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**The 'Dirty
Digger' of
Fleet Street
Rupert Murdoch
—an INTJ?**

After profiling Richard Branson in the March 2001 Review, Anne Russell turns to Rupert Murdoch. From a not-so-great metropolitan newspaper to Australia's first national daily, on to Fleet St (where he was dubbed 'The Dirty Digger'), across the Atlantic to New York (and the infamous tabloid headline 'Headless Body in Topless Bar'), and now into Asia. Citizen Rupert's rise to global dominance has been so inexorable, you might almost think he had it all mapped out in advance ...

Rupert Murdoch is a true revolutionary ... He is the primary mover behind the most far-reaching changes affecting all our lives today. (Tuccille 1989, xvi)

Rupert Murdoch, like Richard Branson, is a global entrepreneur. But unlike Branson, Murdoch has focused his energies and specialised in media organisations. He has bought and sold mass media in many different formats—newspapers, magazines, books, television, film studios, satellite distribution systems, etc.

His focus is always on organisations and products that provide synergy, strategically supporting and promoting each other. In this way, the characters in the Twentieth Century Fox movie *Independence Day* watch European Sky News TV—both organisations owned by Murdoch. Murdoch's business activities and philosophies have been reported in numerous biographies, newspaper and magazine articles, and television programs. Readers and viewers need to be constantly aware of the relationships between authors and publications and Murdoch-owned organisations as their publisher or producer.

Strategic planning, represented in the combination of intuiting, thinking, and judging preferences, is very evident in every Murdoch move. The extraverted or introverted energy is not so obvious: however, those who have met him suggest he is an introvert, and he does seem to be driven by his introverted intuition.

Born in Melbourne in 1931, Murdoch is the second of four children. He has married three times: to Patricia Booker, when he was 25; Anna Torv, at 36, and, at 68, Wendi Deng. While his mother and sister maintain the

strong Australian connection with News Limited, Murdoch relinquished his citizenship when he made a strategic decision to become an American citizen in order to purchase media organisations in the USA.

The organised judging preference in action

Closure and apparently rapid decision-making are strong elements in Murdoch's management style. When, at age 32, he bought his first magazine outside of Australia, 'he took only moments to consider and conclude the deal' (Shawcross 1997, 57). He supported the his editors as long as they presented the 'correct' perspective; if they did not, he would quickly lose respect and sack them.

His mentor and friend Rohan Rivett was appointed to the editorship of the *Adelaide News* at the time Murdoch inherited the paper. Later, Murdoch 'sent him a curt letter ordering him to leave the office that very day.' Murdoch was in his 20s, and Rivett seven years older. Murdoch expanded 'his empire and was more interested in cash than in confrontation, in profits than in political positions. He wanted editors who were safe rather than scintillating, whom he could rely on however far away he might be' (Shawcross 1997, 51).

The Wapping strikes in England occurred when Murdoch moved his printing presses from Fleet Street to the less expensive environment of London's Docklands, where he had set up more efficient computer technology. He spent many weeks secretly planning and organising the new site so there would be enough paper, ink and resources to print all four of his newspapers for several weeks.

To ensure the papers were produced, Murdoch offered journalists generous remuneration if they supported him—and suggested they would be dismissed if they did not move to Wapping. During the printing of the first papers off these presses he worked on the premises, where 'he was everyone and he was everywhere, cajoling, cursing, praising, rushing about like a kid with a complicated toy which he was assembling for the first time' (Shawcross 1997, 231). The unions were broken by Murdoch's strong planning and strategic deal-making with politicians and key personnel.

Murdoch's judging preference for planning, organisation and bringing closure is reflected in the extraversion of his judging function, thinking.

Extraverted thinking

Evidence for an extraverted thinking preference is very strong throughout Murdoch's career. He sees life as a 'series of interlocking wars' (Cranier 1999, 41), and avoids confrontation by sacking people instantly if they do not perform as he expects.

In a telling letter (in Shawcross 1997, 146) Murdoch, then aged 52, shows his extraverted thinking function when he questions the competence of Harold Evans, editor of *The Times* in London:

My chief area of concern about the paper is one I have raised with you several times: the paper's stand on major issues. Of course it takes attitudes, but I fail to find any consistency in them, anything that indicates unmistakably the clear position of conscience that a great newspaper must be seen to hold. Just what that position is, it is your duty to define, and it cannot be mine. But it must be defined with clarity and authority and even repetition.

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Within a week Evans' father died. Murdoch wrote

a note of condolence saying that it was thirty years since his own father died and he remembered it as if it were yesterday. 'A good father-and-son relationship is one of the best experiences in life. You must take any time you need to attend to the necessary family arrangements.' (Shawcross 1997, 147)

Was this note written from an inferior introverted feeling preference? If so, it lasted but a moment, as 'four days after the funeral ... Murdoch called Evans to his office and asked for his resignation ... He said, *The place is in chaos. You can't see the wood from the trees ... Your senior staff is up in arms*' (Shawcross 1997, 147).

Even though Murdoch supported his first wife, Pat, up to her death in 1999, attended her funeral in Adelaide, and gave a mourning lunch for invited friends, he probably did so using a thinking perspective: a belief that this was the right thing to do for the mother of his first child. Murdoch also paid for the education of the sons of Charles Douglas-Home, who had died while serving as editor of *The Times* (Shawcross 1997, 154).

Murdoch's extraverted thinking (TJ) seems to be well supported by introverted intuition.

Introverted intuiting as a driving force?

As Murdoch's intuition is introverted, it is not always evident in the outer world. It is, however, evident in the way he planned his global empire. Initially he bought newspapers across Australia, and in 1964, aged 33, he started *The Australian*. The national daily lost money for many years, but Murdoch had the intuition and foresight to keep it operating. He then went after newspapers in London, and later in New York, each time seeking the tabloids as well as the quality newspapers so he could gain access to maximum audiences.

According to Crainer (1999, 110), 'Murdoch's gift is to be able to absorb the detail of the present while still casting an eye over the parapets to the future.' Recognising that owning just newspapers was not economically sound, he purchased magazines, television stations, film studios, and other organisations that would provide content and create symbiosis across his multinational distribution networks. Murdoch's injection of millions of dollars into the Australian Rugby Super League and his purchase of the LA Dodgers baseball team entirely supports his organisational synergies. He believed that ownership of sporting teams would provide content for his television and other media outlets.

The sensing function is potentially evident in his 20s to 30s when Murdoch 'went horse racing, he took hair-raising flights in small planes all over the country, he went fly-fishing in the Snowy Mountains and he spent a lot of time with the boys' (Shawcross 1997, 63). This could well represent exploration of his extraverted sensing. Sensing is certainly not a dominant or auxiliary function, which would suggest a person meticulous about his dress. Murdoch is remembered during his Oxford University days as 'very exuberant and untidy, his shirttails always hanging out. ... he was like a big bouncy dog' (Shawcross 1997, 32). A sensate with a judging orientation (that is, an SJ) would probably also be much more resistant to change than Murdoch.

An introverted loner or extraverted director?

Harold Evans' first impressions of Murdoch (1983, 159) recall the time when the 38 year old Murdoch and his wife Anna were invited to dinner in 1969:

She was talkative, vivacious and open, whereas he was apparently crippled by shyness. He shuffled, smiled and left sentences in mid-air. He seemed too diffident to be a tycoon and too inarticulate to be a journalist. ... It was difficult to put him at ease.

In a new environment, meeting new people, introverts tend to internalise their observations and wait until they are comfortable in that context before presenting their extraverted function. In the known environments of his media organisations, Murdoch acts much like an extravert: vivacious, charming, and on top of the situation at hand. For example, when he took over the Sydney *Daily Mirror* at age 29 'he knocked down walls and made a large office ... Most of the journalists adored Murdoch and his contagious energy' (Shawcross 1997, 52).

Jung (1971) suggests that

the introverted and extraverted attitudes can never be demonstrated per se; they appear only as the peculiarity of the predominating conscious function. (520)

Introversion or extraversion, as a typical attitude ... establishes the habitual mode of reaction ... In the struggle for existence and adaptation everyone instinctively uses his most developed function, which thus becomes the criterion of his habitual mode of reaction. (534 & 536)

Keeping this in mind, other people experience a person's extraverted function: but this does not necessarily indicate that the extraverted function is dominant. In fact, Jung (1971, 517) says 'the normal man is, by definition, influenced as much from within as from without.' The way we use MBTI today assumes that the dominant function is supported by an auxiliary function in the opposite attitude, and these functions provide the balance of extraversion and introversion.

In Murdoch's case, his extraverted thinking function makes him look like a director of finances, organisations, and people; his introverted intuition presents as a loner, who seems aloof while he manipulates internal images in conjunction with his symbolic memory and creates a wealth of possibilities. If Murdoch is an introvert, it will be the creation of these virtual possibilities extending from evidence of prior experiences that drive his extraverted thinking and actions in the outer world.

The extravert is energised by the external world of objects and people, while the introvert is energised when dealing with external objects in their inner subjective world. Jung (1971, 549-551) suggests that

the extravert's philosophy of life and his ethics are as a rule of a highly collective nature with a strong streak of altruism, and his conscious is in large measure dependent on public opinion. ...

The introvert ... holds aloof from external happenings ... He is easily mistrustful, self-willed ... everything has first to be judged by his own critical standards. ... His best work is done with his own resources, on his own initiative, and in his own way.

Murdoch is not one to be influenced by public opinion when it does not match his mental model. In his extraverted thinking mode he focuses on organisations and business environments; he also insists that his papers cater to the demands of the public. However, the driving force seems to come from within: from Murdoch's own initiative, and in his own way. Mistrust or failure to meet his critical standards seem to have been the reasons for the departure of many promising employees. Murdoch remains clearly at the helm of his 'empire.'

As a gambler from an early age at the local horse races, and later in his purchases of newspapers and other resources, Murdoch shows introversion, keeping key information to himself. As his empire grew he became feared for his tendency to buy papers promising to maintain a particular editor or editorial philosophy, only to sack the editor and change the philosophy soon after. Landrum (1996) reports Murdoch to be a non-imposing man, yet he is driven to dominate and control whatever industry he decides will be part of his organisation.

Harold Evans (1983), the former editor of *The Times*, reports that it was difficult to know what was going on in Murdoch's head:

In his presence it was barely possible to believe he would break his word; away from him, it was barely possible to believe he would keep it. He was incontinent in breach of promise ... like the philanderer who convinces each new girl that she's the one who'll change him. (176-177)

Murdoch's extraverted thinking function makes everything sound logical and definite as he speaks. What others do not see is his dominant introverted intuition, which may alter his intentions after reflection following a meeting. This situation may create confusion as others will be unclear how decisions have been made and will not realise a change of strategy has taken place.

Development of the INTJ and ENTJ

An individual's psychological type is derived from the dynamics of their whole type and the development of the different functions during their lifetime. In hypothesising MBTI preferences and dynamics of type, it is relevant to recognise that each person is unique and uses their innate preferences in a particular context and sociocultural environment.

Tieger and Barron-Tieger (1998, 97) describe INTJs as

Excellent creative strategists. Complex and often brilliant visionaries, their logical analysis and single-minded determination often enable them to see with laser accuracy well beyond what others see. They are fiercely independent and strong-willed perfectionists.

Their description of ENTJs suggests these types are

Natural leaders – strategic, organized, and decisive. Forceful, strong, and committed, they are usually able to mobilize whatever resources or people are necessary in order to get the job done in a way that meets their high and creative standards. (97)

While Murdoch could fit into either of these types, his ongoing independence and early desire to be 'hands on', to ensure the newspapers carried the headlines and content that he 'knew' was 'perfect', suggest INTJ preferences. While he has, at times, inspired his staff

with his energy in the workplace, his leadership style has been drawn more from an independence of vision driven by his introverted intuition.

Grant et al (1983, 227) describe the INTJ's early years as a time for development of 'imagination and creativity' with only 'a favourite friend or two.' During these years Murdoch and his older sister were taught by a governess and seemed to spend little time with other children. Helen said of her brother, 'He didn't like pretend games ... he was a bit of a cat who walked alone' (Shawcross 1997, 29). She may not have been aware of the depth of intuition taking place as he 'walked alone.'

An ENTJ at this age, according to Grant et al (227), is likely to focus on fairness as of 'paramount importance', basing decisions on 'logical analysis free from the desire to please anyone' while 'managing the outer world of people and things.' Perhaps this is seen in Murdoch's early money-making concerns where, with his sisters, he collected manure and caught rabbits. While making his older sister do the dirty work of skinning the rabbits, Murdoch sold the skins for sixpence and gave her only one penny. Was that fair?

At the age of 10 Murdoch was sent to boarding school. There, as a teenager, he would go off alone to the races and gamble his earnings. At the school Murdoch recalls that he 'felt a loner' and was 'bullied a lot':

It made me realize that if you're going to do your job as a publisher or principal in the media, you've got to be your own person and not have close friendships which compromise you. (Shawcross 1997, 29)

Was this natural dominant introversion, or repressed extraversion? As a teenager, an introvert would be exploring his extraverted auxiliary function. It seems that Murdoch, in his comfortable media environment, is externally energised. As Jung suggests, he is probably a normal person who uses both his extraverted and introverted functions: the one supports the other.

If he were an *introvert*, in high school Murdoch would have well-developed intuition, and be developing his extraverted thinking. Impersonal, blunt extraverted thinking, driven by 'unseen' intuition, may have caused problems with his classmates. An *extravert* in his teenage years would, however, be introverting his second function. If Murdoch is an extravert, his introverted intuition could have confused his classmates and, combined with his impersonal extraverted thinking, caused his ostracism.

Either way, Murdoch's combination of introverted intuition and extraverted thinking sets him apart from his colleagues. In the USA representative sample, NTJs represent just 3.9% of the population (Briggs Myers et al 1998, 298).

Late in his teens Murdoch worked as a reporter for the Birmingham *Gazette*. On leaving that job to go to university, he suggested to the proprietor that the editor was incompetent and should be fired (Shawcross 1997, 31). He spoke his logical thoughts without concern for how they would be received by others.

After his father's death in 1953 Murdoch found himself proprietor of the Adelaide *News*. In his early 20s he was actively

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rolling up his sleeves in the newsroom, dirtying his hands with ink, studying typefaces and ad rates, learning all of the trade. ... He was always running, always forgetful. ... He loved parties and established a tradition of raucous New Year's Eve office parties which often ended in boisterous gambling games. ...

Murdoch applied himself to learning his trade and badgered everyone in every department for information—finance, production, advertising rates, distribution, newsprint costs, union problems. He wanted to know everything and to change everything. Criticisms and suggestions were constant. (Shawcross 1997, 43)

Perhaps he was here exploring and developing both his introverted feeling and his extraverted sensing functions to supplement his strategist INTJ personality. He was attracted to information based on 'theories supported by analytical thought and systematic evidence from a variety of reliable sources', and to associations made through 'reasonableness and mental versatility leading to real contributions' (Pearman 1998, 96).

In his 30s and 40s, married to Anna and living at Cavan out of Canberra, 'Murdoch was a generous host and ... loved to play the country squire' (Shawcross 1997, 65). Is this another case of using his extraverted sensing (enjoyment of experiencing the country environment), and exploring his introverted feeling (developing relationships with other people)?

Competence is a core value for NTs

Murdoch presents as a NT temperament type who strives for mastery and personal competence, and expects the same in others. He does not suffer fools gladly. Many an editor was sacked for showing some lack of competence, in spite of apparently having done a competent job to that point.

Rational NTs are reported by Berens (1998, 24) as interacting through competition, and having a career focus on ideas and models, systems and strategies. Murdoch said 'in every area of economic activity in which competition is attainable, it is much to be preferred to a monopoly' (Crainer 1999, 42). Strategically rising to the challenge of competition has led him to create numerous monopolies. His model is based on innovation where, he says, 'the winners will be those who capitalize quickly on changing opportunities. The challenge is to move early and innovate often' (Crainer 1999, 100). This strategy has been very uncomfortable for many of his employees.

Contradictions

In his early years Murdoch showed various preferences. His mother recalls him as 'an ordinary little boy', amenable and thoughtful. 'He liked real things. He liked toys that actually worked. He had no time for imaginary things, fairy tales and so on. He liked links with reality.' He could not bear dissension at home. 'He was a very gentle little boy' (Shawcross 1997, 28-29).

Reading this, one tends to wonder if Murdoch had sensing and feeling preferences as seen through his mother's eyes. In their early years children explore all their preferences, with the dominant preference normally developed most fully. However, these comments may reflect a preference for extraverted thinking, where the outer focus is on logic, reality, and what works in the real world.

Empathy was not evident in Murdoch's use of his sisters to skin rabbits and collect manure, where he gave them a very small share of the income. There was no sense of collaboration in these ventures, even though one sister was older. His money-making activities showed early evidence of extraverted thinking and strategic planning.

Murdoch spent Saturday afternoons alone at the races, where he indulged in betting. Perhaps he was developing NT logic systems: a good training ground for his gambling career, where publishing businesses and people are the stakes he plays with.

Douglas Brass, one of Murdoch's editors and a friend and employee of his father, reflected:

He is warmhearted and generous, hyperactive and adventurous, and he has a superb mind. But of course he can be utterly ruthless and, I'm afraid will tread people down when they get in his way. (Shawcross 1997, 55)

Rupert Murdoch has, in one way or another, influenced the majority of people in our western world. His ability to wield so much influence comes from his unique personality, which appears to be driven by INTJ preferences. ❖

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