

Dr Jonathan Skinner

*The Boar*¹ is the University of Warwick's official student newspaper since 1973. Not only is it the largest media outlet on campus, it can also be defined as a "small press". To do so, a definition of *small press* must first be established. According to the Oxford Living Dictionaries, it is an "independent, relatively small publisher". This is certainly true of *The Boar*, as it is financially independent from any organisation and is completely run by students, not professionals. Less than fifteen titles are published per year² and the profit is always reinvested in the paper instead of being distributed to the writers and editors. Even though it only publishes non-fiction newspaper accounts, it has a collection of diverse materials since its beginning. By reviewing a project that spans 45 years and has held the university to account multiple times, it is possible to see how print culture has evolved during the time, whilst simultaneously looking towards the future of the publication.

The Boar was founded in 1973 by Godfrey Rust and Kasper de Graaf, amidst student protests over free speech and censorship of ideas³, such as occupation led by the National Union of Students which lasted four months (Myers). The first issue cost 4p⁴, but it is now an entirely free publication. Throughout this time, the name has fluctuated between "The Warwick Boar" and "The Boar," occasionally adopting other names such as "Mercury" in 1988⁵.

¹ The name of the publication comes from a pun on the word "bore" as well as a nod to the Warwickshire bear, the symbol of Leamington Spa.

² *The Boar* seeks to print twelve issues during the academic year, with an issue dedicated to the incoming students, or "freshers" as they are commonly known, and an additional one funded by the Students' Union during election season.

³ For more information, refer to the images taken by Jake Bernard, currently displayed on Flickr.

⁴ According to an inflation calculator online, it would be worth £0.46 in 2017.

⁵ In 2008, the name was officially changed to "The Boar" from "Warwick Boar", and will continued to be called as such in the foreseeable future.



Figure 1: The inaugural edition of *The Warwick Boar* published in 1973 (accessed from the Modern Records Centre)

These days, three thousand copies of each issue are published

once a fortnight, and thereafter spread between twenty-five distribution bins around campus.

The Boar is currently printed in an A3 tabloid format, with an average of 32 pages per issue in a grammage of 42.5gsm. Modern technology is crucial to the making of the newspaper.

The program used to create the digital format is called Adobe InDesign. This way, those on the editorial team can pay homage to the original newspaper format whilst also not having to manually arrange the articles. The inspiration for the design is taken from multiple national newspapers as well as other student perspectives. It is important to note that *The Boar* is one of the only student newspapers to feature an individual front page instead of an article⁶. It

⁶ By making the front cover more visual, *The Boar* has more than doubled its distribution around campus.

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also features images of the editors on each page⁷. The completed paper copy is printed in the CMYK colour format at Trinity Mirror Press in Birmingham⁸.

Once the paper is finished, the PDF is added to an online platform entitled issuu⁹. Currently, 94 issues are hosted on such website since 2013. As well as working on a physical copy, *The Boar* also has its own website titled *theboar.org*, where all articles are published. It is hosted by GoDaddy with a WordPress extension and has been viewed more than one million times in the past year, with an average of 75,000 individual users per month.



Figure 2: The latest edition of *The Boar* published in 2017 (accessed from the official Twitter)

Trinity Mirror currently prints some of the industry's largest newspapers, such as Liverpool Echo, Bristol Post and Daily Mirror. Although they specialise in tabloid journalism, *The Boar* does not fall under that category. They are experts in printing in bright colours, which is why they have been chosen. For more information, access their website through here: <http://www.trinitymirror.com/brands/publishing>⁹ issuu currently hosts thousands of publications online and makes it easier for people to follow the news when they do not have access to the finished print product.

On social media, the publication has a very large presence. For instance, the official Facebook page boasts nearly 5,000 likes, as does the verified Twitter account¹⁰. Each individual section of the newspaper has their own Twitter account, and altogether they make up over 20,000 followers. There is also an accompanying YouTube account alongside the publication, where the “Boar Bites” are displayed¹¹. This is crucial to the brand, as it is expected that in the near future, the print product will be discontinued in order to focus on the multimedia aspects of the publication. Although it would be a shame, it does reflect the trajectory of other national newspapers, such as *The Independent*¹².

The Boar receives its funding from sponsors¹³, such as graduate recruiters, and individual ad sales, which can range from £200 to £800. This is what has helped maintain the newspaper free. Unlike other student publications in the country, *The Boar* does not receive money from the University or the Students’ Union. This allows the press to stay independent from each establishment, which is crucial for journalists. As it is a student newspaper, most writers have not had previous experience before being printed. However, this is not an issue,

¹⁰ *The Boar* is one of the only student publications to display a blue verified tick on their profile, showing its credibility to all users of Twitter.

¹¹ These are videos that highlight a specific issue in the paper. In the past, *The Boar* has launched an investigation into the lives of homeless people in Leamington Spa, as well as looking at the mental health services that Warwick has to offer.

¹² *The Independent* became one of the first national newspapers to stop producing a physical copy of each issue, instead focusing all resources on the online version. Many other publications, such as BuzzFeed and The Huffington Post, rely on other multimedia aspects rather than a printed newspaper. This is definitely one of the ways that journalism can adapt to the new era of the internet, and many student newspapers are following suit and abandoning the print product.

¹³ The current sponsors are Tara & Co, glide, Warwick Sport and TeachFirst.

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as many alumni have gone on to become successful journalists. Additionally, every student registered at the University of Warwick is welcome to write for *The Boar*¹⁴. The editorial team has the final say on what is printed, but there are not many cases where an idea is forbidden. The only time an article would be rejected is if it displays remarks that would deeply offend another individual, such as instances of homophobia, racism and sexism amongst others.

The main issue facing *The Boar* at this time is walking the line between digital journalism and the final print product. Although it is one of the most reliable news sources on campus, it still faces competition from online-based platforms, such as *The Tab*, when it comes to breaking news¹⁵. Furthermore, because it is a student project at heart, it will never be as thorough as national newspapers. It is, after all, a part time job for all writers and editors.

Nevertheless, this publication is recognised by established journalists around the UK, having been nominated for multiple Student Publication Association awards in the past three years¹⁶. In the past, it has also been nominated for the Guardian Student Media Award and the GE2015 Student Media Award. Overall, *The Boar* is a household name for aspiring journalists in the area for both its content and its design.

Since its foundation in 1973, *The Boar* has consistently held the university to account and broken news stories that have shaken the country, such as the 1975 Rent Strike¹⁷ and the

¹⁴ Technically, *The Boar* also doubles up as a society within the Students' Union, therefore all students that pay the annual membership fee are allowed to publish their opinions.

¹⁵ Regardless of this competition, *The Boar* has broken many news stories on campus before anyone else. If it is not the first publication to report it, it will launch a full investigation as to why a certain incident happened. An example of this is the June 2016 article "What Went Wrong with Warwick Summer Festival?"

¹⁶ The most recent award was in 2016 for "Best Design for a Newspaper".

¹⁷ *The Boar* played a crucial role in gathering students for the protest as well as accurately and factually reporting what was happening over multiple issues. To see more, access the digitised version through the Modern Records Centre website: <http://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/UWA/P/1/17/6/27>

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2014 protest over tuition fees that led to a stand-off with the police¹⁸. Overall, *The Boar* is not only a great example of a small press, but also, of a student project that has broken boundaries in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Perhaps pushes definition of small press a bit, but, given the unique nature of The Boar as entirely student run and funded, makes a good case and tells an interesting story. A little more ("thumbnail") detail on one incident or case where The Boar played a prominent role would help fill out the picture of how it has exploited its financial independence. It would be interesting to hear more about the line between digital and print journalism. Given the boundaries it has broken, why has The Boar not yet *won* an award?

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¹⁸ Once again, *The Boar* was at the centre of the student protest in late 2014 where students were hit with tear gas after peacefully protesting against the rise in tuition fees.

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