *Guardian* (down from 424,132 in October 2001 and from 278,129 in September 2010) were subsidising the reading habits of 2,613,405 daily unique users (2011) of Guardian Unlimited, that newspaper's free website. The *Guardian* demonstrated its editorial vigour by pursuing and breaking the telephone hacking story, but it may not survive to produce more such journalism. Indeed, the urgent importance of the financial crisis in journalism may be plainly understood through financial scrutiny of the newspaper that exposed Hackgate.

There is no space here to describe the intricate details of an investigation that has seen the Prime Minister's former Press Secretary, Andy Coulson, and the former chief Executive of News International, Rebekah Brooks arrested, occasioned the resignation of Sir Paul Stephenson as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and thrown open to parliamentary scrutiny the future of press regulation. Suffice it to say that Hackgate was exposed by a newspaper that may soon be bankrupt. Guardian News and Media, the company that runs the *Guardian*, lost £33 million in the year to March 2011 (This is London 2011). Andrew Miller, chief executive of Guardian News and Media's parent company, Guardian Media Group, has warned that the company could run out of cash in three years (Sabbagh 2011).

Despite this threat, the newspaper's team, led by reporters Nick Davies and Amelia Hill, seized on phone hacking to deliver an extended master class in ethical investigative reporting. It precipitated the crisis in which the *News of the World* was closed, James and Rupert Murdoch were obliged to appear before a parliamentary select committee, News Corporation's bid for BSkyB was abandoned and police, parliamentary and judicial inquiries were established.

The *Guardian*'s losses have reached peaks of £100,000 a day, but while its plight is desperate it is not unique. *The Independent* produces journalism consumed by 13,513,040 monthly unique users online from revenues generated mainly by 176,983 daily sales of its printed edition. It needs the generosity of Alexander Lebedev, its proprietor, as much as *The Times* (429,554 daily sales in September 2011, 678, 498 in October 2001) is kept alive by Rupert Murdoch's deep pockets and his commitment to news printed with ink on paper.

The link from newspapers teetering on the brink of insolvency to hacking is real. Tabloid circulations have been hammered too. The *News of the World* sold an average of 2,667,428 copies every Sunday in June 2011, the last month for which figures exist. In October 2001 it sold 4,104,227. Social networking, satellite television and video games have all taken time once allocated to newspaper consumption. But declining circulation made competition ruthless. And, when circulation wars are intense, journalists often break rules to win market share.

That is the context in which hacking occurred. Comparable pressures helped to generate atrocious journalism in the era of Beaverbrook and Rothermere, Britain's original press barons. Even in the glory days of Fleet Street's red-top tabloids, when Freddie Starr ate hamsters and profits flowed, the urge to beat rivals with attention-grabbing scoops produced excesses. As mobile telephones became ubiquitous in the early 1990s, it did not take unscrupulous journalists long to recognise their potential.

By 1997, when I became a broadsheet newspaper executive, few editors did not know that it was possible to hack a mobile telephone's message box. When it first became controversial I had the process explained to me by a colleague who had never worked for News Corporation. We did not need or use such tricks at the *Scotsman*, but we knew they could be performed. It is ideologically appealing to elite progressives to imagine that such criminality occurred only at newspapers owned by Rupert Murdoch, but it is not true. We know that the *Guardian*'s own David Leigh once hacked a mobile phone. In 2006 Leigh (2006) wrote: "I, too, once listened to the mobile phone messages of a corrupt arms company executive – the crime similar to that for which Goodman now faces the prospect of jail. The trick was a simple one: the businessman in question had inadvertently left his pin code on a print-out and all that was needed was to dial straight into his voicemail."

Response to Hackgate Informed by Ideology and Self-Interest

Speculative hacking is deplorable, but only marginally more so than the glee with which it has been seized upon by politicians, elite liberal newspapers and several broadcasters. Their attitude is informed by ideology and self-interest and, sometimes, intensified by jealousy. Some members of both Houses of Parliament despise journalists for revealing the details of their expense accounts. Editors of near-bankrupt quality newspapers, of which the *Guardian* is probably closest to economic extinction, hate them for their populism and profitability.

Into their toxic embrace walked the late, lamented *News of the World*, plaything of Rupert Murdoch, the man the left loves to loathe. I think *The Simpsons* ridicule him

best. The episode in which Fox is a drag race sponsor, along with Amalgamated Pornography, Kingpin Malt Liquor, Laramie Cigarettes and Cop Stopper Exploding Bullets is fun. So is the one in which a Fox telethon spokesperson says: "Sure, Fox makes a fortune from advertising but it's still not enough," and "So, if you don't want to see crude, low-brow programming disappear from the airwaves please call now" (Peterson 2011).

But, for some in parliament and beyond, satire can never beat sanctimony. So, while the revelation that News Corporation hirelings tapped Milly Dowler's telephone appalled ethical journalists, MPs and ideologically hostile journalists barely tried to conceal their joy. Celebrities with grudges to bear and secrets to conceal did not try. For Hugh Grant, ill-chosen celebrity front man for the Hacked Off Campaign, the disgrace of the Screws is manna. He is liberated from any obligation to distinguish between illegal conduct and reporting liable to embarrass him. So are Max Mosley and other C-listers who imagine the discomfort they have suffered at the hands of the red-tops is a constitutional issue.

Robust discussion about whether hacking might ever be in the public interest would be interesting. The answer is plain: David Leigh was right; there are circumstances in which a reporter gaining access to private telephone messages can be morally and ethically justified. If it exposes crime or serious impropriety; if it protects public health and safety; if it prevents the public from being misled by an action or statement made by a powerful individual or organisation, then editors should be allowed to sanction it. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – which first made

phone hacking a criminal offence – should be amended to permit such action in the public interest.

But such reform would not reverse closures of newspapers or redundancies among journalists. It could not secure the future health of the vibrant, commercial press that held Eden to account over Suez, revealed the truth about Thalidomide and brought down John Profumo. It could not keep the *Guardian* fit and free to expose "the scandal of tax-dodgers with private jets pretending to live in Monaco, but still working four days a week in a London office" (Leigh 2007) as the excellent David Leigh has done. It would not fund the meticulous investigation through which the *Guardian* exposed hacking.

It is hard to persuade the British electorate to think about the processes whereby the news that informs their democracy is gathered and distributed. Privacy law, libel tourism and an increasingly stretched law of contempt have barely raised a murmur despite the efforts of editors to publicise their woes. The closest the general public usually gets to thinking about the cost of journalism is when they pay the BBC licence fee. Despite that, there are many Britons who will complain about a pay wall at *The Times* and still believe that BBC journalism is free despite the annual disappearance from their bank accounts of Auntie's £145.50 levy. It is worth every penny, but free it is not. Nor is any journalism of quality.

I welcome Lord Justice Leveson's inquiry into press ethics and practices in relation to the public, politicians and police. It is an appropriate response to a profoundly troubling episode in public life. It is essential that operations Weeting and Elveden

(the Metropolitan Police investigations into telephone hacking and alleged payments to police) be pursued thoroughly. But when each of these appropriate reactions to egregious conduct is complete, journalism's core crisis will remain. The pressing question that deserves more thought than hacking is how to fund expensive investigative, foreign and public interest reporting in the multimedia age.

Matt Drudge's decade-old predictions that, in the internet age, "every citizen can be a reporter, can take on the powers that be" and that the net "gives as much voice to a 13-year-old computer geek…as to a CEO or Speaker of the House" (see Hargreaves 2005: 132-133) is daily exposed as naïve. Most loners with computers lack the skills and ethics to gather and report news. A minority who do not, including some who provide a valuable critique of mainstream news values, face the same difficulties their predecessors in the era of print struggled to overcome: they lack the resources to achieve scale, resist legal pressure and speak truth to power at a volume power cannot ignore.

Crucial Role of the Non-Corporate Media

Keeble (2011) emphasises the crucial role played by the non-corporate media in the development of alternative journalism. It also spawned journalists such as Robespierre, who regarded his ideological opponents as criminals and insisted that, "We must rule by iron those who cannot be ruled by justice." Similarly brutal populism is common online, not because it represents majority opinion but because the net permits free expression of prejudice. Unaccompanied by a large-scale,

professional news industry informed by ethical values, the chaotic anarchy of the internet may disappoint us by nurturing a new generation of zealots.

Before Hackgate, a consensus was beginning to emerge among professional journalists and analysts of journalism that networked individuals and traditional media would learn to work together in the public interest. Citizens with information would help professional reporters to do a better job of keeping the powerful honest and accountable to the people they serve. Professional journalists, working within robust ethical guidelines would fulfil their duties and offer the engaged citizens of the 21st century what Eric Hobsbawm called "an explanatory narrative adequate to its complexities" (see Holden 2002).

Since the emergence of representative democracy in economically liberal nation states, professional journalism has served the public sphere well. It has helped citizens to engage in critical debate about the practices of government and state. It has exposed wrongdoing, helped to keep power honest and advanced the case of reform. It has defended democracy and civil rights. When every celebrity has changed the default settings on their mobile phone, the challenge of ensuring that good journalism can continue to perform these duties will remain urgent.

The internet can make this possible. It allows reporters to work collaboratively with their audiences and gives them access to an unprecedented range of data and sources. But the multimedia skills required to nurture, fertilise and reap such collaborative journalism do not come cheap. They demand the backing of profitable newsrooms sufficiently wealthy to maintain independence from government and informed by

ethical values: newsrooms such as the ones maintained by several great British newspapers that are alarmingly close to collapse.

John Kampfner (2011), Chief Executive of *Index on Censorship*, recently made a powerful case against treating hacking as the biggest problem confronting journalism in an article for *Media Guardian*. Kampfner argued that modern "journalism is too weak, not too strong". He advised Lord Justice Leveson to "prevent wrongdoing without killing an already sickly patient" and he pointed out – via comparisons with continental European systems of media regulation – that state intervention in the activities of a free press very rarely serves the public interest. I would add that it may, of course, serve the ideological purposes of those who believe the state can be a magnanimous leviathan.

Lord Judge, the Lord Chief Justice (2011), added his voice to this rising murmur of support for a raucous and unencumbered free press in his keynote speech to a human rights law conference in London. He pointed out that an independent press will, from time to time, behave with "scandalous cruelty and unfairness" but on the same day another part of it will expose scandal and hold power to account. Lord Judge concluded that the public value of the second role is priceless. He warned that, whatever means of regulation are designed to reduce the occasions of unacceptable behaviour by elements of the press, they must not simultaneously, even if accidentally, diminish or dilute the ability and power of the press to reveal and highlight true public scandals or misconduct."

How Lord Leveson and the legislature that appointed him can avoid "diminishing or diluting" that ability in a market in which the most ethical news providers are all loss making is difficult to predict. Easier to perceive is the excellence, reach and impact of professional journalism produced in the arena of foreign news while Hackgate was unfolding.

Ethical Foreign Coverage

Sambrook (2010: 99) identifies three key roles for professional foreign affairs journalists in the multimedia era. He argues that they should provide three core services:

- coverage of breaking news and live events;
- deep specialist niche content with analysis and expertise;
- the aggregation and verification of other sources of information.

While Hackgate and its aftermath were powerful presences on the domestic news agenda, British consumers of professional journalism were provided with extensive reporting of that other great phenomenon of 2011, the so-called "Arab Spring". Examples in that coverage illustrate that the ability to serve Sambrook's purposes exists and is already being deployed. These examples meet the ethical tests of accuracy, sincerity and hospitality to liberal dialogue. They are also significant.

1) Coverage of Breaking News

Speed and commercial reward do not ethical journalism make, but beyond the adrenaline-fuelled enthusiasm of those involved and the technological allure of

portable BGAN satellite links, some of the journalism Sky News produced in Libya has confirmed the enduring ethical value of eye witness reporting in the multimedia age. Chief Correspondent Stuart Ramsay's fever always to be first did not just bring live pictures of fighting to our homes and iPads (Ramsay 2011). It delivered evidence of the murder of prisoners by pro-regime troops at a military compound south east of Tripoli.

However, as the BBC's Jon Leyne (2011: 42) observes in his chapter for *Mirage in the Desert? Reporting the Arab Spring*, "It's not just a question of journalists scripting a live action Hollywood action movie. Without intelligent analysis and explanation, the viewers, listeners and readers would soon grow bored of the spectacle." British viewers, listeners and readers have been well served in this regard.

2) Specialist Content with Analysis and Expertise

On Thursday 20 October, the *Guardian* published in print and online Angelique Chrisafis's feature describing the post-euphoric reality of life in Sidi Bouzid, the small town in Tunisia's interior where Mohammed Bouazizi, the Gavrilo Princip of the "Arab Spring", killed himself on 17 December 2010. Chrisafis (2011) reported the violence and squalor created and experienced by a desperate generation of educated and skilled Tunisians who believe they have no chance of obtaining work. The accompanying analysis by Ian Black (2011) described the dangers of "presenting Tunisian politics as a zero-sum game, with a Westernised and technocratic liberal elite worrying about the economy, versus Islamists with a hidden agenda on the other". Here was work that met my ethical tests.

As compelling was BBC correspondent Gabriel Gatehouse's determined attempt to hold to account those Libyan fighters who imagined that a new democratic era for their country might properly begin with the brutal and summary killing of Colonel Gaddafi. Gatehouse recognised that the dictator's death might offend the rule of law and the principles of due process and civil liberty upon which representative democracy depends. He began to ask how a democratic future can be built upon conduct that rejects democratic values. (BBC News, 7 and 8 November 2011). His work on radio, television and online ticked my ethical boxes.

3) Aggregation and Verification of Other Sources of Information

The curatorial role journalism must perfect if it is to provide valuable service in the era of horizontally connected citizens was performed to expose the hoax we now know as the "Gay Girl in Damascus". Daniel Bennett (2011), a PhD candidate in the War Studies Department at King's College, London, has described this process in another excellent chapter for *Mirage in the Desert?, Reporting the Arab Spring.* Bennett demonstrates that traditional journalists deploying traditional tools would not have exposed Tom McMaster – the postgraduate student at Edinburgh University who invented Amina Araf, a.k.a. the fictional "Gay Girl in Damascus". Partnership between old and new models of journalism performed the task. By exposing the false and allowing us to recognise the "authentic voices"[i] seeking political change this curatorial partnership served ethical purposes admirably.

From the Arab Spring to Hacking

While the future shape of excellent public interest journalism is emerging all around – and journalists are worrying desperately about how it will be financed. Lord Justice

Leveson is exploring the relics of a discredited past. His work may be useful – an effective, independent replacement for the PCC would be good for journalism but its work will matter most in the event that populist tabloids are the best funded survivors of journalism's economic crisis. Since the closure of the *News of the World*, these are the titles most directly engaged in the popular, celebrity journalism that millions of Britons continue to purchase with alacrity.

I reject Hugh Grant's view (Kampfner 2011) that the famous have every right to determine when and how their private lives should remain private. John Kampfner (2011) is right: the main difference between a celebrity who profits from their private life and one who complains about intrusion *is* that the former has a better agent. Many stories the public are interested in are insignificant, but there is nothing hospitable in the view that popular journalism must be restricted and newspaper profits further undermined. It oozes arrogance and condescension in the service of a cause – restraining the tabloid press – which the internet has rendered redundant.

Lord Leveson's attention is concentrated on problems the solution of which will not nurture ethical journalism. There is a fair amount of it about – and it is beginning to make excellent use of new technologies to deliver accuracy and sincerity, hospitality and significance. The real crisis facing ethical professional journalism is that it is commissioned and published almost exclusively by newspapers and broadcasters that are losing money or dependent on subsidy.

The prize is discernible. We can have excellent coverage of breaking news and live events. We can have deep specialist analysis and expert curation. These services can

be supplied ethically to issues of significance at home as well as abroad. But how such work is to be funded if profitable, popular journalism cannot be deployed to subsidise it remains a mystery.

Professional journalists can benefit from a clear set of ethical guidelines, but they already know how to provide excellent service to the public sphere. Their work this year has demonstrated that. The question facing British policymakers is not how to prevent the hacking of telephones – or even how to limit the political influence of an octogenarian media magnate who has already lost the confidence of several major shareholders. It is how to finance an ethical future.

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Note on the author
Tim Luckhurst is Professor of Journalism at the University of Kent. Parts of this chapter have previously appeared in *Times Higher Education.*

<u>**Statement of Truth**</u>

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed Tim Luckhurst.

Date 27 January 2012

Please be aware that by signing the statement of truth you are confirming that you agree that the contents of the submission/statement are true. Please take extra time to ensure that you are completely happy with your submission/statement before you sign it.

If you have provided a submission/statement in your private capacity you should state your full name in the submission/statement but should provide in a separate document personal details (e.g. address, contact address, mobile telephone number and e-mail address), which will not be published.

Please remove any personal details such as home address or telephone number before forwarding the final signed submission/statement.

If you have provided the submission/statement on behalf of an organisation, please state this clearly in the first line of the submission/statement.

2. Your signed submission/statement, in its entirety, should be returned to us by email.

3. Returning your signed submission/statement will confirm that you are content for the Inquiry to publish it on its website in the form you have provided. If this is not the case and you have any concerns or wish for certain sections to be withheld please make this clear in any response.

4. Your signed submission, once received, will initially be provided to those groups who have been designated as Core Participants to the Inquiry (a full list is available on our website: www.levesoninquiry.org.uk).

5. If the Core Participants do not raise any matters your statement will then be referred to in open session and at that point it will be published, along with your name, on the Inquiry's website.

The Inquiry intends to begin publishing submissions/statements on the website shortly and would therefore be grateful for your response by return.