TAKING IT IN --- Integrating data journalism into educational practices

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Data journalism education has been scarce in both educational insitutions and newsrooms in Finland and other Nordic countries. For the most part education in this area has consisted of short introductory courses in universities, a few attempts of integrating data analysis into higher courses of journalism and vocational training and occasional courses in media companies. The project presented here aims to answer to the need of proliferating and integrating data journalism methods permanently into educational institutions and newsrooms. This is done through studying data journalism teaching in an educational pilot.

The aim of the project is to educate both students and teachers of the methods and pedagogical approaches of data journalism. Through studying practical education we map the challenges and possibilities of integrating data journalism education into existing educational structures and practices. The pilot is executed as part of the Data Journalism in Mobile Media Landscape --- project where we have mapped practices of teaching and doing data journalism. We have conducted interviews with both data journalists and data journalism teachers from Finland, the Nordic countries and the UK. A section of the interviews concentrated on the challenges and possibilities of doing and teaching data journalism. The findings from the interviews are taken into consideration in creating a pedagogical approach to integrate data journalism education into journalism studies in the University of Tampere in spring 2017.

Using the Finnish municipal elections of 2017 as their focus, the participants will create reports and news stories on the elections through data journalistic methods. Surveys are gathered both before and after the data journalism education, discerning participants' knowledge on data journalism, biggest questions concerning data journalism and experiences of studying data journalism. Also the partaking journalism teachers fill questionnaires to determine their knowledge of data journalism, as well as questions and ideas concerning the methods of teaching data journalism.

We aim to study the existing challenges and possibilities of teaching data journalism on a pedagogical and organizational level. The pedagogical questions of teaching data journalism include which preliminary skills do participants need (processing data, excel calculations etc.), how to gather data sets, which programs to teach and how the journalistic products will be published. Organizational questions include how teaching is divided between staff and outside experts, which existing courses is data journalism incorporated into and what resources are needed to teach data journalism? The findings of the project are used to integrate data journalism as a sustainable part of journalism education instead of a separate course. Findings are also used to create an educational web material for newsrooms and ecucational institutions.