

# RESEARCH REPORT

## The Journalist's Role, Values, Types, and Challenges in Modern Reporting

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## Introduction

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In the digital age, the marriage of journalism and data has reshaped how we understand the world. In order to understand complex information, data journalism, a dynamic mix of storytelling and analytics, has become essential. This report delves into the dynamic field, focusing on its fundamental ideas, difficulties, and the changing function of journalists. Data journalism is a potent force reshaping the future of information dissemination by supporting transparency and accountability, as well as deconstructing complex data and simplifying it. Join this investigation into the heart of data journalism, illuminating the path for a deeper understanding of its vital role in our information-driven society.

## Journalist Role

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In the fast-changing media environment of today, a journalist's job is complex and hard. Although it may appear that their only responsibility is to report or deliver news, the truth is far more complex and important, especially in the digital age where anybody with a computer can share information extensively. The characteristics of printed and electronic media are greatly varied, leading to different types of journalism in various nations. Theodora Ivancheva's research on news values, however, reveals that journalism as a whole shares some underlying similarities [1].

### 2.1 Verifying Information

Gathering information for a story and checking its correctness is one of a journalist's most important responsibilities. In a time when false information spreads quickly, journalists serve as the gatekeepers of trustworthy information. Journalists, as opposed to gossipers and propagandists, are taught to distinguish between genuine information and rumors.

### 2.2 Objectivity and Impartiality

In order to present news articles without bias or personal viewpoint, journalists must be objective. Journalists should offer information that is neutral and fair, despite the fact that they are thinking, feeling, and perceiving. Using a scientific process to verify facts ensures that stories reflect reality rather than human opinions or agendas.

### 2.3 Providing a Complete and Honest Picture

Fair journalism means presenting all major points of view in a way that is equitable to all stakeholders. Journalists work to give their audience a full and accurate image so that they can create opinions based on well-rounded facts. This includes giving background and depth to the news while representing various viewpoints on an issue objectively.

## **2.4 Differentiating Between Fact, Opinion, and Rumors**

Journalists must distinguish between facts, opinions, and rumors in an era of unlimited information. They produce original reporting and use reliable sources and in-depth investigation to separate fact from fiction. Journalists uphold their profession's moral standards and guarantee the veracity of the information they share by doing this.

## **2.5 Multitasking and Adapting**

Journalists today must complete difficult and demanding duties. While respecting established journalistic standards, they must adjust to new technologies and media channels. Multimedia reporting, social media participation, and data analysis are all part of this adaptation. For their careers to succeed in the changing media environment, journalists need to be adaptable and proficient in a variety of fields.

In conclusion, by giving the public accurate, unbiased, and thorough information, modern journalists perform a critical role in society. Their duties go beyond only reporting; they also serve as filters, making sure the news is reliable, impartial, and fair. Journalists make a vital contribution to an informed and enlightened society through their diligent labor.

## News Values

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In the ever-expanding world of journalism, the rapid growth of data journalism has resulted in an entirely new era of information distribution. The paper "The Principles, Features, and Techniques of Data Journalism" by Olga Kalatzi, Charalampos Bratsas, and Andreas Veglis (published in September 2018, accessible at ResearchGate) [2] illuminates the key values of data journalism. The study have stated the following values;

### 3.1 Simplifying Complexity

Data journalism acts as a link between sophisticated raw data and the general audience. It ensures that the public can understand and engage with issues that would otherwise be overwhelming by turning complex information into appealing narratives.

### 3.2 Intermediaries for Data

Data journalists serve as interpreters, dissecting data from multiple sources. They enable individuals to understand and critically evaluate information by translating facts into understandable tales.

### 3.3 Enhancing Transparency

Transparency is promoted by data journalism by making raw data available. By sharing statistics and visualizations, it allows the public to independently examine the material, encouraging a better educated society.

### 3.4 Accountability

Data journalism is extremely important in holding institutions and individuals accountable. Journalists can uncover disparities, corruption, and systemic issues by looking into data. This scrutiny puts pressure on authorities to fix problems and act in the best interests of the people.

### **3.5 New Roles for Journalists**

In the field of data journalism, journalists take on the roles of sense-makers and watchdogs. They not only discover problems through data analysis, but they also help find solutions. This proactive position adds depth and significance to journalism's societal purpose.

### **3.6 Innovation in Journalism**

Data journalism exemplifies the inventive spirit of modern journalism. It embraces technological improvements and is constantly evolving in terms of how data is collected, processed, and displayed. This adaptability is critical in today's ever-changing digital landscape.

### **3.7 Public Engagement**

Data-driven storytelling and interactive visualizations engage the public in a novel way. It encourages active engagement and a deeper understanding of complex issues by letting individuals study data on their own.

### **3.8 Trust Rebuilding**

Data journalism has the potential to restore public trust in journalism by emphasizing transparency, accuracy, and accountability. The audience gains credibility and trust by seeing the rigorous methods behind data-driven stories.



## Types of Journalists

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Looking at the World Wide Web, there are many articles that have a different number of journalists. Some of the article sources are Wikipedia or do not have a source at all. Therefore, there aren't many options. In this section, I will describe the different types of journalist and explain briefly what they do. I will also do a comparison between two different articles, and on the conclusion, I will decide the number and the types. This is because some journalists have the same role but have a different name depending on the writers of the articles.

### 4.1 Indeed Career Guide website

According to the Indeed Career Guide website, Jamie Briat a career guide, outlined that there are 9 types of journalist:

#### 4.1.1 Investigative journalism

- **Definition:** In-depth research to expose evidence about individuals or organizations.
- **Characteristics:** Thorough research, comprehensive reports, and uncovering unethical practices.
- **Example:** Investigating businesses to assess adherence to ethical standards.
- **Description:** Investigative journalism involves digging deep into topics, unveiling hidden truths, and providing a detailed account of uncovered information. It plays a critical role in exposing societal issues that may remain concealed.
- **Keywords:** Investigative journalism, Thorough research, Expose evidence, Comprehensive reports, Figures or organizations

#### 4.1.2 Watchdog journalism

- **Definition:** Aims to uncover illegal activities or inefficiencies among powerful entities.
- **Role:** Exposing wrongdoing, holding influential figures accountable, and ensuring societal protection.
- **Example:** Investigating political campaign finances to uphold campaign finance laws.
- **Description:** Watchdog journalism acts as a guardian of public interest, scrutinizing those in power and safeguarding against abuses. It serves as a check and balance mechanism in society.
- **Keywords:** Watchdog journalism, Uncover wrongdoing, Monitor activities, Accountability, Investigate

### 4.1.3 Online journalism

- **Definition:** Conveying factual information through digital channels such as digital newspapers, blogs, and social media.
- **Characteristics:** Objectively reporting facts, rapid information delivery, and varied source credibility online.
- **Description:** Online journalism adapts to the digital age, providing real-time information through digital platforms. It navigates the challenges of source credibility in the vast online landscape.
- **Keywords:** Online journalism, Digital newspapers, Blogs, Social media, Rapid information delivery

### 4.1.4 Broadcast journalism

- **Definition:** Communication of information through radio and television, covering various branches like sports, weather, and news.
- **Forms:** Includes investigative reporting, watchdog journalism, and opinion pieces in addition to traditional reporting.
- **Presentation:** Utilizes reading, narrating with background video, or conducting live field reports.
- **Description:** Broadcast journalism engages audiences through dynamic storytelling, combining audio-visual elements to deliver news. It encompasses a range of formats to cater to diverse audience preferences.
- **Keywords:** Broadcast journalism, Radio, Television, Sports, News

### 4.1.5 Opinion journalism

- **Definition:** Expressing subjective ideas and personal perspectives rather than strict adherence to objective facts.
- **Role:** Offers unique viewpoints, helps individuals understand their beliefs, and provides a nuanced view of reality.
- **Consideration:** Recognizing the line between opinions and facts, balancing perspectives for a deeper understanding.
- **Description:** Opinion journalism adds a subjective layer to news, offering diverse perspectives and encouraging readers to critically evaluate their own opinions in light of different viewpoints.
- **Keywords:** Opinion journalism, Subjective ideas, Perspective, Views, Bias

#### 4.1.6 Sports journalism

- **Focus:** Covers athletic news, including scores, standings, and rankings across different sporting events.
- **Genres:** Encompasses investigative reporting, opinion pieces, and sports commentary in both print and broadcast media.
- **Description:** Sports journalism goes beyond scores, delving into the stories behind the games. It provides insights, analyses, and opinions to enrich the audience's understanding of sports events.
- **Keywords:** Sports journalism, Athletic news, Scores, Standings, Sports commentary

#### 4.1.7 Trade journalism

- **Focus:** Reporting within a specific industry or field, detailing shifts and advancements in business.
- **Coverage:** Industry-specific news on products and broader business sectors, processing substantial information on market conditions.
- **Description:** Trade journalism is the specialized lens through which industries are observed. It keeps stakeholders informed about developments, challenges, and opportunities within their specific business domains.
- **Keywords:** Trade journalism, Industry, Business developments, Market conditions, Sector-specific news

#### 4.1.8 Entertainment journalism

- **Scope:** Involves reporting on current events related to popular figures and trends in the entertainment industry.
- **Coverage:** Spans celebrities, movies, television, books, and events, prevalent in print, digital, and broadcast media.
- **Description:** Entertainment journalism captures the pulse of the entertainment world, bringing audiences the latest happenings, trends, and behind-the-scenes insights into the lives of popular figures.
- **Keywords:** Entertainment journalism, Celebrities, Movies, Television, Events

#### 4.1.9 Political journalism

- **Coverage:** Encompasses government, politics, and political candidates across various levels.
- **Role:** Reporting on elected officials, political processes, outcomes, and ensuring public access to political information.
- **Incorporation:** Includes elements of investigative reporting and opinion journalism in print, digital, and broadcast media.
- **Description:** Political journalism serves as the bridge between citizens and the political landscape. It dissects complex political issues, informs the public, and contributes to the democratic process through varied reporting styles.
- **Keywords:** Political journalism, Government affairs, Elected officials, Investigative reporting, Opinion journalism

#### 4.2 Poynter website

According to the Poynter website, Matt Thompson stated that there are 4 main types of journalists. Where the article discusses four types of journalists based on their primary motivations, strengths, potential pitfalls, and notable figures representing each type. Here is a brief summary of each type:

##### 4.2.1 The Storyteller

- **Primary Motivation:** Connecting people to each other and issues that matter.
- **Strengths:** Makes dull material vivid, appeals to a broad audience, and creates memorable stories.
- **Potential Pitfalls:** May oversimplify or obscure underlying empirical trends.
- **Description:** Storytellers excel in crafting narratives that engage and resonate with readers. They have a unique ability to turn mundane topics into captivating tales, making information more relatable to a wider audience.

#### 4.2.2 The Newshound

- **Primary Motivation:** Exposing hidden or unknown facts.
- **Strengths:** Relentless curiosity and drive to uncover new information, attracting a loyal audience.
- **Potential Pitfalls:** Focus on novelty may crowd out important context.
- **Description:** Newshounds are driven by a quest for truth and breaking news. They thrive on being the first to report crucial information, cultivating an audience that relies on them for the latest updates and exclusive insights.

#### 4.2.3 The Systems Analyst

- **Primary Motivation:** Understanding and explaining the world clearly.
- **Strengths:** Identifies root causes, key trends, and patterns, fostering genuine expertise.
- **Potential Pitfalls:** Difficulty in making systemic patterns accessible to general audiences, may lack focus on individual experiences.
- **Description:** Systems Analysts are analytical thinkers who delve into the complexities of issues. They seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of subjects, often focusing on underlying structures and trends to explain the broader context.

#### 4.2.4 The Provocateur

- **Primary Motivation:** Revealing complex facets of the world and providing unique insights.
- **Strengths:** Surfaces distinctive ideas, disrupts herd behavior, encourages critical thinking.
- **Potential Pitfalls:** Risk of being contrarian for its own sake, emphasizing outliers, and latching onto undercovered stories in a way that alienates the public.
- **Description:** Provocateurs challenge conventional thinking by offering fresh perspectives and thought-provoking insights. They aim to push boundaries and prompt audiences to reconsider established viewpoints, fostering a deeper understanding of complex issues.

The author acknowledges that these are types rather than rigid roles, and journalists can exhibit characteristics of multiple types. The best journalism often arises from collaboration among journalists with different inclinations. The article encourages recognizing individual inclinations to enhance collaboration and produce high-quality journalism.

### 4.3 The Jackhawn website

According to the Jackhawn website, Jack Hawn says “ due to its broadness, diversity, and development, is a tricky field to break down and classify.”. However, if we need to specify the types he suggests five types of journals:

#### 4.3.1 News Journalists

- **Focus:** Clear and factual reporting of well-established events.
- **Role:** Relay accurate information to the public without room for interpretation or bias.

#### 4.3.2 Review Journalists

- **Style:** Partly factual and partly opinionated.
- **Approach:** Relays personal experiences with subjects (establishments, destinations, etc.) while giving opinions and judgments based on those experiences.

#### 4.3.3 Columnists

- **Style:** Most individualistic and opinionated form of journalism.
- **Content:** Covers news and reviews but with a distinct touch of the author's personality.

#### 4.3.4 Investigative Journalists

- **Method:** Involves interviews and legal methods to uncover hidden information.
- **Purpose:** Often used to reveal scandals and schemes, serving as a watchdog for the government.

#### 4.3.5 Feature Journalists

- **Nature:** Combination of various journalism types.
- **Characteristics:** Long-form, requires extensive work, eligible for journalism awards. Incorporates aspects of news, reviews, columns, and investigative journalism.

The article acknowledges that journalism can also be classified by medium (print, radio, television, electronic), and by topic, although the latter classification is considered endless due to the broad scope of journalistic coverage. The diversity of journalism is emphasized, covering numerous aspects of the rapidly developing world, and each type is deemed necessary for the world to stay informed.

## 4.4 Conclusion

Considering the publication date,

1. **Indeed Career Guide (Jamie Birt, Updated March 11, 2023):** Describes 9 types of journalists, including investigative, watchdog, online, broadcast, opinion, sports, trade, entertainment, and political journalism.
2. **Poynter (Matt Thompson, March 27, 2012):** Identifies 4 main types of journalists based on primary motivations: Storyteller, Newshound, Systems Analyst, and Provocateur.
3. **Jackhawn (Jack Hawn, Mar 14, 2023):** Suggests 5 types of journalists: News, Review, Column, Investigative, and Feature journalists.

Considering the differences in the number and classification of types across these articles, it's apparent that there isn't a standardized or universally agreed-upon set of journalist types. The variations arise due to different perspectives, purposes, and criteria used by the authors.

- The number of journalist types varies based on the source.
- The classification criteria differ; Indeed emphasizes roles and genres, Poynter focuses on primary motivations, and Jackhawn looks at journalistic styles.
- Some types are consistent across articles (e.g., investigative journalism), while others are unique to specific sources.
- The differences can be attributed to the evolving nature of journalism, diverse perspectives, and the broad scope of the field.

In summary, the identified types are a reflection of the diverse facets of journalism as perceived by different authors, and the variation in numbers and names highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of journalistic roles and approaches.

## Journalism Challenges

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The challenges of data journalism, as discussed below, have been extracted from the same research study titled "The Principles, Features, and Techniques of Data Journalism" [2]. This study delves into the complexities faced by journalists in the realm of data journalism, shedding light on the hurdles encountered in integrating data into newsrooms and journalistic practices. The challenges highlighted in the study include delayed access to vital data, the need for data cleaning and refinement, limited resources, the lack of computational skills, skepticism and resistance within traditional journalism circles, conflicts between traditional principles and technological advancements, issues related to interactivity and audience engagement, prevailing mistrust and perception issues, and technical obstacles within existing Content Management Systems.

### 5.1 Delayed Access to Data

It might be challenging for journalists to use up-to-date material in their reports because government organizations frequently publish datasets with significant delays. Bureaucracy, obfuscation, and legal obstacles to data collection, particularly through Freedom of Information Act requests, worsen this.

### 5.2 Data Cleaning and Refinement

Raw data frequently necessitates substantial cleaning and editing by journalists before it can be used successfully. This procedure takes time and can be difficult, especially given the tight deadlines in journalism.

### 5.3 Limited Resources

Many media organizations, particularly local ones, rely on shoestring budgets, making it difficult for them to invest in data journalism projects. As a result, there is a chasm between huge news organizations and smaller local media firms.



#### **5.4 Lack of Computational Skills**

While the availability of data has increased the demand for individuals with computational and analytical skills, journalism schools and colleges have not fully integrated data journalism into their courses. The industry faces a hurdle due to a shortage of skills.

#### **5.5 Skepticism and Resistance**

Traditional journalists and advocates of traditional journalism frequently express skepticism about the value of data journalism. This skepticism can impede the integration of data teams into newsrooms.

#### **5.6 Conflicts Between Traditional Journalism and Technology**

There are conflicts between traditional journalistic principles and the advancements in technology and data culture. The hierarchy of priorities in journalism practices is often unclear, leading to confusion about the role of data in journalism.

#### **5.7 Interactivity and Audience Engagement**

There are conflicts between traditional journalistic principles and technological and data-culture breakthroughs. The hierarchy of priorities in journalism practices is frequently unclear, leading to misunderstandings regarding the significance of data in journalism.

#### **5.8 Mistrust and Perception**

Data journalism needs to tackle the overall distrust of the public in the media, which has grown in recent years. It is also criticized for being viewed as an elitist kind of journalism, catering primarily to people with internet access and basic data analytic skills.

#### **5.9 Technical Obstacles**

It is technically difficult to successfully incorporate data into journalistic narratives using the current content management systems used in journalism, since they frequently neglect the data contained in the text.

# The Data Journalism Handbook

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What is **data journalism**?

What have other people done?

How can you get started?

The Data Journalism Handbook is a free, open source reference book for anyone interested in the emerging field of data journalism.

It started life at MozFest 2011 in London, with contributions from dozens of journalists and media organisations from around the world.

## 1 Data in the newsroom



**The bottom line**  
A look at business models and sustainability

**Code-writing journo**



**Assembling your team**  
Who does what in different projects and news organisations

← **Hacker for hire**

## 2 Finding data...



...from public bodies using **freedom of information** laws  
...from **open data portals** (local, regional and national authority websites)  
...from document files or web pages by **scraping** unstructured data  
...from the public by **crowdsourcing**

## 3 Understanding data



**Tools of the trade**  
Journalists and developers discuss their tools of choice

**Tools**

**Data literacy**  
Tips for working with numbers and datasets

**Rights in data**  
How to find out if you are legally allowed to publish a dataset and how to open up datasets for others to use

## 4 Delivering data



**Telling stories with data**  
How to look for stories in datasets

**Data journalism**

**Serving data with stories**  
How and when to publish data as an accompaniment to new stories

**Data driven applications**  
How to make dedicated web applications and services using data

**Data visualisation**  
How to do it, how not to do it

**Audience**

**Community**  
How to engage users around your project

It's all in the **Handbook**.

The **DATA JOURNALISM HANDBOOK** is an initiative of the European Journalism Centre and the Open Knowledge Foundation. Over 60 people contributed to the handbook, including data journalists from the BBC, Chicago Tribune, Deutsche Welle, Guardian, Financial Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Zeit Online amongst many others.

It is published by O'Reilly and freely available online under a Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike license.

You can find the book at:

**DataJournalismHandbook.org**



## The Reference

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