

AUT

A FUTURE IN
JOURNALISM





WHAT IS JOURNALISM?

Alleged conman arrested at airport...Ice station on the end of the abyss...Suicide attack kills 11...Team NZ back on water...Pacific languages under threat...

Great journalists are driven by a thirst to find out about what is going on locally, nationally or globally, or in specialist areas, and to write about it accurately, without bias and fearlessly. As the 'fourth estate', journalists are traditionally expected to be the general public's watchdog by representing the interests of 'the people' – the public interest – and balancing them against the interest of business, politics and other powerful elites. Strong editorial ethics are needed to ensure the fourth estate remains relevant and strong across the expanding areas where content is delivered, including web-based news sites, Twitter, blogs etc.

Quality journalism is engaging and accessible, free from speculation and authoritatively sourced. News journalists have to turn news reports around rapidly and across many platforms and media, always racing to break the latest news while keeping it accurate and fair. Lifestyle journalists, for example, must be great storytellers who can engage and entertain readers across topics, including food, sport, beauty, lifestyle etc.

The internet has transformed the content and delivery of news. Citizen journalism (general public alerting people to events/news through the internet) and blogs invade the space that was traditionally the domain of professional journalists. But journalistic skills, including quality writing, the ability to verify user-generated material and fact check politicians, and a talent for interviewing, are still needed. It's journalists that help audiences to cut through the clutter, noise and sheer quantity of information in order to access quality news and information.

Are you curious about the world around you? Do you want to help fight social injustice through stories? Do you enjoy writing persuasively and accurately? Are you a natural at engaging with people and getting them to talk to you?

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Changing world of journalism – The integration of media has created demand for ‘super’ journalists who can produce print and online material, along with imagery, to provide material for TV, radio, video, newspapers, online news sites and the internet. These new multi-media roles offer opportunities for journalists who have strong digital skills and can work collaboratively. However they sometimes require journalists to work to tight deadlines, providing material for more than one platform (ie online and radio), while at the same time writing posts for social media.

Web copy – Writing for the web requires a different writing approach and a faster turnaround, while using the same skills of sourcing stories, interviewing subjects, verifying information and engaging readers. It offers unprecedented variety for journalists who are keen to use a combination of text, moving and still images, and audio across all their stories, often utilising FB and YouTube as well as other websites to source and disseminate news.

Financing online options – Traditional newspapers have gone online to keep relevant, but debate continues over how to generate income online. While currently only a few media organisations have paywalls for online content, it is becoming more common. The big challenge is ascertaining how much, if anything, people will pay. A number of recent news start-ups (notably Newsroom and The Spinoff) have successfully used new forms of funding including subscriptions, sponsorship, Government funding and audience support to fund their reporting.

Freedom of expression issues – Watchdog journalism is becoming increasingly important as political elites try to undermine freedom of expression. At the most extreme, New Zealand journalists have had homes searched and overseas journalists are being arrested or murdered for trying to uncover stories that reflect badly on their governments. As mentioned, New Zealand journalism isn’t exempt from harassment and other attempts at political interference, but journalists are challenging these encroachments.

Rise of the image – The popularity of Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr is a good indication that ‘a picture speaks a thousand words’. Viral videos are also a very powerful way to communicate and engage. However there is much less gate-keeping and fact-checking across these communication mediums. News organisations are having to find ways to harness use of compelling visuals and images – and need journalists with the skills to deliver.

Future for newspapers – There is varying opinion about the future of traditional journalism and news reporting. Resourcing is the big issue. Giving away news free online has undermined the traditional model of financing expensive investigations. Politico European executive director Matthew Kaiminski believes the future of newspapers is in delivery of quality niche news that offers deeper reflections and insights on events as they occur, rather than trying to be the one breaking the news in a more superficial way. Only time will tell if people are willing to pay for it.

WORK SETTINGS

Journalists for publications (newspaper, online news organisations and magazine) are based in offices, spending a lot of time phone and email interviewing or working online, but will also be out researching, sourcing stories, meeting interviewees and reporting on events.

TV and radio journalists spend more time in the field gathering audio and/or visual, live footage, but also writing copy for broadcast. Multi-media journalists do a mix of both.

Some graduates start their careers at small community papers, but others walk straight into roles at NZME, Fairfax, Stuff.co.nz, Mediaworks, RNZ, TVNZ and TV3, or similar overseas companies. Many also take up posts in magazines such as NZ Woman’s Weekly, Idealog and other specialist publications.

Increasingly, journalists are developing portfolio freelance careers picking up varied short term contracts across a range of media platforms. A growing number are joining small media start-ups, taking on online and social media roles.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Most graduates start out in roles as online or multimedia reporters and are expected to work across several platforms and be active on social media.

Multimedia reporter: involves writing news stories and features using a variety of media, subbing, editing and publishing news wires, cutting and uploading video to the website, contributing to the update of the site. Involves shift work because news never stops and 24-hour content is required on the web.

Social media manager: Develops and implements creative and measurable social media campaigns. Develops online community connections through generating regular content across many social media channels. Monitors trends, tools and metrics, and supports other staff with social media.

Print journalist – Sources, researches, interviews and writes articles, features etc for newspapers and magazines, then provides online versions for websites. Includes researching leads, interviewing and recording interview subjects and collating material into an accurate, fair and engaging story.

TV journalist – involves pitching ideas, following up stories from other media, breaking stories, researching ideas, writing scripts for bulletins, writing headlines and packaging reports. Requires expertise with cameras and audio equipment to gather live footage to accompany stories. Involves fronting to the camera as well as doing sound bites and providing online versions for websites.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Excellent research, newsgathering and reporting skills across multiple platforms
- Ability to use multimedia with all stories, as well as maximise the potential of social media
- Confidence to respond creatively to new technologies
- Produce high quality stories that are easy to understand, free from speculation and well sourced
- Professional, incisive interviewers/accurate note-takers
- Strengths in writing for a range of audiences, depending on the medium
- Ability to work competently with still and moving images and audio
- Able to create infographics to illustrate stories

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Passion for news and current affairs
- Inquisitive
- Investigative and curious
- Positive attitude
- Strong attention to detail

SALARY GUIDE

Salaries range depending on the organisation, region and expertise.

	Salary (per year)
Journalist average salary	\$60,000 – \$75,000
NZME starting salaries	approx. \$50,000
Regional papers starting salaries	up to \$45,000
Community papers starting salaries	approx. \$40,000
Experienced journalists	up to \$130,000+
Social Media Manager 5+ years' experience	\$50,000 – \$62,500 \$70,000 – \$120,000

Sources: NZME, Hays, SEEK, Hudson NZ and payscale.com

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (late 2018) and should only be used as a guideline.

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

The AUT School of Communication Studies delivers multimedia journalism education in core areas and also runs specialist courses covering audio and video and magazine journalism.

Compulsory 2-week internships are arranged for all third year and postgraduate journalism students with organisations such as New Zealand Herald, Newstalk ZB, Radio Sport and NZME news agency, Fairfax community papers, Stuff.co.nz, Mediaworks, TVNZ and Radio New Zealand.

Students also work regularly on stories for AUT's online news outlet, tewahanui.nz, producing multimedia stories and utilising social media to both gather and disseminate news. Postgraduate students can also work at the AUT Pacific Media Centre, focusing on Asia-Pacific issues.

Students are provided with further real-world newsroom opportunities through taking part in live news days or through a two-week compulsory stint in AUT's custom-built, state of the art newsroom and media hub.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

There are a range of AUT postgraduate study and research areas available in journalism and communication studies, including postgraduate certificate and diploma studies. The Master of Communication Studies and PhD can be done as a straight research thesis, a thesis by publication or by completing a project-based thesis.

Recent research topics include 3D communication, children's television, Asia-Pacific media, critical discourse analysis, learning communication, production journalism, the future of magazine and long-form journalism, Maori journalism, trauma reporting, social media in journalism, the relationship between journalism and public relations, freedom of information etc.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

Journalists don't have to be registered. However the NZ journalist union, the EMPU, offers support, guidance and professional development to its members.

BRIONY SOWDEN

Broadcast Journalist, BBC World News

Bachelor of Communication Studies in Journalism

"I'm a broadcast journalist, producing and reporting across BBC World News shows including Impact, Global and Outside Source. I write and voice my own packages, pitch stories, and find, interview and brief guests to help shape coverage of major international stories. I also put together programmes, edit copy and output shows in the gallery which is exciting but can be stressful.

In a typical day I'd be working on two major stories and all the content related to those stories. My day begins with an editorial meeting where we pitch our ideas and how to best cover a story on the day. If a story breaks, it's our job to find people on the ground - whether a reporter or local resident at the scene - who can tell us what they're seeing.

I am also involved in the planning side of BBC World News where we get to research bigger stories and pitch our own ideas as well as suggest how to cover a news event ahead of time. Sometimes that means finding specialists on certain subjects - for example an economist who can speak about trade tariffs before they come into effect to help us understand how it affects families, industries and small businesses from New Zealand to Singapore.

I'm lucky enough to work in the second biggest newsroom in the world. I'm surrounded by other journalists who are equally as driven by news and who inspire me to be a better journalist. Some of the people I sit next to and get to work with are the best in the business and I'm constantly learning from them.

I came to BBC World News after about five years reporting and producing news for Al Jazeera English in Doha. I covered historic events, such as the Arab Spring, Egypt revolution, Yemen War and ISIS. Al Jazeera gave voice to the voiceless.

I love giving people the platform to tell the world their story and help educate others."



USEFUL WEBSITES

Media Watch

www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/mediawatch

Mediaworks

www.mediaworks.co.nz/home/careers.html

Prospects (UK)

www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_publishing_and_journalism.htm

Te Waha Nui (AUT student newsroom)

www.tewahanui.aut.ac.nz

Media Council

www.mediacouncil.org.nz/principles

JEANZ (Journalism Education Association of NZ)

www.jeanz.org.nz

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about journalism qualifications or the Bachelor of Communication Studies please visit www.aut.ac.nz/journalism-study

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz


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CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

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EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets


For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through


<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>


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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, August 2019.

