

**Interview with David Nordfors by Yael Gaoni, Globes.
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1-Do you feel that the newspapers and the journalist are stagnant in a traditional concept? Do they need to be shaken up?

Yes, a good deal – but not all – are stuck in a traditional concept. But I don't think anybody in the news business is unshaken today. The question is how many have identified the problem, formulated a vision, selected a credible strategy, and gotten going, before it's game over. It is quite common that people and organizations that don't have a vision and a strategy tend to hold on to their old identities when the world starts shaking around them, even if they know it won't solve the problem. Newspapers and journalists in the western world are shaken, but they still need good visions and strategies in order to get moving.

The problem is, the news has been organized more or less the same way for over a century. The news business has been about mastering and improving the traditional model, not about innovation. The formula for success has been 'more of the same' - manufacturing, not 'something new' - innovation. It is difficult to switch from manufacturing to innovation for any industry. They have different organization and management philosophies.

But innovation is the trend for the whole society; the news media has been hit later than many other industries. In the innovation economy, economic growth is driven more by "something new" and less by "more of the same". Power is being transferred from regulators to innovators.

If a news company wants to remain relevant in the innovation economy, it not only needs to become better at managing its own innovation, it also needs to become better at covering innovation in society. Any journalism that aims at empowering the readers will need to do it.

In short, innovation is a double challenge for news companies. The first challenge is how to become innovative. The second challenge is how to tell the story of innovation. These two things hang together. Innovation in the news offers new ways for journalists to work and to communicate with the readers. Journalism covering innovation offers important stories to catch readership attention and engagement.

A successful news company will be in charge of the attention surrounding innovation, it will shape the common language for innovation, and convert that attention and influence into money.

2 - how would you describe Innovation Journalism

Innovation Journalism is journalism covering innovation. It covers innovation processes and ecosystems.

It tells stories about how innovation happens, and can reflect on our ability to innovate. It can cast light on how the innovation ecosystem is evolving through the interaction between ideas, actors and game, and how science, technology, business, politics and culture mix and interact. It can help us to discuss which trends will develop, and where efforts are best placed.

It can discuss how competitive we are at innovation compared to other societies, what is holding us back from being even better at it, or what we can do to improve.

From the news business point of view, there is a lot of money flowing around in the innovation ecosystems, and there is a lot of competition for attention between the actors in them. If the news can influence the flows of attention in innovation ecosystems, for example by representing the public opinion about who is important and who is not, or by shaping the accepted language for discussing innovation, it will be controlling a valuable resource, and should be able to tap into the flows of money.

3 -what is missing in todays journalism?

The story of innovation crosses the traditional newsbeats. It is always difficult to cross the production lines in any vertical organization, the newsroom is no exception. You tend to fall between chairs or get caught up in turf wars. I am not saying that it is impossible to write about business or politics in the technology section, but it will depend on the relation between the tech editor and the other editors.

Innovation in journalism is important for journalism about innovation. It is not easy to report on innovation from a newsroom that is not innovative. It's a bit like covering personal computers and the Internet when using a typewriter and a telephone.

How come individual bloggers covering innovation news can become more influential than mainstream newsrooms with hundreds of journalists? The bloggers can cross the traditional beats as they want, and it is easy for them to use the latest tools or even invent new ones. Some blogs will grow into influential news companies. It is already happening.

For traditional newsrooms to compete with talented individual bloggers, they will need to address these issues.

I predict that some traditional news industries will succeed, but many will not. It's not a new story. It happened before, when the computer software industry span out from the hardware industry in the 80s, and when network services span out from physical network industries in the nineties. This time, the news

content is separating from the news medium. Youtube, Blogger, Flickr, Facebook etc are providing the medium, and a lot of other new media suppliers will emerge. It is probably too late for most of the traditional media companies to take control, they missed the boat – it is tricky for the BBC to compete with Google in creating search engines, and video publishing on the net, for example. The bloggers have the advantage of not being committed to any old media technology (yet), they do only content. BBC should be able to compete with that, if they can reorganize and let the newsrooms be innovative.

4 -media consumers as like other consumers are generally conservative. Maybe it will be easier to condition journalists and editors but you need to condition the media consumers more.

I do not think the media consumers in many countries today are more conservative than the main stream media companies. Many readers are a step ahead of the main stream media in their interests and that they are using more modern equipment than the journalists use in the traditional newsrooms.

5. Why do you consider innovation as something within itself and not relate it to the different sectors like technology, agriculture, marketing, computers, etc....

An ordinary dictionary defines 'innovation' as 'the introduction of something new'. I like that definition. You might think of something new that would improve your place of work. It could be a good idea or even an invention. But it is often very difficult to introduce it in the workplace. Your colleagues might have different opinions, you might not get the necessary resources, and even if you do, you will almost always run into complex problems that you had not thought of initially, calling for new innovative solutions along the way.

In order to grasp the innovation process you need to combine technology, marketing, science, politics, computers etc. They are all components of innovation. People often think of innovation as a component of technology news or business news. There is nothing wrong in that, and many excellent stories come from it. I just think it is bigger to think of it the other way, that technology and business are components of the innovation of society.

6. Innovation is good, but in a country like Israel the events don't leave enough time for theories. Do you think that in a country like israel innovate journalism can be successful like in Sweden

I don't agree. The quick pace in israel is pretty much driven by a rapid flow of creative thoughts and theories. Every new word represents a new concept, and the quick development of modern Hebrew reflects a high rate of innovation. Israel is in fact an ideal place for innovation journalism, because it is one of the leading innovation hotspots in the world. There is already a lot of good innovation journalism in Israel made under other labels by all types of journalists, ranging from culture to science.

While journalism about innovation is nothing new, calling it innovation journalism is very new – the name did not exist until 2003, when I suggested it. Giving journalism covering innovation a name of its own makes it possible for journalists from different newsbeats to connect to each others innovation stories, to better understand the bigger picture, and to discuss best practice in covering innovation. People need a common name for something in order to communicate around it.

If journalists from different newsbeats get a common language for innovation, then the rest of society will get it too. The level of discussion in the news sets the baseline for the level of discussion in society. I see innovation journalism as an important ingredient of national competitiveness in the global innovation economy.

8 what is the contribution of journalism to innovation? It's not like the hype that's created around an innovative invention which later fails.

Contribution A: Shared language

Innovation requires language. Innovation is the introduction of something new. Introduction requires communication. Communication requires language. Something new needs a name in order to be discussed. Journalism spreads the new words so that new things can be discussed and introduced.

In order to improve how we innovate, we need a common language for discussing innovation itself. Innovation journalism gives language for discussing e.g.: How innovation happens; Who does what, and why, in the innovation ecosystem; Our ability to innovate and our competitiveness; What stops us or enables us from innovating; What we can do about it; Who wants to do what about it (politics of innovation); Innovation trends and happenings.

Contribution B: Agendasetting

Good innovation journalism will attract public attention to issues of public interest. Public attention sets the public agenda.

For many decision makers, the news IS the public attention. If something is in the news, they will address it. Otherwise not.

9. Can you give some examples of what innovation you are referring to?

The expression ‘Silicon Valley’ was spread through journalism. It started as a nickname for a place – a metaphor. In due time it came to represent the special type of innovation ecosystem that has made the Bay Area into the world leading economy. A place where startups can easily be created and

grow. When people in different places around the world wanted to say that they had (or intended to get) a similar innovation ecosystem in their countries, they alluded to the name. 'Silicon Wadi' is an Israeli example. This name was not chosen because of topography, it was chosen because it sounds like "Silicon Valley". It is a way to express that the character of the Israeli innovation system is similar to that of Silicon Valley.

10. The latest innovation in journalism is the internet. Are you of the opinion that printed news has died.

Printed news will continue its decline, unless the Internet melts down for some unforeseeable reason. My guess is that the story is over when enough people get an iPhone or similar which gives a nice reading experience, and the cell phone operators offer enough bandwidth for comfortable browsing.

In the mean while, glossy magazines focusing on glamour and lifestyle will still be good cash cows for some years. But they will also bite the dust, as display techniques improve.

12. How does technological innovation change the journalists function as it relates to writing, and the bond with the reader.

Readers can participate in the creation of a story. The writer can publish a first version of the story, then modify or expand it over the next hours, as the readers communicate around it. It can give a better story, and it will capture more attention from the readership. And since the business of journalism is to generate and brokering attention, this should be good for business.

13. What do journalists need to know in order to address innovation in journalism.

If you cover the story of innovation in journalism, you will be doing innovation journalism. Journalists who understand the forces that are changing the future of the news business will be able to understand the forces that are changing the future of other businesses. Innovation in journalism and innovation journalism belong together.

Everything I have said is about this: Journalism driving innovation. Innovation driving journalism.