

How live journalism brings people together to build trust and excitement around stories

By bringing journalists and readers together to tell stories live, everyone can 'hear what's happening outside of their bubble'

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In spite of what the term 'live journalism' may suggest, it does not refer to the types of coverage one might immediately think of: livestreaming, liveblogging, livetweeting.

The concept stands for events and experiences designed to bring journalists and readers together to tell stories, debate issues and exchange ideas through speech, music, on stage performances and other multimedia formats.

At the International Journalism Festival in Italy last week (8 April), attendees heard about the rise of live journalism from organisations based in Denmark, France and The Netherlands. They explained how they do it, the types of stories they tell and what conversations they sparks among audiences.

Live Magazine

Based in France and inspired by [Pop Up Magazine](#) (<https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/pop-up-magazine-is-using-the-phone-as-its-version-of-podcasting/s2/a688522/>) in the US, Live Magazine does exactly what its name says – it brings journalists on stage to tell original, unpublished stories they

might otherwise report in writing or other formats, to a live audience. The shows have no theme and they are not recorded and broadcast anywhere.

Since its inception in 2014, **Live Magazine** (<http://www.livemagazine.fr/>) has organised 17 shows across six different cities in France and Belgium. It has sold out national theatres for its events, which usually last just over an hour and a half each and feature 12 journalists.

Live Magazine's revenue has tripled in the last three years, said editor-in-chief **Florence Martin-Kessler** (<https://twitter.com/florencemk>) – ticket sales account for most of it, followed by branded events for a private audience, sponsored content and partnerships with other news outlets in France and Belgium.

Participants can make use of multimedia elements such as music, mime, tweets and dance. The stories that work best are those featuring an element of "je ne sais quoi", be it surprise, vulnerability, or a dilemma, as well as a diversity of voices and an experiential aspect that the audience can immerse themselves in. They are all curated by the magazine's staff and held to the same journalistic standard a traditional piece would be.

For example, a L'Express reporter told a story about the time she had spent with the owner of the printing press in Paris where the Kouachi brothers went after the Charlie Hebdo attack, while another reporter from Le monde performed a story on the piano.

"You need to be true and maybe even a bit vulnerable. Live Magazine is a good venue for stories you cannot publish or tell elsewhere."

Zetland Live

Danish organisation **Zetland** (<https://www.zetland.dk/>) started doing live shows five years ago and also began publishing a digital newspaper focused on longform stories in 2016.

The team of 22 employees organises two live shows a year, with 12 to 14 stories told on stage. Co-founder and chief executive **Jakob Moll** (<https://twitter.com/JakobMoll>) said it began as a fun way to build a relationship with Zetland's paying members and to recruit new ones.

"We use different formats, **sometimes we do interviews on stage** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PamytLopxqw>), which can be difficult because if they are planned it feels like you are watching TV so it has to have something surprising about it.

"The point is to make it feel as little as a conference as possible and I think at this moment in time, building excitement around journalism is something we could use," he added.

De Balie

Yoeri Albrecht (<https://twitter.com/YoeriAlbrecht>) is the director of **De Balie**, (<https://www.debalie.nl/home>) a "live magazine we make every day" in a former 19th century courthouse in Amsterdam, which became an art centre 35 years ago.

The space hosts about 1,000 events per year, an average of three simultaneous live shows across the venue, including small gatherings on a given topic in the cafe, or "interview marathons" that last until dawn, as was the case the night before the Brexit vote.

For **one of its live shows** (<http://cultureforum.eu/programme/>) , De Balie brought ten actors on stage to read a series of political statements about "what Europe is and can be".

Last year, De Balie sold 200,000 tickets, but Albrecht said the prices are kept low, varying between €7,5 and €10 so that anyone can afford them.

"We want young people especially to be able to afford them, because that's the period when they need to be in contact with old and new ideas.

"Without truth there is no trust and what live journalism does is build trust. Because you see and meet people and you suddenly realise that even if you have different opinions, there is always common ground."

You can watch a livestream of 'The rise of live journalism' panel discussion at the International Journalism Festival here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYWUBISi3Gs>) .

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