



# journal of alternative and community media

## SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS

### Guest Editors:

Andrew Ó Baoill, National University of Ireland, Ireland ([andrew.obaoill@nuigalway.ie](mailto:andrew.obaoill@nuigalway.ie))  
Salvatore Scifo, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom ([sscifo@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:sscifo@bournemouth.ac.uk))

### **Sustaining Community Media: Challenges and Strategies**

Maintaining community media organisations requires ongoing attention to a number of factors. Radio and TV stations, as well as national and international community media organisations must consider funding, governance structures, changing political and economic conditions, while building, consolidating and extending relationships with their listening communities. The concept of sustainability has been widely used in the context of communication for development paradigms, as a lens for assessing the health and success of that sector. This special issue will provide an opportunity to reflect on questions of resilience and endurance as they arise in alternative, radical, oppositional, and community-grounded media, and to explore the various interdependent factors that can impact the ongoing stability and health of community media projects. Concurrently, the association of the term with questions of ecology prompts a reflective and ethical concern that extends beyond the immediate or parochial, and we expect papers that will, in a holistic fashion, explore the role and operation of the sector in the context of broader socio-political concerns.

Community media have been the focus of an increasing amount of scholarly attention as they have grown in size, from social movement theorists, to political economists, to those focused on governance and organisational communication. As Atton and Hamilton (2008: 26)<sup>1</sup> note in their analysis of the political economy of alternative journalism, the “general political-economic dilemma for any critical project is that it needs resources with which to work, but those crucial resources are present only in the very society that it seeks to change or dissolve.” This special issue will build on existing knowledge, together with exploration of contemporary case studies, to explore the numerous challenges faced by community media activists and organisations in nurturing long-term projects, and identify strategies and best practices for building a sustainable sector.

Questions of sustainability have an immediate practical relevance to those working in the field of community communication - many projects that emerge from the context of short-term tactical media projects struggle with questions of funding and volunteer engagement as the focus of their horizon changes. Also, the workforce and paperwork required by some funding schemes might be a barrier to the search of medium and long-term support. Beyond this, we encourage submissions that tackle the ethical tensions that arise, for instance, for those looking to create media that is at once independent, critical, and financially stable. To what extent is it possible to have a media project that is both oppositional and institutionalised? What compromises or additional work is necessary? How to balance the possible conflict between aims of the stations and those of funding bodies?

---

<sup>1</sup> Atton, Chris, and James F. Hamilton. *Alternative Journalism*. London, Sage, 2008.

In challenging contributors to focus on the interplay of practical considerations of funding and resources, together with questions of mission, key commitments, and values, we expect to foster a constructive debate that has the potential to draw on a range of historical examples, as well as explore some distinctive issues arising in the contemporary context. In what ways do the lower barriers to entry for digital publishing support and challenge the development of enduring oppositional projects? With neoliberalism prompting the expansion of commercial logic into ever more areas of human activity, what are the pressures faced by projects grounded in an opposition to commodification and capitalism more broadly?

Areas of focus might include the following, with projects that draw together a number of tensions in creative and challenging ways particularly welcome:

- Capital and recurrent funding; building revenue streams
- Regulatory challenges and solutions
- Governance and organisation
- Cooperation and health of the sector
- Localism and defining community
- Maintaining and refreshing relationships with communities
- Pragmatism versus idealism

**Abstracts due:** 15 November 2017

**Notification of acceptance:** 1 December 2017

**Publication:** mid-to-late 2018

#### **Submission Guidelines:**

Please send an electronic copy of your 100-150 word abstract via e-mail text to **both** Guest Editors, Andrew Ó Baoill ([andrew.obaoill@nuigalway.ie](mailto:andrew.obaoill@nuigalway.ie)) and Salvatore Scifo ([sscifo@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:sscifo@bournemouth.ac.uk)), by Wednesday, 15 November 2017.

Authors will be informed about the acceptance (or not) of their proposal by Friday 1 December 2017 and will be expected to submit their full paper according to JOACM guidelines (see <https://joacm.org/index.php/JOACM/pages/view/authors>) by 15 March 2018. The issue is expected to be released in mid-to-late 2018.

**We encourage you to circulate this email among your networks.**

[www.joacm.org](http://www.joacm.org)  
[facebook.com/joacm.org](https://facebook.com/joacm.org)  
[twitter.com/JournalofACM](https://twitter.com/JournalofACM)

