

REFRESH: EXAMINING THE PRODUCTION OF CELEBRITY NEWS
IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

This case study examines the newsgathering processes and production of an entertainment website, Futé, and asks how newsroom routines, organizational structure and culture of a virtual newsroom shape editorial content. Futé operates via a virtual newsroom, where communication is not conducted face-to-face, but primarily through instant messaging. This computer-mediated communication (CMC) reconfigures the standard place-based newsroom arrangements and significantly influences the group's organizational dynamics and culture. Because of the unique content and unconventional organizational structure of the site, no single theoretical perspective offers a way of understanding its organizational context and content. Therefore, this study employed a combination of organization theory, specifically Schein (2004) and newsroom sociology frameworks. This research found that four basic assumptions drive the organizational culture of Jezebel: 1) Our mission is true; 2) Working from home is the best way to go; 3) IM is the most effective way for us to communicate; and 4) The new page view bonus system doesn't really affect us. This study exemplifies the potential for new media researchers to adopt a cross-disciplinary approach to their research. As old models for understanding media cease to support the complex structures of new organizations, we must look to additional frameworks for supplementary guidance.