

The New Course in Innovation Journalism at KTH, The Royal Institute of Technology

David Nordfors

Senior Research Scholar, Stanford University, USA
Special Advisor to the Director General, VINNOVA
Program Leader, Innovation Journalism

Mats Nyberg

Pedagogical Consultant, KTH Learning Lab
KTH – The Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	THE COURSE IN INNOVATION JOURNALISM	4
2.1	OTHER EDUCATIONS.....	5
2.2	VINNOVA AND KTH.....	5
2.3	AIMING AT A REGULAR ACADEMIC COURSE	5
3	PILOT COURSE DESCRIPTION.....	6
3.1	GOALS FOR THE STUDENT	6
3.2	COURSE DESCRIPTION	6
3.3	LOGISTICS	7
3.4	REQUIREMENT OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE	7
3.5	WORK SPECIMEN	7
3.6	SELECTION PROCESS.....	7
3.7	IMPLEMENTATION	7
3.8	TIMETABLE	7
4	ORGANISATION:.....	8

The New Course in Innovation Journalism at KTH – The Royal Institute of Technology

KTH Learning Lab will set up, run and evaluate Sweden's first university programme in innovation journalism. A pilot course will be run during 2006. This paper presents the preliminary syllabus of that course, providing a commissioned education in Innovation Journalism corresponding to 5 university credits. The target group for the pilot course are journalists who are already active but wish to develop their knowledge within the field of innovation journalism. Experiences gained from the pilot course will provide the knowledge and experience for an education that may also include university students, as a part of KTH's ordinary academic programme with academic credits and merits. KTH Learning Lab is a part of KTH's new school, KTH VIL - the School of Scientific Information and Learning. The course is closely connected to the Innovation Journalism Program at Stanford and in Sweden. Former Innovation Journalism Fellows will be tutors in the course.

1 Background

Journalism plays a pivotal role in democracy by reporting political processes, competition between groups of players and the ideas that are competing with each other for adoption in society. Few could imagine a democracy without a free and independent press.

Independent journalism has a role to play in innovation systems similar to that in democracies¹. Like pluralist democracies, innovation systems are eco systems where ideas are transformed into new products and processes. Ideas compete for selection, and behind every idea there are various interest groups and incentives at work, competing with each other. The winners get to implement their ideas on the market and in society.

Like in democracies, for people to get a picture of what will happen around them, they need to have a picture of: What are the competing ideas? What is at stake? Which players can win the game? What do their strategies look like?

Like in democracies, each stakeholder or person affected by the decisions of the stakeholders will be interested if the news media covers them. Here is a task and an opportunity for innovation journalism.

¹ D. Nordfors, D. Kreiss, J. Sandred, "Introducing an Innovation Journalism Index – Benchmarking the Swedish Market", Innovation Journalism Vol.2 No.5, May 4 2005.
<http://www.innovationjournalism.org/archive/INJO-2-5.pdf>

The innovation process is a blending of science, technology, law, business, finance, culture and sometimes art. And they all interact. In industry R&D and business development affect each other at earlier stages. Often innovation processes overlap with political processes. Telecom, energy, the environment and health are powerful examples. With better journalistic reporting readers can get a better understanding of ongoing developments and the processes and people driving them.

Innovation journalism needs to face up to the challenge of transcending the limits set by traditional reporting areas. This involves understanding the games being played and here political and business journalism have well established traditions. What is involved is understanding and communicating new ideas as scientific and technical journalism have traditionally done. Innovation journalism involves combining identifying, and reporting the crucial questions, ideas and players, irrespective of traditional reporting areas.

In 2003 VINNOVA initiated through David Nordfors the fellowship programme "Innovation Journalism". Currently this covers a co-operation between VINNOVA and Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning. The programme coined the concept of "innovation journalism"², an expression that has not been used in Sweden earlier or internationally. David Nordfors is Senior Research Scholar at the Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning. In his work, he has built up a knowledge base of innovation journalism. Parallel with academic development of Innovation Journalism, an international network has also been created comprising interested parties and alumni from the fellowship programme.

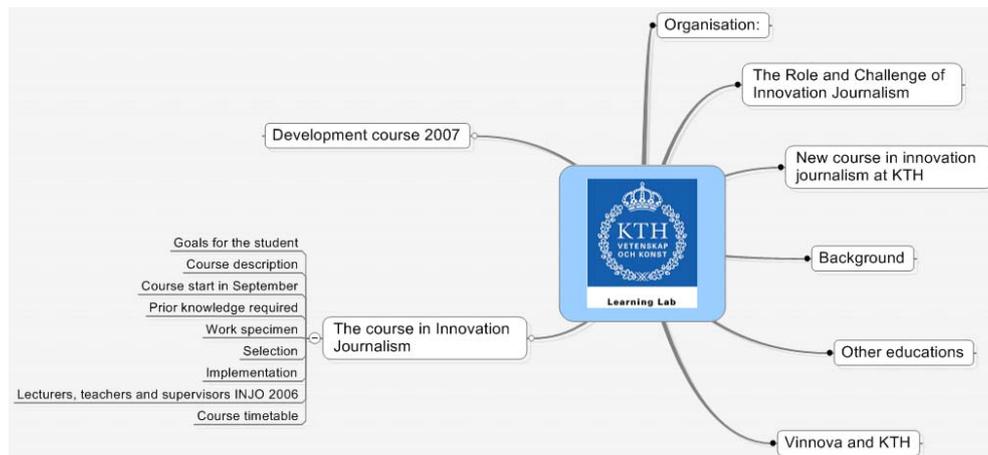
2 The Course in Innovation Journalism

KTH Learning Lab has been commissioned by Vinnova to draw up and evaluate Sweden's first university programme in innovation journalism.

KTH Learning Lab has been commissioned to develop the pedagogical approach at the Royal Institute of Technology (Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan). The work is based on documented research and experiences gained, as well as systematic evaluation.

KTH Learning Lab is a part of KTH's new school, KTH VIL - the School of Scientific Information and Learning.

² D. Nordfors. "The Concept of Innovation Journalism and a Programme for Developing it", *VINNOVA Information* VI 2003:5, Oct. 2003. Also published in *Innovation Journalism*, Vol. 1 No. 1, May 2004. <http://www.innovationjournalism.org/archive/INJO-1-1.pdf>



2.1 Other Educations

A course was started in 2004 in Finland on innovation journalism for working journalists at the University of Tampere.

In 2005 this was followed up by a course for students at the University of Jyväskylä.

In September 2006 a course has been planned for working journalists at KTH in Stockholm.

2.2 Vinnova and KTH

Co-operation between VINNOVA and KTH aims at developing a Swedish programme in innovation journalism within the framework of the mainstream academic system. Initially a pilot course in innovation journalism has been developed for working journalists and other qualified participants who already possess important skills and knowledge. The course will be run during 2006.

The goal is to provide commissioned education in Innovation Journalism corresponding to 5 university credits (corresponding to 5 weeks of full time studies). The target group in this introductory phase are journalists who are already active but wish to develop their knowledge within the field of innovation journalism.

2.3 Aiming at a Regular Academic Course

The aimed result of the commissioned pilot education is an Innovation Journalism course in KTH's regular academic programme, offering full academic credits and merits. Experiences gained from the commissioned pilot education for professional journalists will provide the required knowledge foundation. Course start planned for 2007.

The target group may then be expanded for further education of working journalists and students in Master programmes at KTH, as well as other institutes of higher education with a relevant background.

3 Pilot Course Description

The main purpose of the course is to broaden participants' perspective of Innovation Journalism by blending theoretical knowledge about the cornerstones of the innovation process with everyday practice in journalistic writing on innovations.

3.1 Goals for the Student

The students will understand the difference between an invention and an innovation, what an innovation system is, and get a feeling for how to identify the actors in it. The students will also train how to analyze the goals and actions of the players, and identify the incentives that are providing their momentum. They will analyze the interaction between the players, and get a basic understanding of their knowledge fields, and see how the development of business and technology intertwine.

3.2 Course Description

The course is divided into 8 different modules, where participants acquire knowledge of the different players in innovation processes and their different ways of reasoning, analysing and behaving. Participants will also receive training in assembling complex information from different sources in order to create a realistic holistic view.

The first and last modules look at innovation systems and innovation journalism, its goals, content and relationships with other areas. In the 6 intermediate modules, participants meet representatives of different players in the innovation process in 6 different lectures. The lectures are followed up by means of applied projects and project reporting and presentations. These lecturers are some of the leading specialists in innovation thinking from international industry, the political sphere and the academic world.

Parallel with the lectures, each participant will plan, carry out research and write two articles dealing with innovations and innovation systems. Participants will be tutored by alumni from the Innovation Journalism Fellowship Program who will assess, comment and provide critical feedback during participant work processes. The articles will be posted to a virtual editorial board so that all participants and tutors can follow and comment on each individual work module.

The course premieres real life situations to simulation. The aim is that articles produced in the course should be published in real news media.

3.3 Logistics

The course starts Thursday 7 September. The course runs for 8 weeks

Premises: KTH, Biblioteket, Salongen

Academic director of the course: David Nordfors, Stanford

Project leader, moderator and facilitator: Mats Nyberg, KTH

Course administration: Margareta Bergman, KTH

Min-max number of course participants: 15-20 persons

Application: To be submitted by latest 18 July

Digital course platform: Ping Pong + own digital editorial facilities.

Course material: Compendia, ref. David Nordfors.

Teachers: Teachers at KTH and other higher education institutions with relevant expertise, and also working journalists in the area and active within " Fellows, Innovation Journalism".

Marketing : Start May.

3.4 Requirement of Prior Knowledge

The course participants must be working journalists (certification from editor) and/or studying journalism programmes in higher education or corresponding (copy of certificate to be enclosed).

3.5 Work Specimen

Applicants should enclose a journalistic project they have completed and consider to be relevant.

3.6 Selection Process

If the course is over-subscribed, selection will be based on an assessment of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, where the latter is given a higher weighting.

3.7 Implementation

The course is carried out through lectures, individual work assignments and tutoring by face-to-face meetings and through distance work over the net.

3.8 Timetable

MODULE A1, Innovation systems and journalism.

1. Thursday 7 September 15.00-19.00. Lecture + assignment

2. Tuesday 12 Sept 15.00-19.00. Reporting of assignment

MODULE B1, Industry and finance.

1. Thursday 14 September 15.00-19.00. Lecture and assignment

2. Tuesday 19 September, 15.00-19.00. Reporting of assignment

MODULE C1. The academy and R&D.

1. Thursday 21 September. Lecture + assignment

2. Tuesday 26 September. Reporting of assignment

MODULE D1. Politics and public innovation policy.

1. Thursday 28 September. Lecture + assignment

2. Tuesday 3 October. Reporting of sub-assignment and 1st article

MODULE B2, Industry and finance.

1. Thursday 5 October. Lecture + assignment

2. Tuesday 10 October. Reporting of assignment

MODULE C2. The academy and R&D.

1. Thursday 12 October. Lecture + assignment

2. Tuesday 17 October. Reporting of assignment

MODULE D2. Politics and public innovation policy.

1. Thursday 19 October. Lecture + assignment

2. Tuesday 24 October. Reporting of assignment and 2nd article

MODULE A2. Innovation systems and journalism # (something wrong here in your original i.e. the 2)2.

Workshop. Presentation of articles and publications.

4 Organisation:

Academic director: David Nordfors, Senior Research Scholar at Stanford Center for Innovation in Learning. Programme leader for the Innovation Journalism programme at Stanford, run by SCIL in co-operation with VINNOVA.

Pedagogic director: Mats Hanson, director KTH Learning Lab and vice president at KTH responsible for undergraduate infrastructure.

Project leader, moderator and facilitator : Mats Nyberg, Educational research and development at KTH Learning Lab and journalist, JHS and IHR.

Subject specialist : Jan Sandred, VINNOVA, founder of Biotech Sweden

Course administrator: Margareta Bergman, Academic Administrator at KTH Learning Lab.

Mats Nyberg is pedagogical consultant at the Swedish Learning Lab at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, Sweden. He is a former journalist, now working in the forefront of innovating academic courses with the use of information technology. Mats is the KTH project leader for the pilot course in Innovation Journalism, which is presently being set up.

David Nordfors is Senior Research Scholar at Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning and Special Advisor to the Director General at VINNOVA, the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems. He introduced the concept of innovation journalism in 2003. He founded the Innovation Journalism programs at Stanford and in Sweden, which he is leading today. He is the Commissioner for Innovation Journalism of The Competitiveness Institute based in Barcelona. He was Science Editor of Datateknik, Sweden's largest magazine for IT professionals. He founded "IT och Lärande" (IT & Learning), the largest Swedish newsletter for educators, which he headed as publisher/editor. He was Editor for the Internet Societal Task Force, affiliated with the Internet Society. He was the director of research funding of the Knowledge Foundation, KKstiftelsen, one of the largest Swedish research foundations, where built up the research funding programs and also designed the programs for information dissemination and public understanding of science. He initiated and headed the first symposium about the Internet to be held in the Swedish Parliament. David Nordfors has a Ph.D. in molecular quantum physics from the Uppsala University.