

Data Clinic Project
Market Research Report on Entry-Level Media Studies Jobs

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Executive Summary:

This section summarizes extensive market research on entry-level job postings in the media studies field and delves into future projections and anticipated changes. By exploring current trends and future assumptions, this report aims to comprehensively understand the evolving dynamics within media studies careers. It offers critical insights for college students embarking on careers in media studies, as well as for educators who play a pivotal role in guiding and mentoring these students. This forward-looking perspective is designed to prepare both students and educators for the upcoming shifts in the landscape of media studies careers.

Key Finding:

- **Skill Demand:** The assessment indicates that entry-level roles in media require a wide range of skills. Essential soft skills include communication, wit, and storytelling, underscoring the need for strong personal interaction and strategic insight in media-related professions. In addition, there's a high demand for hard skills, particularly in writing and editing (which encompasses both reporting and video production), as well as expertise in various technological tools, signifying the sector's expansion and modernization.
- **Geographic Insights:** The Washington DC-Baltimore Area stands out as the prime location for entry-level media professionals due to its notably higher demand compared to other regions. Major metropolitan hubs such as Washington DC, Chicago, and Nashville, renowned for their vibrant economies and cultural scenes, also boast substantial opportunities in the media sector. This geographical distribution highlights a nationwide demand for media skills, with significant job openings observed across diverse states like Florida and Illinois, followed closely by California, Texas, and Missouri. Conversely, states like Oregon, Louisiana, Mississippi, Indiana, and Maine show minimal to no presence in the media job market.
- **Salary Trend:** In the media studies field, hourly wages among 418 listed jobs range from \$8 to \$94, with a median of \$32.80 - \$35.50. This distribution indicates inconsistency in pay across various roles. Conversely, yearly compensation for 283 listed jobs varies widely, from \$10,600 to \$200,000, with a median range of \$60,720 - \$81,831. The significant variability in yearly salaries suggests diverse pay scales among different employers and job specializations within the media sector.

- **Working Model:** Remote work is the primary choice in the media studies sector, followed closely by on-site roles, indicating divergent job preferences. The hybrid model is less prevalent, suggesting it's not widely embraced among professionals. Overall, there's a noticeable industry shift towards flexible work arrangements, with traditional and remote setups dominating the landscape.

Overview of Media Studies Field:

Media studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the content, history, and effects of various media; particularly the mass media. It integrates perspectives from sociology, anthropology, psychology, art, literature, business, and law to analyze the complex relationships between media and the societies it influences. The discipline explores a range of topics from traditional print media to digital platforms, encompassing news, entertainment, and emerging forms of communication. It scrutinizes the production, consumption, and regulatory frameworks of media, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of media's role in shaping public perception and culture. The field offers many paths, but finding the right one can be tricky due to its fast changes and challenges like job stability and the need to keep learning new skills.

The objective of this report is to bridge the gap between academic preparation and professional reality. Through interviews with media studies alumni, this report aims to illuminate the real-world applications of a media studies degree, highlighting the diversity of entry-level jobs available to graduates. It seeks to provide a realistic overview of the job market- especially the entry-level jobs market, identifying the skills and qualifications that are most in demand. Additionally, this report intends to offer actionable advice to current students on navigating their career paths and to suggest potential improvements in the academic curriculum to better prepare students for the challenges of the media industry.

By examining the transition from academia to industry through the lens of those who have navigated this path successfully, this report aspires to be a comprehensive guide for media studies students, educators, and career advisors alike. It is a step toward demystifying the media industry's landscape, empowering students with the knowledge and insights needed to make informed decisions about their futures in media.

Part I - Quantitative Research:

I. Data set:

1. Data Source:

The data collection spanned from March 1, 2024, to April 1, 2024, for LinkedIn, and from March 15, 2024, to April 1, 2024, for Indeed, accumulating a total of 4449 data points from both platforms. The findings indicate that LinkedIn is the more fruitful platform for discovering job opportunities in Media Studies. In contrast, Indeed appears to have a significantly lower volume of job listings for this particular field.

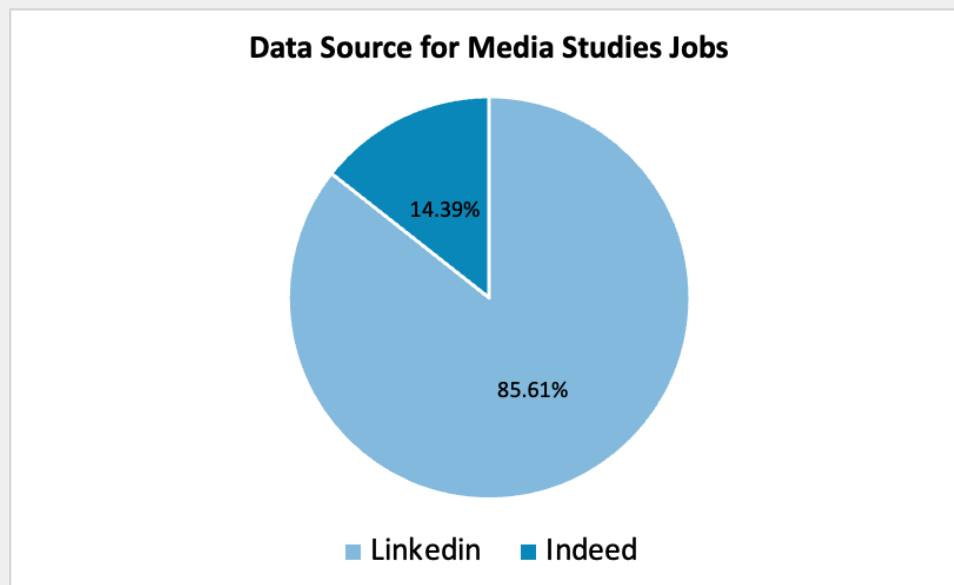


Figure 1. Number of job postings scraped from LinkedIn and Indeed

2. Geographical Analysis:

Figure 2 presents the number of entry-level media job postings in different US states. The data reveals the variation in job opportunities across states, with some states showing a higher demand for entry-level media professionals compared to others.

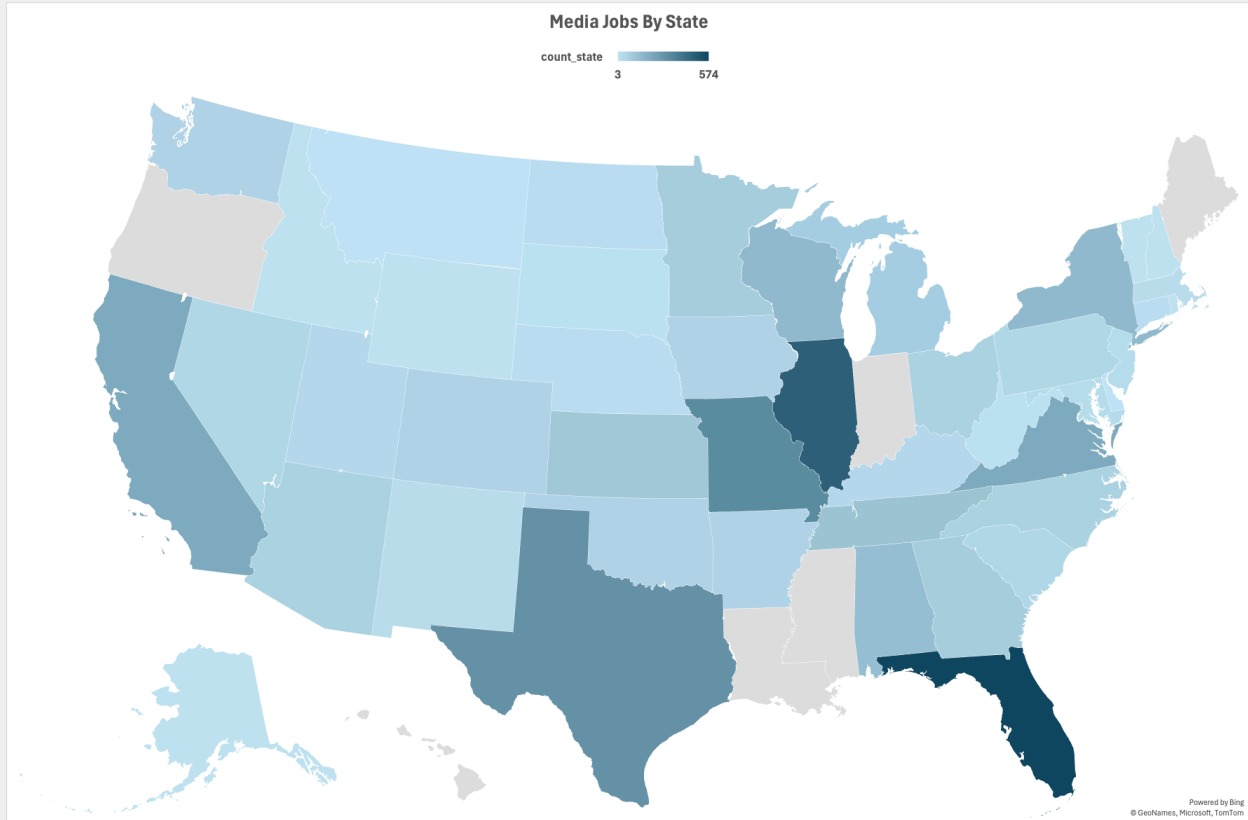


Figure 2. Job postings based on state across the country

There is a high concentration of media job positions in states like Florida, and Illinois followed by California, Texas, and Missouri. States like Oregon, Louisiana, Mississippi, Indiana, and Maine have little to no media job positions.

Figure 3 presents the Top 20 US cities with the highest number of entry-level media job postings. The data reveals the variation in job opportunities across cities making it convenient for job seekers to decide where to look for employment or understand which areas offer the most opportunities.

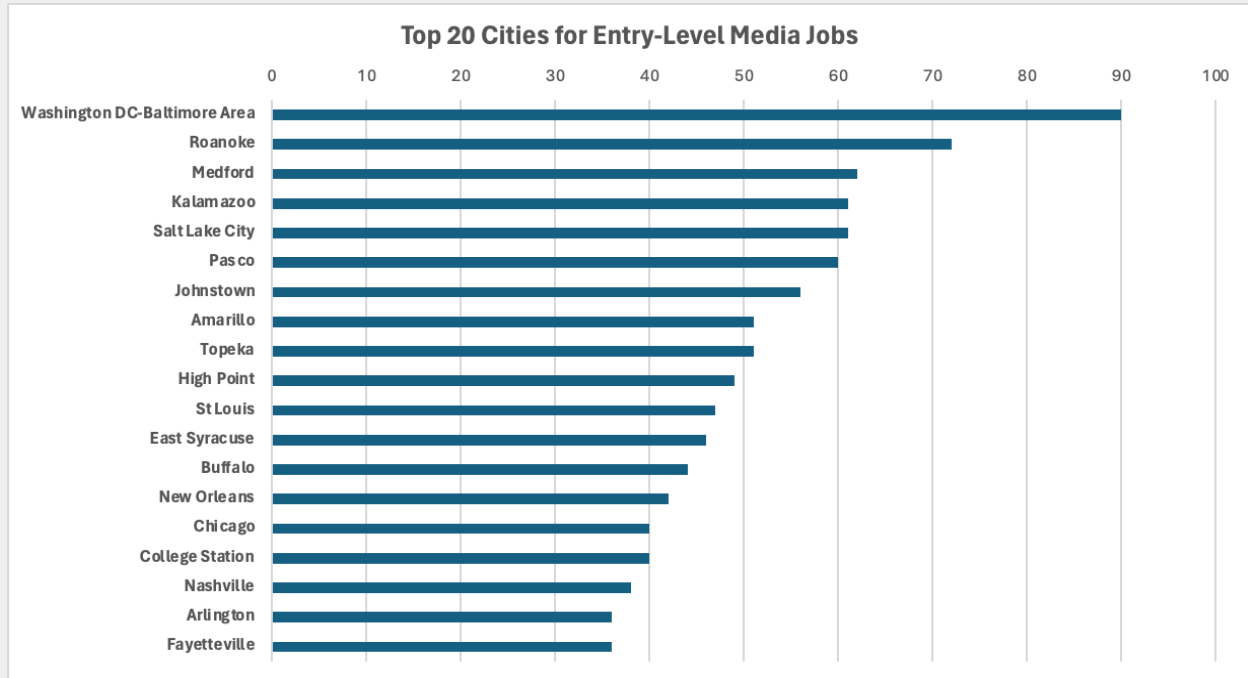


Figure 3. Top 20 Cities with the highest job postings

The Washington DC-Baltimore Area is the top-ranked location for entry-level media professionals, considering that this area has a significantly higher demand than the rest. Major metropolitan areas like Washington DC, Chicago, and Nashville, known for their large populations and significant economic, cultural, and professional activities fall into this category of the highest media job openings.

3. Company Analysis

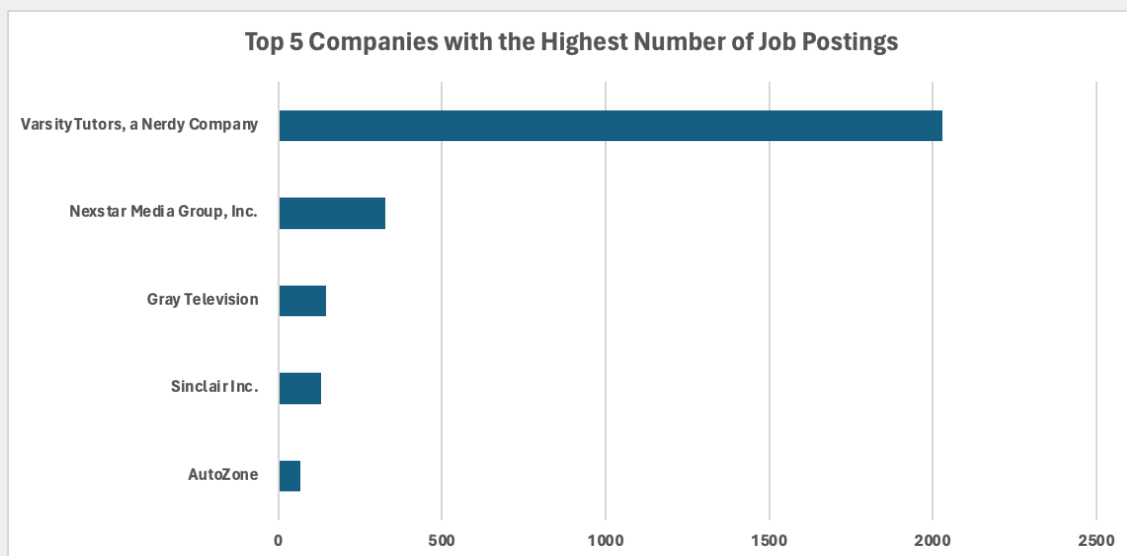


Figure 4. Top 5 Companies with the highest job postings

Varsity Tutors is the company with the highest number of media job postings, with a count of 2,030 jobs. It is followed by Nexstar Media Group, Inc. at 320 jobs and Gray Television at 147.

II. Trends in Job Title

A frequency analysis of job titles within entry-level marketing positions in the media studies field reveals a diverse array of roles. Predominant titles such as "News Producers," "Reporter," "Multimedia Journalist," and "News Photographers" make up over half of the job postings at 54%, indicating a high level of demand for these positions.

Further exploration through keyword analysis in job titles yielded insightful trends regarding the attributes sought by employers. Recurrent terms such as "Tutor," "Writing," "Content," and "News" were notably prominent, elucidating the pivotal roles these skills play in entry-level media studies jobs. The prominence of these keywords indicates a marketplace that values strong writing abilities and content creation expertise, skills crucial for effective communication and storytelling in media. This pattern points to a media studies job market that prioritizes individuals who can adeptly craft narratives and understand the dynamics of news production to engage audiences meaningfully.

III. Trends in Skills Required

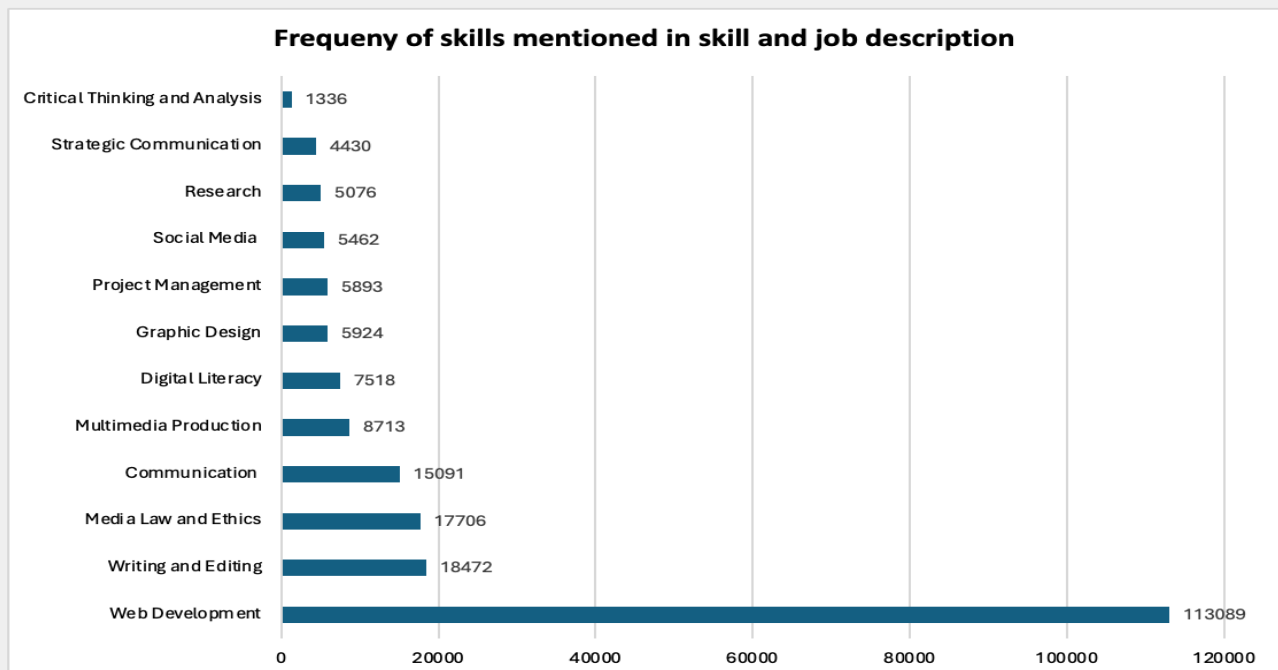


Figure 5. The counts of each skill group in the entry-level media job postings on LinkedIn and Indeed

In general, media entry-level jobs require both soft skills and hard skills, with more emphasis on soft skills such as management, sales, and communication.

1. Soft Skills

Skill trends in media studies-related job postings underscore the importance of nuanced soft skills such as 'Critical Thinking and Analysis' and 'Strategic Communication'. These skills suggest a significant need for professionals who can dissect complex information and present it in a structured and impactful manner. Media studies jobs require a deep understanding of how media operates within societal contexts, necessitating skills in 'Research' to delve into the multifaceted nature of media influences and outcomes. Moreover, 'Social Media' proficiency is highlighted, which encompasses not just posting and engagement metrics but also understanding the psychological and cultural impact of social platforms. These soft skills are crucial in navigating the ever-evolving landscape of media, where understanding audience dynamics and delivering content with precision is key to effective media strategy and communication.

2. Hard Skills

The growing importance of skills like 'Digital Literacy', 'Multimedia Production', and 'Web Development' within the media studies field. These competencies are indicative of the digital transformation within the media sector, where content creation, management, and dissemination across various platforms are central to job roles. 'Graphic Design' is also a significant entry, pointing to the need for visual content creation abilities that complement textual and auditory messaging. These technical skills denote a blend of creative and technological expertise, required for crafting engaging media narratives and analyzing digital trends. The visual representation of skills in *Figure 4* paints a clear picture: media studies professionals must be adept with the digital tools and analytics that are now fundamental to the study, creation, and management of media content in a digitalized world.

3. Comments from the audience

The skill set should be organized into 12 distinct groups, with one group labeled "Other" for skills that do not neatly fit into the primary categories. The group currently named "Web

Development" should be renamed to prevent confusion during the machine learning classification process. Additionally, careful attention should be given to this skill group as it appears to have issues during classification, warranting further verification and consideration.

IV. Compensation

In this research, 945 job postings listed compensation, with the majority of compensations listed in terms of hourly wage or annual salary. Annual Salary usually denotes the yearly earnings for full-time or permanent jobs. On the other hand, Hourly Wage refers to the compensation for each hour worked for part-time, or temporary jobs. In this study, the salary bracket mentioned in each job listing is segmented into two categories: the Minimum (or Lower-end), which is the lowest salary quoted, and the Maximum (Higher-end), which is the greatest salary offered for a given role. Due to the low number of monthly salaries in job postings, this research disregards the monthly salaries.

1. Annual Salary

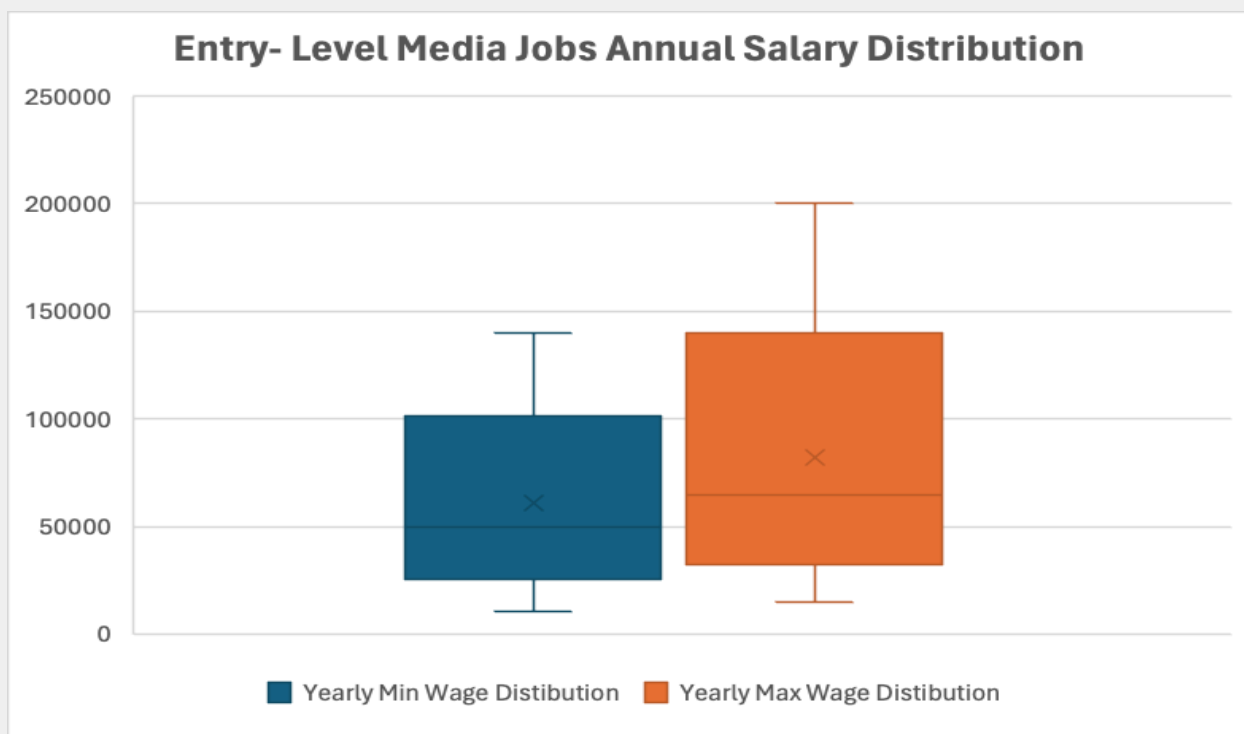


Figure 6. Salary distribution for job postings with yearly compensation

Among 283 jobs that listed yearly compensation, annual salaries show significant variation, ranging from \$10,600 to \$200,000. The median salary ranges from \$60,720 - \$81,831. A considerable portion of yearly salaries falls within the lower to mid-range. However, there's also

a substantial upper tier of positions that provide salaries well above the median, reaching into six figures. The length of the whiskers reflects a broader variability, indicating that the minimum and maximum salaries can vary greatly among different employers and different geographic locations or job specializations within the media sector.

2. Hourly Wage

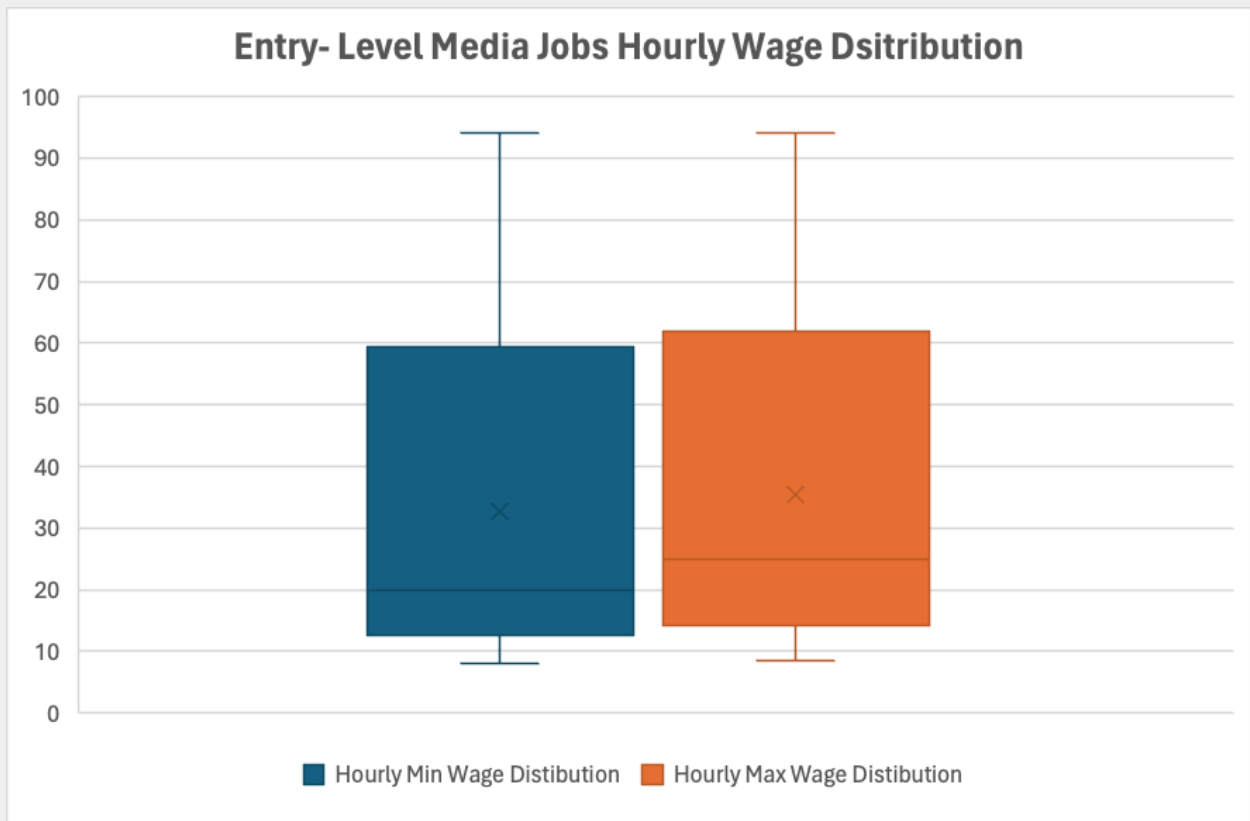


Figure 7. Hourly wage distribution for entry-level media job postings

Among 418 jobs that listed hourly wages, salaries range from \$8 to \$94 per hour. The median salary ranges from \$32.80- \$35.50. A considerable portion of hourly salaries falls within the lower to mid-range as well. The near-identical wages and IQR for both distributions are interesting and unusual, suggesting that for these entry-level roles in media, the minimum and maximum hourly wages in each bracket offered are quite similar.

V. Working Model:



Figure 8. Working Model of Media Studies Jobs from Description

In the media entry-level jobs, remote work emerges as the predominant working model, reflecting a prevalent trend in job preferences. On-site roles closely trail behind, underscoring a notable division in employment preferences within the industry. Meanwhile, the hybrid model appears less common, suggesting it is not the conventional choice among professionals. The distribution of jobs across these models may be influenced by organizational policies and the inherent nature of media roles. Notably, there's a discernible industry-wide shift towards flexible work arrangements, highlighting a growing recognition of the benefits of remote and hybrid setups. However, traditional and remote settings remain dominant, with hybrid models yet to establish a firm footing within the sector.

Part II - Qualitative Research:

In our market research on entry-level media jobs, we engaged in five informational interviews with professionals in the field. Four of them hold positions in various companies, spanning from small local firms to large corporations, boasting 3-5 years of experience each. Additionally, we interviewed a professor from Beloit College who offered significant insights into the industry. Across these discussions, consistent themes emerged, offering invaluable perspectives on the trends and challenges within the field.

1. Market Trends (Present and Future Predictions)

The media industry is experiencing a significant transformation, driven by the shift towards digital content creation and the integration of artificial intelligence. This evolution is heightening the demand for roles such as Multimedia Journalists (MMJs), Reporters, Producers, Social Media Managers, and Anchors, particularly in smaller markets where digital proficiency is essential.

The increasing dependence on digital platforms requires media professionals to possess a mix of traditional media production skills and digital marketing acumen, including social media strategy, blurring the lines between marketing and media. The alumni predict that the job market will greatly value versatility both in front of and behind the camera.

The industry is progressing towards a more technologically integrated production environment. Artificial intelligence is playing a growing role in the media sector by automating routine tasks and enhancing creative processes. AI not only makes operations more efficient but also supports the creation of more personalized and compelling content, which is vital in a competitive landscape. They highlight the necessity to adeptly navigate AI and automation technologies, mastering a variety of skills, and becoming a "jack of all trades".

2. Skills and Credentials

Soft Skills:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ● Communication | ● Flexibility | ● Speaking |
| ● Adaptability | ● Time Management | ● Work Ethic |
| ● Resilience | ● Presentation | ● Stress Tolerance |
| ● Curiosity | ● Writing | ● Customer |
| ● Storytelling | ● Questioning | Engagement |

Across various responses, there is a consistent emphasis on the importance of communication, adaptability, and resilience. Alumni particularly highlight the need not only to communicate and adapt effectively but also to learn from mistakes, maintain curiosity, and ask questions without fear of being wrong. These insights suggest that the media industry places a high value on flexibility and continuous learning. Additionally, the ability to manage time efficiently and handle multiple projects simultaneously is recognized as essential. Soft skills are deemed slightly more important than technical skills because they are generally more challenging to teach and learn.

Technical Skills:

- Camera Operation Proficiency
- Fundamental Videography Skills
- Fundamental Photography Skills
- Video Editing Proficiency (e.g. Adobe Premiere, Edius)
- Social Media Management Expertise
- Proficiency in Content Creation Software (e.g. Adobe Creative Cloud tools: Premiere Pro, Photoshop, After Effects, ENPS, Canva, Adobe Max)

Entry-level candidates in media production are expected to possess these core technical skills, which are crucial across a range of media roles, reflecting the industry's diversity. As noted by Beloit College alumnus Jimmy Velasco, the requirements can vary greatly, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and a versatile skill set.

The ongoing integration of AI into media, exemplified by advanced features in Adobe Premiere Pro for speech and text editing, highlights the evolving nature of media tools. This progression enables faster and more efficient workflows but also introduces new challenges and complexities.

Furthermore, candidates are encouraged to expand their technical horizons beyond conventional media tools. Learning to operate drones and obtaining an FAA license, along with pursuing certifications in AV technology like Extron systems, enriches one's technical abilities and prepares them for multifaceted roles in the dynamic media landscape. This comprehensive skill set is invaluable as the sector continues to evolve and integrate new technologies.

Formal Credentials:

There is a nuanced view regarding the necessity of formal education in the media industry. While entry-level positions often require some form of higher education, whether a degree or

certification, the importance of a formal degree can vary. The emphasis on having a well-curated portfolio, a professional reel, and practical experience is evident. Logan Eischeid, a Beloit College alumnus, reinforces this perspective by highlighting the importance of a robust portfolio over formal academic credentials. This trend reflects a growing acknowledgment within the industry that practical skills and proven abilities are often as crucial as formal education.

3. Courses proposed for a Media Studies Major/Minor:

- Basics of media studies
- Journalism
- Camera work
- Writing
- Audio recording
- Software usage
- Theatre Show Production
- Anchoring
- Interviewing

The alumni recommend the formation of a curriculum that balances theoretical knowledge with practical skills and real-world applications. Essential components of the program should include producing, editing, writing, anchoring, understanding media theory, and marketing. Internships are particularly emphasized as they provide invaluable hands-on experience and a chance to apply classroom learning in professional settings. This comprehensive approach aims to equip students with a robust set of skills and knowledge essential for success in the media industry.

4. Key Takeaways

- The media industry is increasingly leaning towards digital content creation, with multimedia journalism and the integration of artificial intelligence becoming key components.
- The lines between marketing and media are blurring, indicating a future where skills in both areas will be crucial for media professionals.
- Practical experience demonstrated through a robust portfolio and real-world media projects often outweighs formal education in hiring decisions.

- Technical skills, including familiarity with digital platforms, content management systems, and AI tools, are highly desirable.
- Soft skills like adaptability, creativity, writing, and presentation are highly valued and can significantly differentiate you in this competitive job market.

Part III - Implications and Limitations:

III.1 Implication for Students Interested in Pursuing a Media Career

Students aspiring for careers in media should be prepared to navigate a dynamic and competitive field characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting job market demands. Success in this industry increasingly depends on a blend of robust technical skills, such as multimedia production, video editing, and digital literacy, and essential soft skills like communication, adaptability, and critical thinking. Students should consider enrolling in courses such as “Intro to Sound Recording”, “Graphic Design”, “Digital Marketing” and “Intro to Practicum Broadcast TV” to develop relevant hard skills. Courses like “Public Speaking”, and “Creative Writing” can be beneficial to improve soft skills. Geographic mobility plays a vital role in finding entry-level jobs, as job opportunities are concentrated in certain regions around the US. To enhance employability, students are encouraged to engage in internships and practical projects that enhance their portfolios and provide real-world experience. Staying informed about industry trends and continuously updating one's skill set has become increasingly important.

III.2 Implication for Career Advisors and Mentors

Our study offers valuable insights that can inform advisors and mentors’ guidance. They can help students understand the evolving landscape of entry-level media positions. Advisors can encourage students to improve their soft and hard skills by looking at the market trends. They can suggest students to seek internships and practical experiences to build on their portfolios before getting a job. Given the industry's rapid technological evolution, mentors can stress the importance of staying updated on emerging tools and trends. Furthermore, they can guide the transition from academia to industry, emphasizing the value of practical skills and real-world experience over formal education alone.

III.3 Implications for Instructors

For instructors in the media studies programs, our research offers valuable insights that can inform curriculum development and teaching strategies. By understanding the evolving landscape of entry-level media positions, instructors can tailor their courses to better align with the media industry's demands. Instructors can integrate discussions about emerging industry trends and technologies into their lessons, ensuring students are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills. Providing opportunities for hands-on experience, such as internships, case studies, or practical projects, within the curriculum can also enhance students' readiness for the workforce. Instructors can encourage students to pursue interdisciplinary studies, integrating perspectives from fields such as sociology, psychology, and technology, to gain a holistic understanding of media's role in society, which can also cultivate soft and hard skills further.

III.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement

1. Geographical Bias in Data Collection

Limitations:

The project's data collection has a geographical bias, focusing primarily on regions with high activity and population density. This approach skews the data towards areas with more job postings and may not accurately reflect the job market conditions in less populated or rural areas.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Expand the data collection to include a wider range of geographical locations, particularly those with lower population densities, to provide a more balanced view of job opportunities across different regions.
- Consider factors that could influence job postings in various areas, such as the availability of public services, local employment opportunities in other fields, regional tax rates, and other socio-economic conditions that could affect job markets.

2. Relevance of the Top 5 Companies Based on Eligibility

Limitations:

The Company Analysis Chart lists the top 5 companies with the most job postings but does not specify if these positions are open to international applicants or are exclusive to U.S. residents. This lack of detail can limit the utility of the chart for international job seekers and does not reflect the global nature of the job market.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Indicate whether job postings at these top companies are available to international candidates or if there are restrictions based on residency or visa status.
- Provide additional segmentation of job data based on eligibility criteria, which could include citizenship, work visa requirements, and language skills.

3. Skills Group

Limitations:

The overview of required soft and hard skills in media studies-related jobs lacks comparative analysis with other industries and omits historical data, which could contextualize the skill demands and trends over time.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Incorporate Comparative Analysis: Add a comparison of skill requirements between media studies and fields like marketing or graphic design to highlight unique or overlapping demands.
- Include Historical Data and Trends: Integrate data on how skill demands have evolved over time to help anticipate future industry needs and assist professionals in staying relevant.
- Detailed Skill Breakdown: Provide skill requirements segmented by job role and experience level within media studies to offer targeted guidance for skill development.

Appendix A: Skills groups definitions and examples

- **Social Media:** Skills involve the adept use of social platforms to effectively engage with audiences, distribute content strategically, and monitor evolving trends. These skills are essential for marketing professionals in the digital age, as they leverage social media to enhance brand presence and connect with target demographics.

Examples: platform analytics, community engagement, content curation, social media strategy.

- **Writing and Editing:** The ability to produce clear, compelling content and to refine the work to meet publication standards.

Examples: journalistic writing, proofreading, editorial writing, copy editing.

- **Digital Literacy:** Proficiency in understanding and utilizing digital tools and platforms effectively.

Examples: digital content creation, understanding digital ecosystems, navigating CMS.

- **Communication:** The ability to convey information effectively and foster an exchange of ideas.

Examples: interpersonal communication, public speaking, cross-cultural communication.

- **Media Law and Ethics:** Knowledge of the legal and ethical considerations in the creation and distribution of media content.

Examples: copyright laws, fair use policy, ethical reporting, media regulations.

- **Web Development:** Skills in creating and managing online content through web platforms.

Examples: HTML/CSS, JavaScript, website maintenance, search engine optimization (SEO).

- **Project Management:** The ability to plan, organize, direct, and control resources for a specific goal.

Examples: timeline management, resource allocation, risk management, Agile methodologies.

- **Multimedia Production:** Competence in creating content that combines text, audio, images, animations, or video.

Examples: video editing, sound design, animation, photography.

- **Strategic Communication:** Planning and executing communication strategies to achieve specific organizational goals.

Examples: campaign management, brand messaging, crisis communication, audience analysis.

- **Research:** The ability to conduct thorough and systematic investigation into a topic or issue.

Examples: qualitative research, quantitative research, market analysis, academic writing.

- **Graphic Design:** Creating visual content to communicate messages through typography, imagery, color, and form.

Examples: layout design, branding, user interface design, print design.

- **Critical Thinking and Analysis:** The ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking to analyze and evaluate information.

Examples: problem-solving, logical reasoning, data interpretation, decision-making.

References

1. LinkedIn Entry-Level Media Jobs:

[https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=media+jobs&l=USA&sc=0kf%3Aexplvl\(ENTRY_LEVEL\)%3B](https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=media+jobs&l=USA&sc=0kf%3Aexplvl(ENTRY_LEVEL)%3B)

2. Indeed Entry-Level Media Jobs:

https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/search/?currentJobId=3869750100&f_E=2&keywords=media%20jobs&origin=JOB_SEARCH_PAGE_JOB_FILTER