The State of Journalism 2023

Social media habits, reporting strategies, PR pitching preferences and more
Research Partners

ONA
ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION

FPA
FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

New York Financial Writers Association

SPJ
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

SABEW
SOCIETY for ADVANCING BUSINESS EDITING and WRITING

IJnet
INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS' NETWORK

 journalism.co.uk

OWAA

ICFJ
International Center for Journalists

SEJ
SOCIETY of ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISTS

PressGazette

RTDNA

NLGJA
The Association of LGBTQ Journalists

NBPRS
Methodology

We surveyed 2,226 journalists from January 4th to February 6th, 2023.

The goal of this survey is to understand the current state of journalism and the future outlook of the industry by speaking to the people who produce the news. The self-administered online survey collected 2,226 responses.

Muck Rack distributed the survey with the help of 14 research partners including Society of Professional Journalists and Online News Association.

Survey responses were primarily sought through email and most respondents came from email outreach directly to journalists in Muck Rack’s database. The survey was open from January 1 until February 6, 2023. The majority of responses came from U.S.-based journalists, and Asia, Africa and Europe were well represented as well. Survey responses were checked for duplicates as well as inconsistent or low-effort responses.

The conservative estimate of the margin of error for this survey is +/- 2.4%. There are two exceptions to this. First is the salary question which only uses responses from journalists from the U.S. and has a smaller sample size. The margin of error for this question is 3.3%. The second is two questions regarding freelancer pay. The margin of error for these questions is 3.7%
Executive Summary

- Economic uncertainty has impacted the work of around two-thirds of journalists.
- The number of journalists who say they’re more likely to respond to pitches now compared to last year has increased by about 7%.
- Journalists plan to spend more time on Youtube, Linkedin and TikTok.
- About half of journalists considered leaving Twitter, but only 28% say they plan to spend less time on the social network this year.
- Fewer journalists find CEOs to be credible sources. 74% found them credible in the 2021 report versus 62% this year.
- Millennials and Gen X are the most commonly reported target audiences for journalists
- Journalists cite lack of funding and disinformation as top concerns for the industry.
Journalism trends, challenges and events
Two out of three journalists say their work has been impacted by economic uncertainty.

How has economic uncertainty affected your work? (select all that apply)

- Economic uncertainty has not affected my reporting: 33%
- I’ve switched jobs or made a career change: 22%
- Layoffs/furloughs at my outlet(s) have increased my workload: 21%
- More stories about the economy: 21%
- Personal layoff(s) have meant less work in general: 18%
- Less news to cover as companies postpone new releases: 9%
More than half of journalists are optimistic about their profession.
Disinformation and lack of funding are the top two concerns of journalists.

The **third most cited** concern is trust in journalism, and the **least cited** is a lack of new students and job seekers in the industry.

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1. Quality control/fact-checking support in newsrooms
2. International press freedom
3. Overwhelming news cycle/too many stories to cover
4. Lack of students/new job seekers interested in journalism
Nearly 80% of journalists say trust in their area of coverage has increased or stayed the same.
Most journalists get their news from online newspapers, followed by Twitter.

While the ranking stayed the same, the number of journalists who turn to Twitter for their news decreased by 4% compared to last year.
Almost half of journalists believe short-form video will grow in popularity in 2023
Virtual events may be falling out of favor

Compared to last year, journalists who say they are “more likely to cover virtual event” dropped by 8% while those less likely to cover them rose by 7%.
In-person events are seeing a comeback

The number of journalists who plan to attend more in-person events in 2023 rose by 13% compared to last year.
Top 10 events journalists plan to cover in 2023

1. UN Climate Change Conference (COP28)
2. World Conference on Climate Change and Sustainability
3. World Economic Forum
4. Government Social Media Conference
5. Comic-Con San Diego
6. TED
7. SXSW
8. National Civil Rights Conference
9. New York International AutoShow
10. E3
Social media usage and habits
The number of journalists tracking their stories on social media is growing

This number has grown about 4% since our 2021 State of Journalism survey.
Twitter is the most valued social network, followed by Facebook and LinkedIn

While the rankings are the same as last year, a shakeup may be happening.

LinkedIn’s popularity grew by 8% this year and TikTok jumped up 5%. Meanwhile, Facebook fell by 5%.
Journalists plan to spend more time on LinkedIn and YouTube, less time on Facebook

LinkedIn and YouTube will likely be winning a lot of journalists’ attention this year. They have the biggest difference between those who will spend more time there vs. less.

Snapchat and Facebook are the only platforms where it looks like more journalists are stepping back.
Most journalists consult a company’s social media in their reporting.

When reporting on a company, I consult the company’s social media:

- Strongly agree: 15%
- Agree: 44%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 26%
- Disagree: 7%
- Strongly disagree: 6%
Nearly all journalists use Twitter

Do you use Twitter?

Yes 90%

No 10%
Journalists are split over leaving Twitter

Have you considered leaving Twitter in the last year?

- Yes: 50%
- No: 44%
- I’m not sure: 7%
Following news, promoting their work and finding sources are the top 3 ways journalists use Twitter.
3 Media relations and pitches preferences
Some journalists are more receptive to pitches this year vs. last year

This year 29% of journalists are more likely to respond to pitches, which is a 6% increase compared to last year’s report.
Many journalists lament the lack of relevant pitches

Year after year, journalists say the same thing: pitches get rejected if they aren’t personalized or come at a bad time.

However, about a quarter of all “other” responses say the pitches they receive are unrelated to their beats.
Most journalists get up to 5 pitches per day

And about 60 people said their email is clogged with at least 255 pitches every week.
Many journalists put out 2–4 stories per week.

But another 47% create more than 5 stories a week.
Only about one in four journalists say none of their stories come from pitches.

About the same amount say half or more of their stories come from pitches, while the majority get about a quarter of their stories that way.
Academic experts reign supreme as the most credible sources

They may hold the second spot, but CEOs have fallen out of favor after dropping 12% in two years, while social media personalities gained 7% during that same time period.

Meanwhile, PR pros held steady year-over-year with about half of journalists finding them a good source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic subject matter experts</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEOs</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company PR professionals</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency PR professionals</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media personalities/influencers</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrity spokespeople</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloggers</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-appointed subject matter experts</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you consider the following to be credible sources for your reporting?
Localization was less important for shareability

Last year, 54% of journalists said stories were more shareable when they are easily localized. This year, only 47% say the same thing.
THE PERFECT PITCH
According to a survey of 2,000+ journalists

- 92% of journalists prefer to be pitched via 1:1 email
- 55% don’t care which day they pitched—of those who do, 21% prefer to be pitched on a Monday
- 61% want to receive pitches before noon
- 67% prefer pitches that are under 200 words

Now Trending
- 69% say pitches that connect to a trending story are the most shareable
- 76% are more likely to cover a story if offered an exclusive
- 45% say one follow up is ideal and 51% say it should come within 3–7 days later
Beats, mediums and audiences
Similar to last year, the average journalist covers 4 beats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics, government, and legal</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art/culture</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy and environment</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business and finance</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional/Local (city, state)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science and weather</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food and dining</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellness &amp; fitness</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fashion and beauty</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fintech</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer electronics</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How would you categorize the scope of your coverage?

- National: 49%
- International: 47%
- Local/Regional: 40%
- Trade: 8%
Millennial and Gen X are the most commonly reported target audiences for journalists. Many who responded “other” targeted based on geographies or said their coverage is for all ages.
Most respondents primarily report online and just under half also work in print.
The majority of journalists produce content in two or more mediums

In addition to your primary medium, do you also produce content at least once a month in any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online only</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcast</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t produce content on any additional channels</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Demographics & salary
Where are you based?

- USA: 49%
- Canada: 4%
- UK: 9%
- Europe: 7%
- Asia: 15%
- South America: 1%
- Africa: 11%
- Australia: 2%
- Other: 1%
More than 80% of those surveyed are full-time journalists.

Which of the following best describes you?

- I’m a full-time journalist, editorial writer, blogger or podcaster: 57%
- I’m a full-time freelance journalist: 24%
- I write some journalistic content, but supplement my income with other non-journalistic work: 15%
- Other (please specify): 4%
How old are you?

- 20–30: 28%
- 31–40: 27%
- 41–50: 17%
- 51+: 27%

How long have you been a journalist?

- Under 1 year: 1%
- 1–2 years: 9%
- 3–5 years: 20%
- 6–10 years: 22%
- 10–20 years: 22%
- 21+ years: 26%
How much do you earn a year including bonus? (US respondents only)

- Less than $40k: 20%
- $40-$70k: 31%
- $70-$100k: 20%
- $100-$150k: 9%
- $150-$200k: 4%
- More than $250k: 1%
- Prefer not to say: 15%
Freelancers: how do you charge for your work?

- Hourly: 7%
- By the word: 25%
- By the scope of the piece: 49%
- Other (please specify): 19%
Nearly 60% of freelancers earn less than $300 per piece

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100 or less</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100-$200</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200-$300</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300-$400</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$400-$500</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500-$600</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600-$700</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$700-$800</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$800-$900</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$900-$1000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1000+</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!

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PR Pros:
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