FT digital future: fewer hacks, more 'premium' staff

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It's bad news for journalism trainees but a logical outcome of digital technology. The Telegraph's Digital Editor Ed Roussel has told Sheffield media students that there will be fewer jobs for journalists who simply replicate information available from elsewhere. Instead resources will go on top names who add value. Routine news will be gathered from agencies like PA and Reuters.

In Jeff Jarvis' words, "do what you do best and link to the rest". The Telegraph has been a leader on new technology-driven production practices. It hosted blogs and created a '360 degree' newsroom and last month announced it was 'outsourcing' sub-editing.

For the journalism students this looks like bad news. There will be far fewer routine jobs. Some like Nick Davies also warn of the dangers to standards. But Roussel sees it as a way of improving editorial quality:

> *"Reducing the cost of manufacturing and distribution is an imperative for any newspaper group that is determined to remain profitable, as we are (…) The principle holds true on the digital side. ITN creates our video content, providing quality and value that we would struggle to generate internally; Brightcove handles our video distribution; Google powers our search; Escenic provides our web publishing tool; we use software developers in Bulgaria and India. "Newspaper-web companies should focus internal resource on what they do best: creating premium editorial content."*

I think Roussel is right, but Sheffield student blogger Ben Spencer reports that the audience of future hacks were less sanguine:

> *"He argued that if you can get news from these providers, why pay someone else to replicate the service? All a newspaper needs to pay for is its star journalists. Roussel's audience of young trainee reporters slumped into their seats…"*