

A source of inspiration

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This article is by Polis Summer School student Dillon Baker (@dillonabe) on a talk given by Ros Atkins (@BBCRosAtkins)

[Ros Atkins @ Polis Summer School 2015](#) from [Polis Video](#) on [Vimeo](#).

'Intimacy at a distance'

Shedding light not only on how his new BBC News program [Outside Source](#) is adapting to the new digital environment, Ros Atkins also spoke about how his job has been impacted by technology's ability to provide 'intimacy at a distance'. Figuratively speaking, this means that we can get closer to an event while it is happening than ever before. It has allowed for an unprecedented degree of interactivity between journalist and the viewing public and has allowed the journalist to engage and respond in real-time to what's going on around them. This drastically changes the dynamics of the relationship between the consumer and the media, with most of us now receiving our information in increasingly non-linear ways.

Content Curation

The news today—at least as Ros is approaching it—is less didactic broadcast and more “real time collation,” where the best of the best from around the world, from journalist and non-journalist alike, is given equal opportunity to tell the news as it happens. The broadcast also becomes more participatory as the interests and concerns of viewers find direct agency through mediums like Twitter. The array of information available through the internet on any given topic means that it's less about getting a scoop as getting the best information to the public as quickly as possible; no matter who's information it is.



Ros made the point that this opens up a greater need for the news to be transparent. Information is power and therefore the news will always remain a powerful tool. How this power is used and towards which ends in particular has historically been a relationship defined by

the ethical and moral considerations of the 'journalist as gatekeeper.' While the ability to source the best and most current content expands, the creation of that content also moves further away from the hands of the journalist. In this, and all cases where it might be applicable, Ros advocated verification as far as it will take you, transparency where it won't, and honesty when it is still necessary to go there.

While the format of journalism may change, Ros advises that the best commodity you'll have to bring to a story as a journalist is your objective curiosity. If you are genuinely and truly curious about the world and the people that inhabit it, that passion will translate to your audience more than anything else. "Curiosity is the motor of everything. . . let it drive everything you do."

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