

Journalism

Journalism refers to the production and distribution of reports on recent events. The word journalism applies to the occupation (professional or not), the methods of gathering information and organising literary styles. Journalistic mediums include print, television, radio, Internet and in the past: newsreels.

Concepts of the appropriate role for journalism vary between countries. In some nations, the news media is controlled by a government intervention, and is not a fully independent body.^[1] In others, the news media is independent of the government but the profit motive is in tension with constitutional protections of freedom of the press. Access to freely available information gathered by independent and competing journalistic enterprises with transparent editorial standards can enable citizens to effectively participate in the political process. In the United States, journalism is protected by the freedom of the press clause in the First Amendment.

The role and status of journalism as well as mass media, has undergone changes over the last two decades, together with the advancement of digital technology and publication of news on the Internet.^[2] This has created a shift in the consumption of print media channels, as people increasingly consume news through e-readers, smartphones, and other electronic devices. News organizations are challenged to fully monetize their digital wing, as well as improvise on the context in which they publish news in print. Newspapers have seen print revenues sink at a faster pace than the rate of growth for digital revenues.^[3] Notably, in the American media landscape, newsrooms have reduced their staff and coverage as traditional media channels, such as television, grapple with declining audiences. For example, between 2007 and 2012, CNN edited its story packages into nearly half of their original time length.^[4]

This compactness in coverage has been linked to broad audience attrition, as a large majority of respondents in recent studies show changing preferences in news consumption.^[4] According to the Pew Research Center, the circulation for U.S. newspapers has fallen sharply in the 21st century.^[5] The digital era has also ushered in a new kind of journalism in which ordinary citizens play a greater role in the process of news making, with the rise of citizen journalism being possible through the Internet. Using video camera-equipped smartphones, active citizens are now enabled to record footage of news events and upload them onto channels like YouTube, which is often discovered and used by mainstream news media outlets. Meanwhile, easy access to news from a variety of online sources, like blogs and other social media, has resulted in readers being able to pick from a wider choice of official and unofficial sources, instead of only from traditional media organizations.

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Production

Journalistic conventions vary by country. In the United States, journalism is produced by media organizations or by individuals. Bloggers are often, but not always, journalists. The Federal Trade Commission requires that bloggers who write about products received as promotional gifts to disclose that they received the products for free. This is intended to eliminate conflicts of interest and protect consumers.^[6]

In the US, a credible news organization is an incorporated entity; has an editorial board; and exhibits separate editorial and advertising departments. Credible news organizations, or their employees, often belong to and abide by the ethics of professional organizations such as the American Society of News Editors, the Society of Professional Journalists, Investigative Reporters & Editors, Inc., or the Online News Association. Many news organizations also have their own codes of ethics that guide journalists' professional publications. For instance, *The New York Times* code of standards and ethics^[7] is considered particularly rigorous.

When writing stories, objectivity and bias are issues of concern to journalists. Some stories are intended to represent the author's own opinion; others are more neutral or feature balanced points-of-view. In a print newspaper, information is organized into sections and the distinction between opinionated and neutral stories is often clear. Online, many of these distinctions break down. Readers should pay careful attention to headings and other design elements to ensure that they understand the journalist's intent. Opinion pieces are generally written by regular columnists or appear in a section titled "Op-ed", while feature stories, breaking news, and hard news stories are usually not opinionated.

According to Robert McChesney, healthy journalism in a democratic country must provide an opinion of people in power and who wish to be in power, must include a range of opinions and must regard the informational needs of all people.^[8]

Many debates center on whether journalists are "supposed" to be "objective" and "neutral"; arguments include the fact that journalists produce news out of and as part of a particular social context, and that they are guided by professional codes of ethics and do their best to represent all legitimate points of view.

Forms

There are several forms of journalism with diverse audiences. Thus, journalism is said to serve the role of a "fourth estate", acting as a watchdog on the workings of the government. A single publication (such as a newspaper) contains many forms of journalism, each of which may be presented in different formats. Each section of a newspaper, magazine, or website may cater to a different audience.^{[9][10]}

Some forms include:

- Access journalism - journalists who self-censor and voluntarily cease speaking about issues that might embarrass their hosts, guests, or powerful politicians or businesspersons.
- Advocacy journalism - writing to advocate particular viewpoints or influence the opinions of the audience.
- Broadcast journalism - written or spoken journalism for radio or television.
- Citizen journalism - participatory journalism.
- Data journalism - the practice of finding stories in numbers, and using numbers to tell stories. Data journalists may use data to support their reporting. They may also report about uses and misuses of data. The US news organization ProPublica is known as a pioneer of data journalism.
- Drone journalism - use of drones to capture journalistic footage.^[11]
- Gonzo journalism - first championed by Hunter S. Thompson, gonzo journalism is a "highly personal style of reporting".^[12]
- Interactive journalism - a type of online journalism that is presented on the web
- Investigative journalism - in-depth reporting that uncovers social problems. Often leads to major social problems being resolved.
- Photojournalism - the practice of telling true stories through images
- Sensor journalism - the use of sensors to support journalistic inquiry.
- Tabloid journalism - writing that is light-hearted and entertaining. Considered less legitimate than mainstream journalism.
- Yellow journalism (or sensationalism) - writing which emphasizes exaggerated claims or rumors.



Photojournalists photographing President Barack Obama of the USA in November 2013.



Photo and broadcast journalists interviewing government official after a building collapse in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. March 2013.

Social Media

The rise of social media has drastically changed the nature of journalistic reporting, giving rise to so-called citizen journalists. In a 2014 study of journalists in the United States, 40% of participants claimed they rely on social media as a source, with over 20% depending on microblogs to collect facts.^[13] From this, the conclusion can be drawn that breaking news nowadays often stems from user-generated content, including videos and pictures posted online in social media.^[13] However, though 69.2% of the surveyed journalists agreed that social media allowed them to connect to their audience, only 30% thought it had a positive influence on news credibility.^[13]

Consequently, this has resulted in arguments to reconsider journalism as a process distributed among many authors, including the socially mediating public, rather than as individual products and articles written by dedicated journalists.^[14]

Because of these changes, the credibility ratings of news outlets has reached an all-time low. A 2014 study revealed that only 22% of Americans reported a "great deal" or "quite a lot of confidence" in either television news or newspapers.^[15]

Fake News

"Fake news" is deliberately untruthful information which can often spread quickly on social media or by means of fake news websites. It is often published to intentionally mislead readers to ultimately benefit a cause, organization or an individual. A glaring example was the proliferation of fake news in social media during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Conspiracy theories, hoaxes, and lies have been circulated under the guise of news reports to benefit specific candidates. One example is a fabricated report of Hillary Clinton's email which was published by a non-existent newspaper called The Denver Guardian.^[16] Many critics blamed Facebook for the spread of these materials. Its news feed algorithm in particular was identified by Vox as the platform where the social media giant exercise billions of editorial decisions every day.^[17] Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, has acknowledged the company's role in this problem: in a testimony before a combined Senate Judiciary and Commerce committee hearing on April 20, 2018, he said:

It's clear now that we didn't do enough to prevent these tools from being used for harm as well. That goes for fake news, foreign interference in elections, and hate speech, as well as developers and data privacy.^[18]

Readers can often evaluate credibility of news by examining the credibility of the underlying news organization.

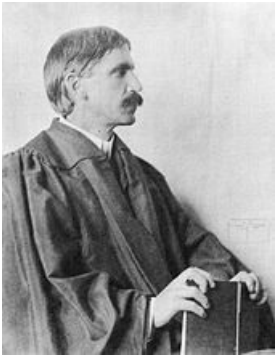
History

Johann Carolus's *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien*, published in 1605 in Strassburg, is often recognized as the first newspaper. The first successful English daily, the *Daily Courant*, was published from 1702 to 1735.^[19] The reform of the *Diário Carioca* newspaper in 1950s is usually referred to the birth of modern journalism in Brazil.^[20]

Debate over role in society

In the 1920s, as modern journalism began to take form,^[21] writer Walter Lippmann and philosopher John Dewey debated over the role of journalism in a democracy. Their differing philosophies still characterize an ongoing debate about the role of journalism in society.

To Lippmann, journalists served as mediators between the general public and policy-making elites. Lippmann believed the public could not assess modern society's increasingly complex flow of information; therefore, it needed an intermediary to filter its news. Journalists served as this intermediary, recording the information exchanged among elites, distilling it, and passing it on for public consumption. The public could affect the decisions of the elite with its vote while the elite focused on running the business of power. Effectively, Lippmann's philosophy had the public at the bottom of the power chain, inheriting its information from the elite.



John Dewey

Lippmann's elitism had consequences that he came to deplore. An apostle of historicism and scientism, Lippmann did not merely hold that democratic government was a problematic exercise, but regarded all political communities, of whatever stripe, as needing guidance from a transcendent partisanship for accurate information and dispassionate judgment. In "Liberty and the News" (1919) and "Public Opinion" (1921) Lippmann expressed hope that liberty could be redefined to account for the scientific and historical perspective and that public opinion could be managed by a new system for information exchange with the government. The journalist was thus to dedicate to gathering verifiable facts while commentators like himself would place the news in the broader perspective. By abhorring influential newspaper publishers and preferring the judgments of the "patient and fearless men of science", Lippman denigrated not only the opinion of the majority but also the opinion of those who had influence or power as well. In a republican form of government, the representatives are chosen by the people and share an adherence to the fundamental principles and political institutions of the polity. Lippmann's quarrel was with those very principles and institutions, for they are the product of the pre-scientific and pre-historical viewpoint and what for him was a groundless natural-rights political philosophy.

However, Lippmann turned against what he called the "collectivism" of the Progressive movement he encouraged with its de-emphasis on the foundations of American politics and government and ultimately wrote a work, "The Public Philosophy" (1955), which came very close to a return to the principles of the American founders.

Dewey, on the other hand, believed not only that the public was capable of understanding the issues created or responded to by the elite, but also that it was in the public forum that decisions should be made after discussion and debate. When issues were thoroughly vetted, then the best ideas would bubble to the surface. Dewey believed journalists should do more than simply pass on information. He believed they should weigh the consequences of the policies being enacted. Over time, his idea has been implemented in various degrees, and is more commonly known as "community journalism".

This concept of community journalism is at the centre of new developments in journalism. In this new paradigm, journalists are able to engage citizens and the experts and elites in the proposition and generation of content. While there is an assumption of equality, Dewey still celebrated expertise. Dewey believed the shared knowledge of many to be far superior to a single individual's knowledge. Experts and scholars are welcome in Dewey's framework, but there is not the hierarchical structure present in Lippmann's understanding of journalism and society. According to Dewey, conversation, debate, and dialogue lie at the heart of a democracy.

While Lippmann's journalistic philosophy might be more acceptable to government leaders, Dewey's approach is a more encompassing description of how many journalists see their role in society, and, in turn, how much of society expects journalists to function. Americans, for example, may criticize some of the excesses committed by journalists, but they tend to expect journalists to serve as watchdogs on government, businesses and actors, enabling people to make informed decisions on the issues of the time.



Walter Lippmann in 1914



Journalists interviewing a cosplayer

Elements

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel propose several guidelines for journalists in their book *The Elements of Journalism*.^[22] Because journalism's first loyalty is to the citizenry, journalists are obliged to tell the truth and must serve as an independent monitor of powerful individuals and institutions within society. The essence of journalism is to provide citizens with reliable information through the discipline of verification.

Professional and ethical standards

While various existing codes have some differences, most share common elements including the principles of — truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability — as these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent dissemination to the public.^{[23][24][25][26][27]}

Some journalistic Codes of Ethics, notably the European ones,^[28] also include a concern with discriminatory references in news based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disabilities.^{[29][30][31][32]} The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approved in 1993 Resolution 1003 on the Ethics of Journalism which recommends journalists to respect the presumption of innocence, in particular in cases that are still sub judice.^[33]

In the UK, all newspapers are bound by the Code of Practice of the Independent Press Standards Organisation. This includes points like respecting people's privacy and ensuring accuracy. However, the Media Standards Trust has criticized the PCC, claiming it needs to be radically changed to secure the public trust of newspapers.

This is in stark contrast to the media climate prior to the 20th century, where the media market was dominated by smaller newspapers and pamphleteers who usually had an overt and often radical agenda, with no presumption of balance or objectivity.

Because of the pressure on journalists to report news promptly and before their competitors, factual errors occur more frequently than in writing produced and edited under less time pressure. Thus a typical issue of a major daily newspaper may contain several corrections of articles published the previous day. Perhaps the most famous journalistic mistake caused by time pressure was the Dewey Defeats Truman edition of the Chicago Daily Tribune, based on early election returns that failed to anticipate the actual result of the 1948 US presidential election.

Failing to uphold standards

Such a code of conduct can, in the real world, be difficult to uphold consistently. Reporting and editing do not occur in a vacuum but always reflect the political context in which journalists, no less than other citizens, operate.

A news organization's budget inevitably reflects decision-making about what news to cover, for what audience, and in what depth. When budgets are cut, editors may sacrifice reporters in distant news bureaus, reduce the number of staff assigned to low-income areas, or wipe entire communities from the publication's zone of interest.

Publishers, owners and other corporate executives, especially advertising sales executives, could try to use their powers over journalists to influence how news is reported and published. For this reason, journalists traditionally relied on top management to create and maintain a "firewall" between the news and other departments in a news organization to prevent undue influence on the news department.^[34]

Although some analysts point to the inherent difficulty of maintaining objectivity, and others practically deny that it is possible, still others point to the requirements of a free press in a democratic society governed by public opinion and a republican government under a limited constitution. According to this latter view, direct or implicit criticism of the government, political parties, corporations, unions, schools and colleges and even churches is both inevitable and desirable, and cannot be done well without clarity regarding fundamental political principles. Hence, objectivity consists both in truthful, accurate reporting and well-reasoned and thoughtful commentary, based upon a firm commitment to a free society's principles of equality, liberty and government by consent.

Codes of Ethics

There are over 242 codes of ethics in journalism that vary across various regions of the world.^[35] The codes of ethics are created through an interaction of different groups of people such as the public and journalists themselves. Most of the codes of ethics serve as a representation of the economic and political beliefs of the society where the code was written.^[35] Despite the fact that there are a variety of codes of ethics, some of the core elements present in all codes are: remaining objective, providing the truth, and being honest.^[35]

Journalism does not have a universal code of conduct; individuals are not legally obliged to follow a certain set of rules like a doctor or a lawyer does.^[36] There have been discussions for creating a universal code of conduct in journalism. One suggestion centers on having three claims for credibility, justifiable consequence, and the claim of humanity.^[37] Within the claim of credibility, journalists are expected to provide the public with reliable and trustworthy information, and allowing the public to question the nature of the information and its acquisition. The second claim of justifiable consequences centers on weighing the benefits and detriments of a potentially harmful story and acting accordingly. An example of justifiable consequence is exposing a professional with dubious practices; on the other hand, acting within justifiable consequence means writing compassionately about a family in mourning. The third claim is the claim of humanity which states that journalists are writing for a global population and therefore must serve everyone globally in their work, avoiding smaller loyalties to country, city, etc.^[37]



News photographers and reporters waiting behind a police line in New York City, in May 1994

Legal status

Governments have widely varying policies and practices towards journalists, which control what they can research and write, and what press organizations can publish. Some governments guarantee the freedom of the press; while other nations severely restrict what journalists can research or publish.

Journalists in many nations have some privileges that members of the general public do not, including better access to public events, crime scenes and press conferences, and to extended interviews with public officials, celebrities and others in the public eye.

Journalists who elect to cover conflicts, whether wars between nations or insurgencies within nations, often give up any expectation of protection by government, if not giving up their rights to protection from the government. Journalists who are captured or detained during a conflict are expected to be treated as civilians and to be released to their national government. Many governments around the world target journalists for intimidation, harassment, and violence because of the nature of their work.^[39]



Journalists at a press conference

Right to protect confidentiality of sources

Journalists' interaction with sources sometimes involves confidentiality, an extension of freedom of the press giving journalists a legal protection to keep the identity of a confidential informant private even when demanded by police or prosecutors; withholding their sources can land journalists in contempt of court, or in jail.

In the United States, there is no right to protect sources in a federal court. However, federal courts will refuse to force journalists to reveal their sources, unless the information the court seeks is highly relevant to the case and there's no other way to get it. State courts provide varying degrees of such protection. Journalists who refuse to testify even when ordered to can be found in contempt of court and fined or jailed. On the journalistic side of keeping sources confidential, there is also a risk to the journalist's credibility because there can be no actual confirmation of whether the information is valid. As such it is highly discouraged for journalists to have confidential sources.



Number of journalists reported killed between 2002 and 2013^[38]

See also

- Citizen Journalism
- Fourth Estate
- Hallin's spheres
- History of American newspapers
- History of journalism
- Journalism education and Journalism school
- Journalism ethics and standards
- Journalism genres
- Lists of journalists
- Non-profit journalism
- Objectivity (journalism)
- Sensor journalism
- Sports journalism

Journalism reviews

- *American Journalism Review*
- *Columbia Journalism Review*
- *Health News Review*
- *Ryerson Review of Journalism*


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Further reading

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External links

- *Online Journalism Review* (<http://www.ojr.org>)
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