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Editorial: In this issue

Eric Loo  
*University of Wollongong, eloo@uow.edu.au*

T Lau  
*Stanford University, USA*

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When practitioners and journalism educators gather for a talkfest, we hear the usual complaints that journalism graduates “... they can’t write, can’t spell” and “... they don’t have a grasp of basic grammar”. Journalism education and critical media studies are questioned for its inadequacies in meeting the needs of the ‘information society’. Haven’t we heard it all before?

Are journalism educators becoming increasingly irrelevant to the changing times? Have we failed in our job as journalism educators? Or is it a case of the industry continually peddling its blinkered views on university journalism programs? Regardless, the journalism academy continues to battle on with their mission of churning out entry-level skilled graduates for the industry, and that, with ambivalent intellectual and resource support from the industry towards enhancing the contents and context of tertiary journalism education.

Trends in the Asia-Pacific region show that media academics are also increasingly working closely with media training institutes and non-governmental organisations in developing an integrated curriculum, but which, nevertheless is slanted towards the mechanics of media production. Many journalism educators have also succeeded in striking up pragmatic partnerships with non-university training institutions.

There is a consistency in journalism education to be characterised by a dominant professional orientation, motivated in part by attracting students to the field through its occupational promises. This orientation is said to be mainly rooted in practicalities, such as the need to produce employable graduates. Does this goal which fulfils the short-term need of employment and maintaining student enrolments augur well for journalism education?

Asia Pacific Media Educator Issue No. 8 draws our attention to the need to reflect and capitulate on opportunities arising from the industry criticisms, in many cases unwarranted and contradictory. The articles also revisit the academic-vocational dichotomy debate and provide fresh insights on attempts to integrate professional practice with critical reflective academic values.

The Editors