The British journalist in the digital age

Monday 9th May 2016
JOURNALISTS IN THE UK
Neil Thurman, Alessio Cornia, and Jessica Kunert
Roles
Trust
Influences
Ethical questions
Change
UK survey: 700 journalists (Dec. 2015)
Journalists’ earnings compared to salaries of other workers, by country

Low relative earnings → High relative earnings
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DIVERSITY
Notes: Journalists who said they also worked in other paid activities outside journalism were excluded. The average age of female journalists in our survey was 40 against 45 for men. This age difference is likely to explain some, but not all, of the income disparity between the sexes. (n=411)
Rank of male and female journalists in the UK by years of professional experience, December 2015.

Men
- Senior managers: 23%, 30%, 37%, 21%
- Junior managers: 41%, 39%, 41%, 55%
- Rank and file journalists: 36%, 31%, 48%, 29%

Women
- Senior managers: 17%, 21%, 18%
- Junior managers: 48%, 50%, 29%
- Rank and file journalists: 50%, 29%, 28%
Proportions of male and female journalists by years of work experience.

Note: data only includes journalists who were working in the profession in December 2015. (n=682)
UK journalists with 3 or fewer years of employment in the profession

Have a Bachelors Degree: 98%

Have a Master's Degree: 36%

% of women on journalism degree courses

Bachelors: 57%

Master’s: 63%

Source: HESA (students enrolling in 2012, 2013 & 2014)
University entry rate

All 18-year-olds in England: 31%

White men who received free school meals: 9%

Source: HESA
Religious affiliation (or none).

UK journalists in 2015 (n=669)

- Christian: 31.6%
- Muslim: 4.8%
- Hindu: 0.4%
- Jewish: 2.7%
- Other religion: 3.7%
- Buddhists: 0.4%
- No religion: 64.4%

2011 UK Census

- Christian: 61.1%
- Muslim: 4.8%
- Hindu: 1.4%
- Jewish: 0.5%
- Other religion: 1.6%
- Buddhists: 0.4%
- No religion: 27.8%
Ethnicity of non-white UK journalists vs General population.

- Mixed race: 2.3% (UK journalists in 2015), 2.0% (2011 UK Census)
- Asian: 2.5% (UK journalists in 2015), 6.9% (2011 UK Census)
- Black: 3.0% (UK journalists in 2015), 0.2% (2011 UK Census)
- Other: 1.3% (UK journalists in 2015), 1.0% (2011 UK Census)
Gross monthly salaries of UK journalists by level and type of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree in journalism/communication</th>
<th>£0–1,600</th>
<th>£1,601–2,400</th>
<th>£2,401–4,000</th>
<th>£4,001–6,400</th>
<th>&gt;=£6,401</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>36%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree in other subject</th>
<th>£0–1,600</th>
<th>£1,601–2,400</th>
<th>£2,401–4,000</th>
<th>£4,001–6,400</th>
<th>&gt;=£6,401</th>
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<td>16%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No degree</th>
<th>£0–1,600</th>
<th>£1,601–2,400</th>
<th>£2,401–4,000</th>
<th>£4,001–6,400</th>
<th>&gt;=£6,401</th>
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<td>15%</td>
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<td>3%</td>
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</table>

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism
Gross monthly salaries of UK journalists by age

- **<=24**: 88% (£0–1,600), 8% (£1,601–2,400), 4% (£2,401–4,000)
- **25–29**: 35% (£0–1,600), 48% (£1,601–2,400), 16% (£2,401–4,000), 2% (£4,001–6,400), 2% (>=£6,401)
- **30–39**: 12% (£0–1,600), 41% (£1,601–2,400), 39% (£2,401–4,000), 7% (£4,001–6,400), 2% (>=£6,401)
- **40–49**: 9% (£0–1,600), 27% (£1,601–2,400), 37% (£2,401–4,000), 23% (£4,001–6,400), 5% (>=£6,401)
- **50–59**: 9% (£0–1,600), 20% (£1,601–2,400), 37% (£2,401–4,000), 24% (£4,001–6,400), 11% (>=£6,401)
- **>=60**: 23% (£0–1,600), 30% (£1,601–2,400), 33% (£2,401–4,000), 10% (£4,001–6,400), 5% (>=£6,401)
WORKING ROUTINES
Media types worked in 2012 and 2015

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio
- TV
- Online

NCTJ (2012)

This survey (December 2015)
Media types worked in 2012 and 2015

-21%

NCTJ (2012)
This survey (December 2015)
Media types worked in 2012 and 2015

- Newspapers: -21%
- Magazines: +100%
- Radio: N/A
- TV: N/A
- Online: N/A

NCTJ (2012)
This survey (December 2015)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalist</th>
<th>Median salary band (gross/year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working exclusively online</td>
<td>£19,212 – £28,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working exclusively in newspapers</td>
<td>£28,812 – £38,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Proportions of UK journalists working in one or across multiple media types (print, TV, radio, online)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of media types worked in</th>
<th>Proportion of UK journalists (n = 700)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 3% of journalists reported that they worked in a news agency, which is why the percentage figures do not add up to 100.
Gross monthly salaries of UK journalists working in one medium or two media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Work in one medium</th>
<th>Work in two media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0–1,600</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1,601–2,400</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£2,401–4,000</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4,001–6,400</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;=£6,401</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No. of stories produced or processed / week
Median number of news items produced or processed/edited per week

- Do not work online
- All journalists
- Work online-only or online + in other media
- Work only online

+71%  
+186%
JOURNALISM & CHANGE
Journalists’ views on changes in their editorial freedom

8% Decreased a lot
33% Decreased
40% Did not change
17% Increased
3% Increased a lot

Journalists’ freedom to make editorial decisions
UK journalists’ views on changes in the influence of audience research/feedback (in last 5 years)

Influence of audience research

- 4% Weakened
- 27% Somewhat weakened
- 42% Did not change
- 27% Somewhat strengthened
- 27% Strengthened a lot

“frightened” about the “shift from proper journalism to ‘clickbait’ stories ... I fear for ... the public who will soon live off nothing but attention-seeking, fact-free, gossipy clickbait”

Source: Press Gazette survey
UK journalists’ views on changes in the influence of PR (in last 5 years).

In 2006, 40% of stories in UK quality newspapers and TV & radio news programmes based ‘wholly, mainly, or partially on PR material’.

Source: Lewis et al.
Source of PR materials in UK national ‘quality’ newspaper stories (%)

Source: Lewis et al.
Journalists’ trust in political institutions

- **Government (n=670)**
  - No trust at all: 13%
  - Little trust: 32%
  - Some trust: 47%
  - A great deal of trust: 8%

- **Political parties (n=671)**
  - No trust at all: 12%
  - Little trust: 45%
  - Some trust: 39%
  - A great deal of trust: 8%

- **Politicians in general (n=672)**
  - No trust at all: 10%
  - Little trust: 44%
  - Some trust: 44%
Trust in government: UK journalists vs. general population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalists (n = 670)</th>
<th>No trust at all</th>
<th>Little trust</th>
<th>Some trust</th>
<th>A great deal/complete trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British population*</th>
<th>Distrust it greatly</th>
<th>Tend to distrust it</th>
<th>Tend to trust it</th>
<th>Trust it a great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: British Social Attitudes Survey (2014).
Journalists’ trust in other state institutions

The police (n=670)
- No trust at all: 4%
- Little trust: 15%
- Some trust: 55%
- A great deal of trust: 24%

The military (n=657)
- No trust at all: 5%
- Little trust: 14%
- Some trust: 51%
- A great deal of trust: 28%
### Trust in the police, parliament, military, trade unions, and religious leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No trust at all</th>
<th>Little trust</th>
<th>Some trust</th>
<th>A great deal of trust</th>
<th>Complete trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders (n=662)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions (n=666)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament (n=666)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The military (n=657)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police (n=670)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How frequently mentioned in UK news stories

LAW AND ORDER SOURCES:
22%

TRADE UNION SOURCES:
1.5%

Source: Lewis et al., 2008
UK journalists' trust in the news media

The news media (n=677)

- No trust at all: 3%
- Little trust: 16%
- Some trust: 60%
- A great deal of trust: 20%
- Complete trust: 7%
ETHICS & STANDARDS
Ethics and standards

• Relationships with sources
• Using material without permission
• Misrepresentation & subterfuge
• Falsification & verification
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Always justified</th>
<th>Justified on occasion</th>
<th>Not approved under any circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepting money from sources</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricating quotes</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altering photos</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing unverified info</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressuring sources</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentation</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using private personal docs</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for conf. info</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-creations</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtefuge</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden recorders</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using private bus./govt. docs</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paying for confidential information

US Journalists: 5% Always justified, 95% Not approved under any circumstances
UK Journalists: 51% Justified on occasion, 47% Not approved under any circumstances
Claiming to be somebody else

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>US Journalists</th>
<th>UK Journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always justified</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justified on occasion</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not approved under any circumstances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
INFLUENCES ON JOURNALISTS’ WORK
UK journalists’ views on influences on their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Not influential</th>
<th>Of little influence</th>
<th>Somewhat influential</th>
<th>Very influential</th>
<th>Extremely influential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial supervisors and higher editors</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism ethics</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers on the staff</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The military, police, and state security</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Influence of resource limitations, audience demands, and ‘the competition’ on journalists’ work

- **Time limits**: 2% Not influential, 5% Of little influence, 29% Somewhat influential, 40% Very influential, 24% Extremely influential
- **Availability of newsgathering resources**: 4% Not influential, 7% Of little influence, 29% Somewhat influential, 41% Very influential, 19% Extremely influential
- **Audience research/data**: 8% Not influential, 12% Of little influence, 39% Somewhat influential, 28% Very influential, 13% Extremely influential
- **Competing news organizations**: 16% Not influential, 47% Of little influence, 27% Somewhat influential, 6% Very influential, 19% Extremely influential
ROLES
Journalists’ views on the most important roles for journalists in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>No. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing information</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing accuracy</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding power to account</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing entertainment</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth telling</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Journalists’ views on the importance of being an adversary of government

Be an adversary of the government (n=661)

- 48% Unimportant
- 23% Of little importance
- 19% Somewhat important
- 7% Very important
- 7% Extremely important
Journalists’ views on the importance of letting people express their views, by country
Journalists’ views on the importance of letting people express their views, by country
JOURNALISTS IN THE UK
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Neil Thurman
@neilthurman
#UKjournalists