



# Q&A / TOM ROSENSTIEL / PROJECT FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM

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Tom Rosenstiel is director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism at the Washington, D.C.-based Pew Centre, which published its annual State of the News Media report last month. He was in Toronto last night speaking at the University of Toronto's Massey College; The Globe caught up with him to talk about the future of the industry.

## **The Pew study is quite focused on the U.S. How does the Canadian news media, and its challenges, differ?**

Certainly you have a stronger tradition of public financing of media. CBC is a bigger part of your media culture ... You also have fewer newspapers and fewer newspaper companies. ... But the differences are going to become less important, because the fundamental problem facing all media is the same. And that is, there's no model at this point for monetizing audiences on the Web.

## **There's been a lot of hype about electronic readers, the iPad especially. Could such devices could be saviours of the media industry?**

At the moment, it looks like some of the news institutions are developing significant skills on the content side. They're beginning to use the technology ... [Old media] are doing pretty well in terms of producing content that consumers want. But they're generating very little revenue. Ultimately who wins is the company that can figure out a model [to] generate revenue from that.

## **Do you think it will be difficult to persuade consumers to pay for online content?**

There isn't going to be one revenue solution. ... The idea that there's a magic bullet, is probably not the case. The Wall Street Journal, like Bloomberg, has been able to charge for content because it's serving a business market. That model is doing fine. It is the general interest news, civic news, news that we feel we should consume because it's interesting or helps us function as citizens. That's the news that's most in doubt.

## **What message do you have for the Canadian audience?**

The future of media is going to be determined by the consumer, by how we as citizens use technology to consume and synthesize information. It's going to be determined by the degree to which those institutions can adapt ... The story of the digital age is that the consumer is her own editor. ... In a sense, journalism is shifting from being a product, our storytelling, to being a service.