

*Sur le journalisme – About Journalism – Sobre jornalismo*  
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## Call for Papers

### The commons as a force for rethinking information production?

**Deadline: April 15, 2026**

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The process of commodification of information – defined as the shift from use value to exchange value (Mosco, 2017) – is continually evolving, especially as part of the drive for ever-greater capital valorization. Over the past three decades, this dynamic has accelerated across the information, culture, and communication sectors, in response to a structural crisis of the capitalist system in which these industries struggle to remain viable sources of capital valorization (Schiller, 2007; Bouquillion, 2008). This commodification process, long sustained by advertising revenues, was profoundly disrupted in the 2010s when Google and Meta absorbed most of those revenues (Papaevangelou, 2023; Sebbah et al., 2020; Smyrniaios & Rebillard, 2019). The outcome has been a far-reaching crisis for news media, reigniting debates over whether information can still be effectively valorized. In that context, a central question emerges: has the information industries sector stopped being profitable?

At the same time, one may question whether profit-seeking industries are still able to produce what is described as quality information, contributing to citizens' political formation and supporting the development of political systems moving toward democracy (Mouffe, 1994). This development has significantly weakened the legitimacy of journalism as a mediator of the public sphere, particularly in a context marked by the emergence of news actors and newly amplified voices. This is precisely why the notion of *commons* has gained renewed relevance in discussions about information production.

The notion of *commons* is not necessarily in direct opposition with the commodification process driven by the logic of capital (De Angelis & Harvie, 2014; Caffentzis & Federici, 2014). Rather, it subordinates that process to the logic of a collective use value (Borrits, 2018). The aim is therefore to prioritize use value – the social benefits generated by shared access to and collective use of a resource – over its market value (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992).

More specifically, our focus on the commons can be understood in three ways:

- (1) first, following Ostrom's work (1990), as a set of self-governed resources managed by collectives that establish shared governance rules for these natural resources (with water often cited as an example);
- (2) second, by emphasizing the institutional dimension of *the commons* and the necessity of political struggle to make it the foundation of a new social order (Dardot & Laval, 2014), thereby distancing the commons from any form of naturalization (Madison et al., 2008/2010);
- (3) and finally, by understanding the commons as a new mode of production that offers an alternative to capitalism (Brancaccio et al., 2021).

In this call for papers, we pursue a twofold objective: applying the concept of *commons* to contemporary shifts in news production, and examining it through the tangible practices emerging within the information sector. Methodologically, we draw on the proposals of Ostrom (1990) and Bollier (2014), who argue that any attempt to grasp the commons in a given project must take into account (1) the groups and individuals who initiate commons-based practices, (2) the object of the commons (in this case, the resource at stake, namely information) and (3) the governance rules established by the community. As these three dimensions may be present to varying degrees across different projects, it is crucial to consider both their respective contributions and their interrelations (Pélissier, 2018).

Contributions may address one or several of these questions. They may fall within at least one of the four sections outlined below.

- (1) The commons in media management and governance practices. This section examines the development of alternative ways of financing and managing media organizations that produce information – what Kikuti Dancosky et al. (2021) and Camargo et al. (2023) refer to as “alternative economic arrangements” to corporate media structures. Research engaging with this theme may examine how the notion of *commons* is mobilized in collective governance spaces within the media sector (such as journalistic cooperatives, alternative or independent media), in projects that organize relationships between journalists and their audiences, beyond the unrealized promises of participatory journalism (citizen newsrooms, reciprocal journalism, community journalism, etc.). It may also explore the extent to which the concept of *commons* informs the search for new funding models for information production that move beyond the advertising-based capitalist model, including membership schemes, crowdfunding, or philanthropic funding.
- (2) The expression of the commons through media (meta)discourses. This section examines how journalism contributes actively to the construction of a new social order – or even a new utopia (Andrade & Pereira, 2021). Studies in this area may explore forms of news production in which the notion of *commons* becomes central, expressed both through ideological positions that diverge from dominant journalistic paradigms and through the inclusion of other actors and marginalized voices in media discourse. This strand may also investigate how journalism expands its own boundaries by circulating a range of meta-discourses that seek to reshape, or at least question, the social definitions of the journalistic profession.
- (3) The relationship between public service media and the commons. Historically, public service media have been structured around three core missions: inform, educate, and

entertain, following the well-known formula of Lord Reith, the first Director-General of the BBC. How should we position the notions of *commons* and of public service within the information sector (Tremblay et al., 2019)? How can we understand their relationship at a time when the very existence of public services is being questioned in many countries? And how could the idea of public service be reinterpreted, or even re-legitimized, in connection with community-based approaches to the production of information?

- (4) Ways journalists work and produce news. Newsrooms are typically highly hierarchical environments (Meltzer, 2009; Francoeur, 2021), and can even be spaces where various forms of violence take place (Le Cam & Libert, 2016). Similarly, relationships between journalists and their sources depend on complex negotiations in which power dynamics are often at play. New organizational forms within media outlets, however, may have the potential to transform journalistic practices and conventional modes of news production. In other words: does approaching news production through the lens of the commons invite us to rethink the organization of journalistic work around principles of self-management? Or even to reconsider the very role of journalists in producing information? This reflection may also extend to the study of sociotechnical systems and emerging norms (including legal ones) that shape journalistic work and redefine its conditions of production, such as decentralized infrastructures, open-source tools, or information distributed under Creative Commons licenses.

We particularly welcome submissions that place structural contexts at the center of their analysis while remaining attentive to individual and collective forms of innovation, and that bring together both present-day dynamics and longer temporal perspectives, as well as macro- and micro-level approaches. Taking the commons seriously today also requires acknowledging that forms of commoning have long existed (Federici, 2014). Consequently, we approach the notion of *commons* from the perspective of the possible transformations of the world (Guéguen, 2014) brought about through journalism and information, drawing on empirical work with both local and global ambitions.

Submission instructions:

The deadline for submitting full manuscripts (between 30,000 and 50,000 characters, including footnotes and bibliographical references) is **April 15, 2026** directly on the website: <https://revue.surlejournalisme.com/slj/about/submissions>. Please indicate in the subject of your message the title of the issue to which you wish to contribute.

Manuscripts may be submitted in English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. Articles go through a double-blind peer review.

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