

## Editorial

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A central paradox for critical communication scholars is that major technological shifts can both reproduce and undermine prevailing relations of power. Here, Edward Comor acknowledges that digital ICTs constitute the infrastructure for sustaining US imperial dominance. At the same time, he argues, the efficacy of ICTs are fetishised by US military, intelligence and foreign policy elites. The routine employment of big data algorithms, GPS surveillance and cyberwarfare capabilities reifies the intersubjective illusion of mastery over an external world which is, in itself, technologically constructed. Historically informed, geopolitical understandings of external threats are thereby erased, to the detriment of US imperial power. David Park's article reveals how technological innovations can reproduce and reconstitute capitalist relations of power. In the US, the tactics and technologies of commercial surveillance – price customisation software, search history tracking and face recognition – exacerbates already existing socioeconomic inequalities just as they create new forms of surplus value extraction, from on-line workers and consumers.

Rufus McEwan points out how the commercial success of broadcasting organisations in a converged media environment, now requires media professionals to embrace social media platforms for promotional and marketing purposes. Interviews conducted with on-line producers and announcers working in New Zealand's two main radio networks detail the complicated commercial synergies of ratings, branding, social media publicity and engagement with listeners. This research illuminates the sheer commercial extremism of the New Zealand broadcasting environment. Similarly, Sarah Baker argues that the deregulation of New Zealand television broadcasting from the late 1980s, entirely transformed the purpose and content of current affairs programmes. No longer the facilitators of public knowledge and debate, they have become conduits for sustaining the commodity value of primetime audiences. Baker's content analysis of selected current affairs programmes from 1984 to 2017 demonstrates an unremitting contraction of item length and a rapid growth of celebrity, entertainment, lifestyle and sports stories. These changes are correlated, chronologically, with major shifts in television broadcasting policy under successive governments. Put simply, the television current affairs genre in New Zealand has abandoned long form formats to become entertainment.

This generic format eschews journalistic practices of investigation, accuracy and verification, an absence which encourages the circulation of 'fake news' throughout the media domain. On Martin Hirst's account this is not a new phenomenon. The blurring of fact and fiction in news stories had long been a deliberate ploy of newspaper proprietors wishing to advance a political agenda. In social media environments, however, the real time speed of peer-to-peer information sharing, the aggregated re-postings of news-like information and the monetisation of clickstreams systematically conflates false information with truth. The fake news phenomenon as such can be variously categorised across different media environments but it is also a political accusation against the information advanced by ones opponents. In this respect Donald Trump's twitter tirades against journalists and news

organisations he doesn't like can influence mass perceptions of reality. These are not anomalous developments, within capitalism mainstream news coverage is not comprised of stories and investigations that might exemplify the social picture of class relations. Fake news can thus be seen as the deep default setting of mainstream news reporting.

Lee Artz's article provides a global context for all other contributions to this issue. He writes that the major media entertainment corporations are inherently transnational operations which reflect transnational capitalist relations. It is thus misleading to describe the likes of Disney and Time Warner as US-centric corporations. Their cross national partnerships, mergers and joint ventures instead illustrate the transnational dimensions of vertical and horizontal integration. These are the hallmarks of contemporary global capitalism.