



# What Is Happening to News: The Information Explosion and the Crisis in Journalism

*Jack Fuller*

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Across America, newspapers that have defined their cities for over a century are rapidly failing, their circulations plummeting even as opinion-soaked web outlets like the *Huffington Post* thrive. Meanwhile, nightly news programs shock viewers with stories of horrific crime and celebrity scandal, while the smug sarcasm and shouting of pundits like Glenn Beck and Keith Olbermann dominate cable television. Is it any wonder that young people are turning away from the news entirely, trusting comedians like Jon Stewart as their primary source of information on current events?

In the face of all the problems plaguing serious news, *What Is Happening to News* explores the crucial question of how journalism lost its way—and who is responsible for the ragged retreat from its great traditions. Veteran editor and newspaperman Jack Fuller locates the surprising sources of change where no one has thought to look before: in the collision between a revolutionary new information age and a human brain that is still wired for the threats faced by our prehistoric ancestors. Drawing on the dramatic recent discoveries of neuroscience, Fuller explains why the information overload of contemporary life makes us dramatically more receptive to sensational news, while rendering the staid, objective voice of standard journalism ineffective. Throw in a growing distrust of experts and authority, ably capitalized on by blogs and other interactive media, and the result is a toxic mix that threatens to prove fatal to journalism as we know it.

For every reader troubled by what has become of news—and worried about what the future may hold—*What Is Happening to News* not only offers unprecedented insight into the causes of change but also clear guidance, strongly rooted in the precepts of ethical journalism, on how journalists can adapt to this new environment while still providing the information necessary to a functioning democracy.

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