

'News Inspector' tool gives readers greater transparency into editorial changes

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News delivery and consumption has rapidly changed in the digital era. No longer print-bound, the BBC, Guardian, Daily Mail and FT use blog format online news delivery, giving live commentary and many edited versions. Powerful news sources such as Twitter also abound, challenging the more conventional channels to beat to a faster pace.

Whilst such a fluid [news](#) production process allows instant access to news as it happens, does it risk the integrity and clarity of reporting? Is it too easy to conceal mistakes, misrepresentation and bias? Most news is remodelled for delivery via print, tweet, web-stream, SMS and online text, but does such a variety of channel comes at the expense of hard fact, proper investigation, credibility and truth?

The authors of "Revealing the news: How [online news](#) changes without you noticing", published in Digital Journalism, discuss a means of tracking changes to news: enabling readers to distinguish the original content from the hidden edits. The 'News Inspector' could potentially be the latest cutting-edge tool, providing an easy and low cost way to reveal these undeclared edits to news reports. They analysed a BBC story published online which was 65% rewritten over the course of a few hours for reasons and by persons unknown.

The 'News Inspector' intends to allow readers to probe a 'moral dimension', give greater transparency to stories and glean underlying conclusions from the more meaningful edits. The product will analyse word counts, time and sequence changes and variations of names and

headlines to track alterations. The aim is for the reader to have access to when and who changed the content by a simple roll-over or pop-up.

The authors report "a growing public distrust of online sources of information"; will The News Inspector reinstate confidence?

More information: "Revealing the news: How online news changes without you noticing" John Fass & Angus Main. *Digital Journalism*. [DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2014.899756](https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.899756)

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