

Eight essential questions for the SEMINAR

by Athanase Papandropoulos

1. What is “old” and what is “new” journalism?
2. In a period with more news and more influential journalism, across an unprecedented range of media, than at any time since the birth of the free press in the 18th century, why journalism is under unprecedented attack from politicians, philosophers, the general public and globalization radicals, religious groups and even from journalists themselves? How to explain this paradox and to explore the possible implications?
3. When information travels as fast as it does, it can wreak destruction before there is time for it to be understood. In the world of instant journalism, reputations are destroyed and privacies trivially invaded in the time it takes to switch TV channels. Junk food may be convenient and taste OK at the first bite, but its popularity raises longer-term questions of public health; so too with junk journalism. The circumstances of modern news thus test the journalist’s judgment and honesty, not in fundamentally new ways but more routinely and at greater speed than ever before. So what should be ethics in journalism?
4. Are bloggers journalists?
5. It is a fact today that newspapers are in remorseless, if gradual, decline. An American research reports that today a minority of people say they read a newspaper the previous day –compared to 60% only fifteen years ago. In Greece, more than three quarters of people today do not regard newspapers as an important source of news, whereas almost everyone watches television news. This change is of huge significance. What is the evolution you for-see in this third digital era?
6. What do you think about journalism as a spectacle?
7. In this third, digital era of electronic news media, based around the internet and other broadband communications technologies, the formative creative and political cultures are different again, this time based upon a fusion of economic liberalism and globalization with a technology rooted partly in the Pentagon and partly in the world’s leading research universities. The effects of these waves of technological change upon culture, ethics and practices of journalism, have already been profound. Today there are instant news services from all sorts of communities of interest, from cancer sufferers to anti-capitalist campaigners –the latter styling their own “anti-media” organizations of “independent media centers”. Anyone with a modem can report to the world. Is this a kind of new journalism?
8. Communication is journalism?