

Very Online | Columbia Journalism Review

By Karen Maniraho

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“Ours is a period of increasing noise,” Jason Parham [wrote](#) earlier this year, for *Wired*. “Everything is bleeding into everything around it. All trends, large and small, now suggest a new cultural mood—but only until the next Vaseline-smearred obsession comes along.” Parham is one of several writers tasked with covering the internet and its subcultures—a sprawling beat that defies clear definition. The best of these journalists are immersed in the internet but do not obsess over viral moments, which fly by too fast and seem, in isolation, to be trivial. By focusing on creators, communities, and the algorithm-based platforms that drive trends, these writers find ways to cut through the noise—and surface a deeper understanding of life, online and off.

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