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Editorial

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This first editorial of 2018 is a slightly unusual one. Firstly, because it is the same across ***Journalism Studies***, ***Journalism Practice***, and ***Digital Journalism***. Secondly, because it is the first in any of these journals—beyond guest editorials—that is not written at least in part by Bob Franklin. The reason, of course, is that, as of this issue, Bob Franklin is no longer their editor, having decided, after 18 years, to pass stewardship of the journals over to individual editors. As a result, Folker Hanusch is now editor-in-chief of ***Journalism Studies***, Bonnie Brennen is editor-in-chief of ***Journalism Practice***, and Oscar Westlund is editor-in-chief of ***Digital Journalism***. As this is a significant moment in the history of these three journals, we decided to co-author this editorial in order to outline and pay tribute to Bob Franklin's editorship, as well as his wider influence on the field of **journalism studies**. We also want to address, very briefly, how we see the transition to individual editors and what readers may expect

from the journals in the future. While we will deal with individual journals' approaches in separate editorials, there are some mutual ideas and values we would like to articulate.

It is important to acknowledge the work of Professor Bob Franklin in developing the journals into the field-leading publications they have become. The story began in the year 2000, when the first issue of *Journalism Studies* was published. This came at a time when one barely spoke of a scholarly field of **journalism studies**, and *Journalism Studies*—as well as *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, first published in the same year—played a pivotal role in establishing this field. Back then, journalism was studied not as a field in itself, but rather as a part of other, larger communication fields. The International Communication Association, for example, was still six years away from establishing a **Journalism Studies** Interest Group, which would later become one of its most popular divisions. These were pioneering times and Bob Franklin was certainly one of the key scholars in promoting and advancing the nascent field of **journalism studies**. In the early days, the team of founding editors included Franklin, Gerd G. Kopper, Elizabeth Toth and Judy van Slyke Turk. Together, they edited the journal, publishing four issues per year, until in 2006, when Franklin became sole editor and the journal moved to six issues per year. One year later, he became founding editor of *Journalism Practice*, a journal established to "provide opportunities for reflective, critical and research-based studies focused on the professional practice of journalism" (Franklin [1], 1). Originally publishing three issues per year, it quickly attracted the attention of the scholarly community and, as a result, a steadily growing number of high-quality submissions. This meant the journal expanded over time to the current ten issues per year. Meanwhile, the increasing focus on digital developments in journalism made it important to establish a third journal. Thus, *Digital Journalism* launched in 2013, with Franklin again its founding editor. It experienced similar growth to the other journals, quickly moving from three to ten issues per year. With *Journalism Studies* having moved to 12 issues per year in the meantime, the suite of Franklin-edited journals in 2017 published a total of 32 issues.

All three journals have become incredibly successful. The journals contain ground-breaking empirical research, and also offer revised and even entirely new conceptual and theoretical frameworks, as well as articles giving useful insights into research methods. Increasingly, articles have focused on journalism in very different corners of the world, thus contributing to an internationalization of the field and challenging established understandings of what journalism is and the purposes it serves. The journals have an excellent reputation in the scholarly community, which is testament to the boundless energy Franklin—and his outstanding editorial assistant and partner Annie Rhys Jones—devoted to them over the years. The articles published in the journals have attracted numerous citations and some have been downloaded as many as 30,000 times. Articles published in the journals have also won awards, such as the *Wolfgang Donsbach Outstanding Journal Article of the Year Award* from the **Journalism Studies** division of ICA.

The establishment and success of the three journals so far would not have been possible without Bob Franklin and his admirable editorship running the three journals. Franklin embodies both the authoritative and the humble editor, in the best ways possible, as he has successfully developed the journals with his editorial voice. We think we speak on behalf of the entire **journalism studies** community when we say that he has been a tremendous source of wisdom, inspiration, guidance, collegiality and professionalism for so many scholars. As such, we are sad he will no longer be editing

the three journals. However, we take on the challenge of becoming new editors, with a strong sense of responsibility for carrying on his work and with the hope of continuing the journals' standards of excellence.

We take over the reins of editorial leadership at a very important and exciting time. Journalism research is booming: Associations like ICA and IAMCR, as well as many regional and national bodies are increasingly popular among **journalism studies** scholars, with divisions devoted to journalism growing in size. At the same time, the field is still learning to articulate an identity, fragmented as it has been traditionally, through a range of epistemological and methodological approaches. Perhaps paradoxically, as traditional journalism industries are experiencing an existential crisis, journalism scholarship has never been more popular.

Alongside this development, journals have proliferated, but Bob Franklin's retirement as editor signals a shift for three very important publication outlets for the field. Necessarily, one can expect some changes as the publications often colloquially known in the research community as "Bob's journals," will develop slightly more individual identities. Each journal will be led by an editor-in-chief, with the assistance of three associate editors. Together, these teams will formulate their own separate visions, which will be dealt with in individual editorials in the respective journals over coming months.

In the meantime, however, we want to emphasize that we take over editorial leadership of *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism Practice*, and *Digital Journalism* with a strong spirit of collaboration among ourselves. This will mean a continuous communication flow between editors-in-chief and, where appropriate, coordination of some policies on matters such as special issues, editorial feedback and transparency, as well as editorial board memberships. We will articulate more of these issues in the near future.

For now, we hope to be able to draw on the amazing community of scholars that inhabit the field of **journalism studies**. As the founding editors of *Journalism Studies* noted in their first editorial back in 2000, and Bob Franklin reiterated when launching *Digital Journalism*, all editors

are obliged ultimately to acknowledge that our energy and ambitions for the project will amount to little without the support of a wide readership and, we hope, the active participation of large numbers of journalists and academics whose contributions will be crucial to creating a truly critical and public forum for debating significant issues central to **journalism studies** (Franklin et al. [[2](#)], 5).

As such, we aim to continue the leadership of these journals in the spirit of their original intention, and greatly hope that we can continue to rely on the community that has supported them for so long already.

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- [2](#) Franklin, Bob, Gerd G. Kopper, Elizabeth Toth, and Judy VanSlyke Turk. 2000. "Editorial." *Digital Journalism* 1 (1): 1–5. doi: 10.1080/21670811.2012.740264

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