Table of Contents

Policy

Practices

Innovation

Work Conditions

Social Media

Public Relations and Advertising

Digital Games

Journalism

Conclusion

Introduction

1. Making Media: Production, Practices, and Professions

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Introduction

What does it mean to make media professionally? To be a journalist, a marketing communicator, advertising creative, or public relations practitioner? What is it like to work in film or television, to develop games, to be a musician, or manage a record label for a living? It is safe to say that the answers to these questions vary greatly. Whereas the various fields of cultural work used to be considered in terms of their specifics, contemporary scholarship acknowledges the great diversity and hybridization of practices and careers that make up formerly distinct professions in the media industries. Profound transformations are afoot in the areas of technology and digitalization, management and economics, culture and audience preferences, as well as in the role politics and policymaking plays in both enabling and constraining the ways in which media industries and professionals can do their work and earn a living.

This book aims to investigate, illustrate, and critically analyse how the various technological, political, economic, and social transformations are affecting the media industries as well as the people professionally making media. The goal is to provide those interested in studying media industries and production, and those considering a career in the media a clear grasp of the relevant topics and themes, as well as an understanding of what shapes media work. The authors gathered in this volume provide a comprehensive review of the scholarly research on making media, delving specifically into emerging themes such as the emotional quality of media work, the radical changes affecting the business operations of media firms, and ways in which precarity determines the lived experience of media professionals across a variety of media industries. In doing so, we endeavour to bring into conversation different domains of theory and practice in media industries: political economy and cultural studies; the sociology of work and psychology of professional decision-making; production and management studies.

In order to grasp the many developments shaping the creative work media professionals do, we have structured this book in three sections: production, practices, and professions. Media *production* considers issues at play within, across, and around the institutions and forces that create our media, our information, and our culture: management and economics, media policy, markets, consumers (Hesmondhalgh,

2006; Paterson, Lee, Saha, & Zoellner, 2015). Media *practices* involve the various ways in which media professionals make media (and, importantly, how they 'make it work' in the media industries): innovation, working conditions, affective labour. Media *professions* are those more or less demarcated fields of work that make up professional life in the media industries, including (but not limited to): journalism, advertising, marketing communications, public relations, digital games, television, music and recording, and social media entertainment.

Media production

Technology has always been an amplifier and accelerator of media industry trends, just as developments in media making have inspired and supercharged the development of technology. However, in recent decades there has been a marked shift from consumer electronics to information technology as the most powerful sectoral force shaping how media content gets produced, distributed, and experienced. At the heart of the changes within and across the media industries is the role of the internet, platforms, and connected devices such as smartphones. In only a short time these technologies and the businesses that thrive within these infrastructures – the so-called new intermediaries, from hardware manufacturers (Samsung, Apple) and software developers (Microsoft, Alphabet, Tencent) to platforms (Facebook, Google, YouTube) and online marketplaces and services (Netflix, Amazon, Spotify) – have uprooted and disrupted the ways in which legacy media operate. Generally, it is safe to say that these technologies and corporations have nestled themselves firmly in-between media users and producers, making each of them co-dependent on their products and platforms for formatting, distributing, accessing, and sharing media content.

As media institutions (and the people working across the media industries) adapt to this new reality, the values, expectations, and structures of the digital economy come to co-determine creative decisions and processes. Automation, data, and algorithms play an increasing role in all forms of media work, acting as demand predictors as well as content creators (Napoli, 2014). The digital technological context of media work means that more focus is placed on user-generated content and consumer engagement, as well as on generating (and using) data about users and consumers of products and services online.

As institutions across the media industries respond to (and, in part, join forces with) the new cultural intermediaries, they continue to computerize and digitalize all elements of the production cycle of making media. Sometimes, this means that entire divisions, departments or standalone companies are formed, and new professional roles emerge – such as content manager, engagement editor, data analyst, and digital editor. In other instances, the emerging technological context is implemented

to primarily facilitate existing work and production processes – generally leading to job cuts and other 'doing more work with fewer workers' deleterious managerial interventions. To some extent, all of this means that the standard ways of doing things can change quite substantially in the industry, while, at the same time, some companies use newer technologies primarily to maintain and streamline existing structures and production cycles.

Key is that processes of disruption and consolidation co-exist, in essence liquefying and solidifying media production at the same time.

Media practices

In terms of the actual work of making media, the emerging technological context of media work diminishes the cost of the production of media. Media companies large and small struggle to adapt, as they tend to be stuck in 'heavy' material contexts consisting of expensive studio complexes and associated equipment, dedicated newsrooms, content management systems, and other proprietary software packages and hardware configurations designed for particular uses within specific companies and industries.

The immaterial context of media organization and management similarly comes under pressure from technological changes. Legacy media are historically oriented toward specific schedules associated with platform-specific production processes benchmarked by deadlines, around which other societal systems – such as companies, government institutions, and political parties – traditionally organize their operations (as expressed through press conferences, national and global release schedules of films and games, and routinized cycles in advertising determined by events and seasons). However, the digital realm introduces a new media logic, one that seems oblivious to industrial-age schedules or more or less predictable production cycles, forcing organizations to aggressively replace 'analogue' production practices with 'digital' ones. The digital economy tends to be sold as one that is 'always on' and therefore managing a permanent publication presence is of the essence to any media firm or professional wishing to stand out. In the process, new technologies (and associated values and practices) are introduced to manage an organization of work that is supposedly more flexible, nimble, and (most importantly) always ready to go.

In manufacturing, the process of acceleration (while cost-cutting) is known as the managerial philosophy of 'just-in-time' production: the production of goods to meet customer demand exactly in time, quality, and quantity. This approach is also part and parcel of much media work, where continuous deadlines have become the norm. Furthermore, media practices are disjointed because of the

increasingly networked nature of the production cycle – where you can be part of a product, process, or professional peer group without necessarily being in the same building, city, or even country. As media industries diversify their activities across multiple media and markets, media professionals are expected to cultivate cross-media proficiencies and multi-skill (rather than honing their craft in one specific area of expertise).

Key is that media practices are both accelerating and being supplemented by a wide array of new roles, skills, and competences, contributing to an ongoing destabilization process both felt and experienced by practitioners.

Media professions

What all of this worldwide shuffling of the cards with which media makers have to play means for media professions, is that the boundaries between formerly distinct peer-based communities of practice are blurring. Media work, once located in institutions where contracted labourers would produce content under informal, yet highly structured working conditions, today is best typified by a lived experience of precarity and fragmentation. As freelancing, part-timing, temping, or otherwise contingent work becomes the norm across journalism, film and television, games, music and recording, advertising, and social (entertainment) media, practitioners increasingly move within and between professions. Journalists cross-subsidize their work with copywriting for commercial purposes, marketing agencies set up fully fledged newsrooms to provide quality content to clients, musicians earn a living by partnering with brands, film and television makers cross industry lines left and right, and those most versatile in computer skills can be found anywhere in the industry – not just in digital studios.

At the same time, a media professionals' primary way of making sense of him or herself is through recursive self-reference, particularly when it comes to those professionals working inside more or less established companies. More often than not, this means that the various developments affecting the industry – such as emerging technologies, new business models, national and international media policies, and changing audience tastes, habits, and influences – are perceived as coming from the outside, and the digital future is therefore seen as something happening to media industries and professionals (rather than, for example, also occurring because of the way they function and work). For media practitioners whose identities are tied to the specific way they perform (or used to perform) their work, these changes can be experienced as a profound threat to their profession. As a consequence, there can be a hesitation in embracing the many new opportunities, affordances, and convergences that the disruption and transformation of the media industries offer.

There is no formal entry requirement to any kind of media work – although students around the world flock to media degrees like bees to honey, expecting a perfect gateway to what seems like a highly attractive industry. Simultaneously, institutions for higher education worldwide provide a wide range of (skills-based) media production tracks and degrees, offering the promise of employment in an exciting, dynamic, and high-profile field. Media industries are overpopulated with young, passionate and hard-working men and women, usually living and working in the heart of the city in close proximity to each other, their work, and sources of entertainment. However, what often remains unseen is the ambiguous reality behind the glossy, attractive image of media work: the enormous amount of emotional labour that is required to 'stay in' the industry, the ability to handle rejection, stress, and permanent impermanence, the need to constantly perform and present yourself in the best possible light in order to succeed, and having to financially and emotionally cope with being un(der)paid while trying to 'make it work' in an unforgiving climate.

The informal nature and relative ease of getting into the industry furthermore belie its highly complex, bureaucratic, computerized, and formulaic nature. Often the lofty ideal of self-actualization through meaningful creative work suffers as media professionals experience boredom, frustrated development, and feelings of powerlessness (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011, p. 39). The informality of media work is a structural feature, championed by both employees and employers as a liberating element privileging creativity and innovation, while simultaneously functioning as a highly effective de-politicizing device, as few media workers find time, motivation, or social support to mobilize against exploitative labour arrangements (McRobbie, 2016).

Key is that the work of making media belongs at once to a clearly recognizable set of distinct industries, practices, and professions, while, at the same time, it can be considered to be transforming, destabilizing, and even de-professionalizing (Witschge & Nygren, 2009) in the process.

Main trends in making media

Surveying the fast-growing literature on what making media professionally is like, interviewing and observing media workers, and teaching media production offers excellent data to synthesize the consequences of the aforementioned changes in media making. This corpus has been subjected to a principal component analysis (PCA), a technique used in statistics to recognize patterns in a dataset by organizing the variance hierarchically, thereby only selecting those components that display the greatest variance for further analysis. In social theory – particularly in the work of Luhmann (1990) – principal components are seen as essential constituents of

social systems that 'transform themselves into themselves' (Mingers, 2003, p. 404). In other words: a principal component is something – a trend, a concept, or a specific set of circumstances – that all practitioners who make media professionally experience in one way or another, whether in journalism, advertising, marketing communications, public relations, digital game development, film and television, music and recording, or social media work.

In operationalizing the concept of principal components, the distinctive role that specific trends, concepts, or circumstances play in making media is the key to identifying them. We identified nine principal components: collapse, hybridity, affordance, power, flexibility, precarity, entrepreneurship, agency, and affect. We will briefly discuss each concept, recognizing how these developments, at times, conjure contradictory experiences for media professionals.

Collapse

There is an overall sense of collapse across the media industries: a collapse of parts, units, functions, roles, business and revenue models, for example. Whether real or perceived, there is a prevailing sense and discourse that traditional ways of doing things do not work (anymore) in the digital age. Particularly when it comes to business models, the relative stability of advertising and sales has collapsed into online (and offline) business models that combine revenue streams from multiple sources, cultivate and commodify relations with consumers, and bypass media producers altogether in order to co-create with media users (as citizen journalists, influencers, and productive fans). At the same time, the rapid adoption of digital devices and platforms as the go-to technologies for accessing and experiencing media fundamentally altered the habits of audiences, collapsing the categories of consuming and producing media. Collapse is also present in the distinctly 'making' aspects of media making, as genres, storytelling formats, and creative practices collapse in favour of hybrid or hybridized media products and production processes. Everywhere we see an ongoing convergence of different domains, sectors, and disciplines within and across the media industries, bringing new challenges for managing media firms and production processes.

Hybridity

Media products become increasingly hybridized under conditions of collapse, and are difficult to place into categories that can be effectively isolated and subsequently micro-managed. Combined with the increasingly promotional role of media content, this has caused boundaries between professions and practices to blur. The rise of branded content and native advertising (i.e. advertising in the form of editorial content)

in journalistic media, for instance, has blurred the distinction between journalism and advertising, just as the distinction between authentic content and paid-for experiences and opinions can be hard to make in social media entertainment (cf. YouTubers), and a musician's live performance can simultaneously be a promotion of a product or a brand.

Hybridization has implications for media makers, who must be simultaneously generalists and specialists, combining the command of one profession with knowledge of a host of others. Media makers face pressures to combine particular activities associated with making – such as gathering, selecting, curating, producing, editing, writing, filming, designing, coding, so on and so forth – with work to do in the areas of the promotion and distribution of media content. For many, if not most media workers, making media increasingly coincides with distributing, promoting, and selling media, partly because their livelihood depends on it, in part because this is something employers expect, and also because the aforementioned collapse of distinct departments and roles within the media industries shifts the responsibility for managing every aspect of making media from the firm to the individual professional.

Affordance

Although technological developments can most certainly be described in terms of the rise of new digital intermediaries, platformization, datafication, and algorithms, we should not ignore the tremendous affordances new media also offer to makers. The underdetermined nature of digital media enable practitioners to experiment with telling stories in all kinds of ways. Opportunities arise in the fields of extended reality (XR) and transmedia storytelling, where media makers are challenged to use multiple media channels, formats, and interfaces. Through new (and often relatively cheap and easy to use) technologies, more people can participate in making media than ever before, stimulating both the emergence of a truly global market for media makers, as well as local playgrounds for the inclusion of many different voices and communities. The possibilities to interact with audiences have increased significantly, paving the way for various forms of co-creation. Although traditional (advertising and sales-based) business models of media organizations are under pressure, the opportunities to monetize media content and products expand, just as the platforms on which content can be shared multiply, potentially providing media makers with more autonomy and creative freedom.

Power

Given the profound transformations across the media industries and the corresponding destabilization of media professions and practices, questions of power become highly relevant. There is a general shift in power being whisked away from professional

content creators to media users and owners – and, specifically, the new digital intermediaries. As a result, most professional practitioners experience media work as precarious. They are being underpaid and undervalued for their contributions, and are expected to do more than before (often with fewer resources at their disposal or colleagues to collaborate with). Although unions are active to some extent in the media industries, media makers tend not to become members of such formal organizations. Precarious working conditions and networked production processes furthermore tend to handicap efforts to mobilize otherwise fragmented media professionals.

On the other hand, the number of professional associations is rising across the various industries. Media professionals do find new ways to organize themselves, both online (through closed Facebook and LinkedIn groups, for example) as well as offline (especially in the context of distinctly local communities and place-based social support structures). By developing infrastructures to support independent work, these types of formal and informal alliances help to counteract the various forms of power imbalance that are visible within the media industries.

Flexibility

Flexibility (whether numerical, functional, temporal, or financial) is a key governing principle in media work, and runs through all accounts of what it is like to make it work as a professional media maker. Numerical flexibility refers to the creative use of workforce numbers to manage a media organization. This means, for example, that even a full-time salaried and contracted position can disappear in an instant, work potentially moves overseas overnight, and your team may dissipate at any moment due to suddenly changing working arrangements. Functional flexibility describes the division of the media workforce in a multi-skilled core of employees and a periphery of freelance professionals. The overall trend is that this 'core' is not only diminishing, but also does not offer many guarantees in terms of job security. At the same time, freelancers generally report not seeking the relative safety of a full-time contract with an established media company, even though many freelance media workers struggle to make a living (Deuze & Witschge, 2018). The overall lack of dependable, well-organized (such as '9-to-5' type) working schedules is known as temporal flexibility, whereas financial flexibility refers to the generally uneven, individualized, and performance-based systems of rewards and remunerations (instead of uniform salaries) in place across the media industries.

To be flexible – as a media firm or professional – thus means many things at the same time. Flexibility both disrupts established practices of making media as well as consolidates (and, perhaps more importantly, naturalizes) specific ways of organizing the work. What flexibility particularly brings to making media, is *presentism*: a form of limiting and defusing concern for one's work and career prospects by focusing

on the present (Goyanes & Rodríguez-Gómez, 2018) to the detriment of historical understanding and rational anticipation of possible futures (Bourdieu, 1998).

Precarity

Media work is a lesson in precarity, meaning: coming to terms with having little or no control over 'what happens next' in your professional career. Although this is not necessarily a new situation for many media professionals, precariousness is evident in constantly changing labour conditions, in particular the rise of the so-called gig economy with its emphasis on short-term project labour, often organized through online platforms. Such a way of living and working – of having a workstyle rather than a lifestyle (Deuze, 2007) – among other things necessitates the maintenance of a permanent self-promotional profile across various social networks.

This is not to say that the 'happy few' who have indeed secured stable, steady jobs supported by contracts and excellent labour conditions (such as a pension plan and medical insurance policies) do not experience precariousness. This is quite possibly the most important insight regarding this principal component of professional media makers: regardless of your formal status as a worker in the media industries, you always work from project to project, from one story to the next, from task to assignment – all the while governed by the informal rule that you are only as good as your last production.

One way to master the art of living with precarity is finding a way to cross-subsidize the work: doing what you have to do in order to do what you want to do. This model is quite common in regions where a lot of high profile media companies are based, such as Soho in London, Hollywood in Los Angeles, and Madison Avenue in New York. Beyond film, advertising, and television, this way of working increasingly applies elsewhere in the media industries as well, especially in journalism. As mixing news work with other communication-related jobs such as public relations tends to be perceived as rather problematic when it comes to the editorial autonomy of reporters, these forms of cross-subsidy are not without complications. Since precarity has become a permanent component of making media professionally, practitioners will have to figure out how to deal with (potential) professional frictions resulting from cross-subsidizing their work.

Entrepreneurship

The rise of entrepreneurship, framed as an individual solution to systemic problems, is clearly visible within media industries. It is a dominant frame in contemporary policy and management discourse. One's ability to take risks, find new business opportunities, and being a successful self-promoter tends to be heralded as an

appropriate response to a contingent and altogether precarious industry context. However, an alternative conceptualization of being entrepreneurial can be identified as well: not as a 'business saviour' (Sørensen, 2008), but as the building block of a social support system – as a skillset contributing to sustainable community-formation and the design of creative solutions for urgent problems in everyday life and society at large.

The rhetoric and logic of start-up culture and entrepreneurialism can be perceived all around us. It propagates a playful mindset, sees disruption as a force for good, and equates work with passion, thereby celebrating and naturalizing the overwork through which the 'passion project' of making media is pursued professionally. The entrepreneurial mindset reinforces the idea that making media is not just a way to make a living – it becomes your identity. Making media – being a journalist, a recording artist, a game developer, an Instagram influencer – is not something you do, it's something you are. And, we should add, rebelling against who you are is something most of us would understandably hesitate to do.

Agency

Making media professionally puts practitioners in a field of sometimes complimentary, and often competing pressures and forces. In essence, these elements comprise content, connectivity, creativity, and commerce. Media industries produce content, but also invest in platforms for connectivity – where fans and audiences provide the free labour of sharing, commenting, and co-creating content. Media work is based on the creative desire to tell stories – a feeling common among practitioners across the various media industries, generally associated with a wish to do so autonomously – yet tends to take place within a distinctly commercial context. Within the broader context of the principal components that make up media work, it is up to each professional to find agency by negotiating and balancing these four core pressures.

Agency for professional media makers can be expressed on different levels. On the individual level, practitioners build networks – not just as a way to find and get new jobs, assignments, and clients, but also to build a social support structure. Peer communities are a crucial part of the job, and are often distinctly local – as in the media industries all production is global but all work is local. This international division of cultural labour means that each individual media worker is responsible for preparing, finding, and keeping employment in the context of a truly global industry. Particularly freelancers have to find creative and experimental ways to address work-related challenges outside official legal regimes – including visibility projects, organized campaigns, and collective organizations. The media tend to cluster in specific (urban) areas, within which an ongoing exchange of labour, talent,

and skills takes place between people and organizations. This creates a sense of community that can help practitioners to collectively find some agency vis-à-vis an otherwise uncontrollable international division of labour.

On the macro level, agency can be found through a keen understanding of the global production networks of the media industries and the way markets function. This for example means that, while overall the various industries prefer to invest in proven formats and predictable products (such as movie, television and game franchises, established beats in news media, genre conventions in music), every company needs to engage in exploratory innovation as well in order not to fall behind, as well as to secure the 'next big thing'.

Affect

Above all, media work is a form of affective labour: work that elicits an affective investment from its practitioners exceeding conscious deliberation, and that is intended to elicit a similarly pre-cognitive response in people. In the contemporary attention economy, engagement is a key aspect of making media: not just getting people to notice and pay attention to your product or service – which is difficult enough – but even more so, to get people engaged, to suspend their disbelief, to keep them coming back for more. Insights from consumer psychology and behavioral design are becoming quite popular in the media industries, propelled by the enormous amount of data that media users generate online, and propped up by companies such as Facebook and Google. At the same time, media professionals are also, to some extent, expected to surrender completely to their work, in part encouraged by comfortable, and at times even playful working environments – which, in the case of freelancers, also include the private home, or any one of the countless cozy coffee shops and cafés serving as informal office spaces.

What is key here, is the fundamental role feelings and emotions play in making media, and making it work as a media professional. Not only is the labour affective, it is immaterial: a category of work where people turn the whole self into work. Where material labour refers to learned skills in industrial settings – like operating machinery –immaterial labour includes social and communication skills. Affective and cognitive activities – the way we feel about ourselves, things, and each other, and how we make sense of these aspects of our lives – become commodified in media work. They are part of 'what it takes' to be a professional media maker: to develop a sense of taste, to empathize with the desires and needs of others, to translate all of this in products and services that appeal to people.

Media work is furthermore a form of emotional labour, denoting the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with organizationally defined rules and guidelines. Managing (and more often than not repressing)

one's emotions is key to survival and success in media work. Negative emotions such as hate, anger, jealousy, and sadness are usually not tolerated – especially among newcomers. Although conflict is an often cherished aspect of media work – generally considered to be conducive to creativity and innovation – the level of friction allowed in media work should not be overestimated. This requires constant, careful calibration by each and every media professional.

Finally, media work as a form of affective labour is passionate: extreme emotions are part of making the work meaningful. Although one could argue that, according to objective standards, many (if not most) media workers suffer from all kinds of labour exploitation – doing underpaid or unpaid work, experiencing dismissal or rejection for no apparent reason – still, many express that they 'cannot believe I'm getting paid to do this!' Passion is the extreme emotional energy that keeps the engine running, both in terms of how workers make sense of themselves and their role in the 'creativity machine' of the media industries, and how the work gets 'sold' to newcomers and outsiders: as something you have to be passionate about.

(How to use) this book

Structuring the dynamic world of making media in production, practices, and professions allows us to focus on the different ways these principal components impact (and are shaped by) the way professionals work. In each section, the various authors address several (if not all) of these components in terms of their specific research topic. We endeavoured to include a wide array of researchers – 53 authors from fourteen different countries – who provide different theoretical perspectives as well as insights into internationally varying experiences. Chapters within each section are divided by theme, and relate to each other as some focus on general, overarching developments, while others offer detailed case studies in specific national or industrial contexts. At the end of each chapter we offer a reading guide with three suggested connections to other chapters, organized around a taxonomy of *cases* – referring to another chapter where a specific case or example of the argument is elaborated in more detail; *contexts* – linking to work in the book that provides the bigger picture of the phenomenon under investigation; and *contrasts* – thought-provoking additional reading offering alternate or critical perspectives.

It is our intention that this book serves as a gateway to the scholarly study of (professional) media making, as well as a way to prepare for (and make sense of) a career in the media industries. To that effect, there is no single pathway through the book. We advise the reader to pick a first chapter to read (after this one) based on a specific question or concern he or she may have, and take it from there – either

by subsequently reading the other chapters within that particular section or by following the taxonomy of recommendations we have included. The works cited in the reference section at the end of each chapter may serve as further suggestions for study beyond this book.

By way of introduction, we conclude this chapter with a short summary of the how the three sections of this book are organized.

The first section of this book, on media *production*, kicks off with a series of essays on the history, traditions, and contemporary challenges of media industries and production scholarship. The study of media production and work knows a rich history, coming from a variety of disciplines and coalescing around a couple of fundamental approaches, generally divided into: sociological approaches to the organization of media work; political economy approaches to the media; management, business and organizational studies; and media and cultural policy studies. Recurring questions inspiring such research focus on the various ways in which the creative and production processes in media industries are organized, coordinated, and managed, what role and influence media ownership, size, and strategy have (specifically regarding the autonomy of media workers and the diversity of media), and what the nature and experience of work is in the media industries.

The section on media production starts off with chapters by Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren, David Lee and Anna Zoellner, and Patrick Vonderau in which they take stock of the research on media industries and highlight several issues that researchers face. Providing a conceptual framework, Bernhard Miège revisits and updates his earlier foundational work, while David Nieborg and Thomas Poell give insight in the process of platformization. Similarly, Dwayne Winseck, Terry Flew, and Nicolas Suzor offer reviews of important developments in media policy and how this affects the organization of work in the industry. Tackling fundamental issues regarding the business of media industries, the contributions by Chris Bilton, Paolo Faustino and Eli Noam, and Mikko Villi and Robert Picard address what the transformation of business models means for media managers. Amidst analyses about how media audiences' needs are shifting and consumers are even turning into producers themselves, Göran Bolin, Sylvia Chan-Olmsted, and Rang Wang offer important perspectives on the changing nature of value as well as markets for media production.

In the second section of the book – on the *practices* of making media – Arne Krumsvik, Stefania Milan, Niamh Ní Bhroin, and Tanja Storsul unpack the dominant rhetoric of innovation in making media, Stefan Werning unravels the discourse on startups and entrepreneurship, and Vincent Mosco calls attention to the profound role automation, robotization, and data analytics have come to play. Beyond these broad perspectives we look at the concrete experiences of (different categories of) media professionals in a changing industry, whereby Penny O'Donnell and

Lawrie Zion, Doris Ruth Eikhof and Stevie Marsden, and Nicole Cohen offer cases in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Recognizing that what gives making media meaning is often determined by its potential for self-fulfillment, Eugenia Siapera, Zelmarie Cantillon, and Sarah Baker examine the pitfalls of media making as a form of affective labour and Ilana Gershon and Mark Deuze offer alternative perspectives on how to 'make it work' in the media.

In the concluding section of the book – on media *professions* – we take all the important work on media industries and production on the road through a variety of case studies of specific industries and accompanying professions, ranging from music and recording (Sofia Johansson and Leslie Meier), television (Amanda Lotz and Paul Dwyer), social media entertainment (Brooke Erin Duffy and David Craig), advertising and public relations (Sara Rosengren and Dustin Supa), digital games (Aphra Kerr and Casey O'Donnell), and journalism (Ana Serrano Tellería, Amanda Brouwers, and Tamara Witschge).

We wrap up the book with a discussion with Henry Jenkins, whose publications on textual poaching, convergence culture, and spreadable media have been so influential. He is arguably one of the few scholars in the field of media industries and production whose work speaks to both the industry and the academy. Responding to his observations are colleagues from around the world: Tanja Bosch, Anthony Fung, and Elizabeth Saad Corrêa. We conducted interviews with these keen observers of the media on the basis of key insights we gained from assembling this book.

There is a lively debate among those studying media industries and production whether the kind of scholarship as represented in this book can, or even should, serve the interests of the industry and those vying a career in the media. Some advocate direct engagement with the industry, seeking a dialogue with hopes of improving the plight of media workers, identifying creative and innovative potential, hoping that scholarship can contribute to making better media (Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). Others remain sceptical about such alliances, instead arguing for sustained critique regarding the ways in which the media are particularly good at exploiting the emotional investment and passion of (especially younger) media makers, how commercial pressures serve to frustrate and distort the creative autonomy and range of voices possible in mainstream media production, and how schools and universities become complicit in maintaining often poor working conditions across the cultural, creative, and media industries (Mayer, 2011, 2017; McRobbie, 2016; Banks, 2017). In general, it is important to note that most, if not all scholars in this area are deeply invested in improving the working lives of media professionals, in promoting a rich diversity in media making practices across the various industries, and in further professionalizing the emerging discipline of

media production studies (including, but not limited to Deuze, 2007, 2011; Holt & Perren, 2009; Paterson, Lee, Saha & Zoellner, 2015).

The idea for this book was born when developing the outline for a brand new course for (advanced) undergraduate students who are considering careers in the media. Instead of offering them skills training or internship preparation, the goal was to give them a critical sense of the key forces, dynamics, and trends shaping the work of those who make media professionally. The learning goal was to prepare them for a job and, at the same time, help them critically reflect on what it is like to make media. The hope is that the approach and range of perspectives outlined here inspire students to do research and develop theory, as well as analyse and debate the role production practices play in the creation of media.

Making media is exciting, frustrating, inspiring, bewildering, problematic, complicated, and fun – and this book endeavours to be all of that, too.

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