# Transformative times: Australian journalists' perceptions of changes in their work

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## Abstract

Numerous studies have pointed to the fact that journalism in most industrialised societies is undergoing a particularly intensive period of transformation. Yet, while many scholars have studied how news organisations are changing, comparatively fewer studies have inquired into how journalists themselves are experiencing the changes in their work brought on by the technological, economic and cultural transformations. Based on a representative study of Australian journalists, this paper reports on their perceptions of changes in a variety of influences and aspects of their work over the past five years. It finds that journalists say change has been most notable in audience interactions and technological innovation, while economic changes are somewhat less strong. Importantly, they are also very concerned about an increase in sensationalism and a drop in journalistic standards and the credibility of journalism. Results are also compared across different organisational contexts.

## Introduction

A common refrain throughout most of the scholarly literature over the past decade has been that journalism is undergoing a radical transformation, particularly in the Western world. Often, this has resulted in what Franklin (2012: 665) argues is a '"crisis in journalism" frame [which] has been widely adopted to understand and respond to the current changes in journalism'. At the same time, the vast majority of people still receive their news through mainstream journalism, and even in those societies where change is most visible, it appears the profession is more resilient than some commentators make out. Nevertheless, it is clear that journalism in industrialised societies is undergoing a transformation, and it is important to take account of these changes as they may be affecting the quality of the public sphere more broadly. The past decade has therefore seen a burgeoning amount of scholarly work that assesses the changes in journalism. In particular, the focus has been on the United States, which is actually somewhat unique in its own experience of changes in journalism, and studies from other contexts are needed to more comprehensively analyse the complexity of change in journalism (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009: 577).

More importantly, as Dickinson, Matthews and Saltzis (2013: 5) have noted, while there is a consensus that the transformations are changing journalists' work in fundamental ways, journalists and their practices 'have not often been the main objects of study'. Yet, asking journalists about their experience of change is important in order to comprehend how it impacts on news work. Such an analysis would allow us to better understand what journalists believe are pressing concerns, but also what the benefits of the technological, economic and cultural changes are. To address this aspect, this paper enquires into journalists' perceptions of a variety of changes in their work over the past five years.

Based on a representative survey of Australian journalists conducted in 2012 and 2013, the paper examines change in two ways. First, journalists were asked about whether certain influences on journalists' work had increased or decreased during the past five years. Second, respondents were asked to which extent a variety of work aspects had increased or decreased during that time. Because organisational settings are very important in this context (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009; Paulussen & Ugille, 2008), results are compared across different organisation types, illuminating our understanding of how journalists experience change. This focus will be of value for future research into transformations in journalism.

**Overview**
The digital transformations affecting many aspects of life in industrialised society have also had fundamental implications for journalism, challenging long-held beliefs about the nature of news and journalism's professional practices (Zelizer, 2009). For journalists, this has resulted in a 'tension between tradition and change' (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, 2009: 562). For example, Hargreaves (1999: 4) has contended that 'in a democracy everyone is a journalist', and that the practices of citizen journalism are believed to challenge journalism's elitist position. Despite the rapid pace of change, research into the challenges facing journalism was originally slow to emerge. Historically, studies of emerging technologies, such as the Internet, Web 2.0 and social media, quickly focused on the pioneering work of participatory websites such as blogs or collaborative news sites (Bruns, 2005). Heralded as new opportunities for the reinvigoration of an idealised public sphere, these amateur sites received vastly more attention, while there was limited research on how mainstream journalism was changing with increased user involvement (Paulussen et al., 2007). This situation has changed considerably, and there now exists a sizeable body of academic research into the way in which digital media are affecting journalism (for an overview, see Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). Journalists, originally reluctant to embrace audience participation, appear to be slowly opening up to interaction, and the increasing reliance on web analytics is beginning to influence news decisions (Anderson, 2011). Three key developments have placed mainstream journalism in many Western countries under pressure.

First, the emergence of new technologies is fundamentally transforming journalism's elitist position and the notion of public service in a 'redactional society' (Hartley, 2000). Audiences are increasingly involved in influencing and creating news content, reshaping traditional definitions of journalism (Lewis, 2012). Everyone can be a journalist today, which challenges the elite status of journalists as the authorised storytellers of our time. In Australia, there have been a number of developments in this regard, with an upsurge in participation among new media organisations, but also traditional ones, even if their journalists have not always embraced such participatory elements (Flew, 2009; Knight, 2008; O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Second, we can observe immense economic implications. The developments of the past decade have led to significant threats to established business models of journalism, as the previous 'rivers of gold' of classified advertising have moved online. A recent account of the emergence of online 'pure-plays' in career, automotive and real estate advertising has demonstrated the devastating effect this has had on Fairfax Media, one of Australia's largest news media publishers (Williams, 2013). The economic restructures of media businesses is leading to increasingly precarious job situations, as seen in the retrenchment of between 1000-1500 journalists in Australia in 2012 and a self-reported loss in the quality of news (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Third, major social and cultural transformations have been taking place. First, the rapid rise of new technologies has led to an emerging 'participatory culture' (Jenkins, 2006) or 'digital culture' (Deuze, 2006). McNair (2009: 239) argues they are leading to 'unprecedentedly participatory democracies'. In journalism, these processes have resulted in an enduring tension between professional control and open participation (Lewis, 2012). Second, the rise of consumption cultures in the West has led to an increase in soft news and lifestyle journalism, which is challenging traditional hard news reporting in new ways (Hanusch, 2012a; Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2013). While

some criticise such types of journalism, others argue they can actually enhance journalism's contribution to the democratic process by popularising knowledge (Hanusch, 2012a; Hartley, 2000; McNair, 2009).

In summary, news production has come under pressure due to a variety of factors, such as cutbacks in editorial resources, increases in workload, profit-making and advertising demands, the growing importance of audience measures, sensationalism, as well as shrinking editorial independence. Journalists increasingly face challenges posed by new media technologies, user-generated content, professionalised public relations, and other forces. Organisational aspects appear to be an important factor in this regard. Public service broadcasting, such as the ABC and SBS,, will arguably be differently affected by the economic and technological implications, as earlier studies have demonstrated (Flew, 2009; Wardle & Williams, 2010). Further, research into journalism's transformation has been mostly focused on the newspaper industry, not surprising given that it appears to have struggled the most through declines in circulation (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Hence, we need to differentiate between journalists' perception in terms of the type of medium they work for, be it newspapers, broadcasting, or magazine journalism. Geography also matters, as research on local news suggests that organisations in non-metropolitan areas have lagged behind metropolitan ones, although they are catching up quickly (Vine, 2012).

In order to address these issues, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of Australian journalists' perceptions of the various changes their industry has experienced over the past five years. Four research questions were developed to facilitate the analysis:

RQ1: What are journalists' perceptions of changes in their industry over the past five years?
RQ2: What are the differences and similarities in journalists' perceptions of changes in relation to the ownership model of their organisation?
RQ3: What are the differences and similarities in journalists' perceptions of changes in relation to their type of medium?
RQ4: What are the differences and similarities in journalists' perceptions of changes in relation to their geographic location?

**Methodology**
The research questions are analysed using data from a representative survey of 605 Australian journalists, conducted between May 2012 and April 2013. The survey was part of the Worlds of Journalism Study, which examines journalism culture across the globe (www.worldsofjournalism.org). While a number of small or beat-specific journalist surveys have been undertaken in recent years in Australia (see, for example, Schultz, 1998; Brand and Pearson, 2001; Hanusch, 2012b; Josephi & Richards, 2012), this was the first large-scale representative survey of the country's overall journalism workforce in more than 20 years (Henningham, 1993). The study took an inclusive approach to determining its target population, in that it defined journalists as those who had some editorial responsibility over news content. This definition follows those employed by other seminal studies (for example, Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). It also included freelance journalists, as well as those working at so-called 'alternative media', such as Indigenous and ethnic news organisations, community radio stations, as well as alternative online news sites. Such types of journalists have historically not always been included in similar, large-scale journalist surveys (for example, Henningham, 1993; Weaver et al., 2007). Their exclusion, it is argued, meant that these studies only took account of a certain kind of mainstream, institutionalised journalism. This survey, however, applied a broader definition of the term journalist, and to represent the variety of types of journalists, alternative media's inclusion was deemed important. This also meant general magazine journalists were included, while Henningham (1993) only included news magazines. To ensure respondents worked primarily as journalists, only those were interviewed who earned at least 50 per cent of their income from paid work for news

media and were involved in producing and editing journalistic content, editorial supervision or coordination.

Random staff lists were generated across a sample of 290 news organisations, using provided staff lists, by-lines on published news stories, information from government agencies and trade publications, academic sources, as well as news media stories. The sample was stratified to be representative of the distribution of journalists working in various media categories, such as metropolitan newspapers, regional newspapers, metropolitan radio stations, and so on. In total, 676 journalists were sampled, with telephone surveys conducted between May 2012 and March 2013. The response rate was 89.5 per cent, resulting in a final sample of 605 journalists. This compares to an overall population of Australian journalists of between 8000 and 11,000, depending on the definitions used (Christensen, 2012; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

To ascertain whether journalists had been working in the industry long enough to make informed statements about how they perceived change, only respondents who had at least five years' experience were selected for this study. It was assumed that this amount of experience was necessary to judge how much journalism had changed. Of the 605 respondents to the larger survey, 474 (78.3 per cent) had at least five years' experience.

*Measures*

Journalists with at least five years' experience were asked two main sets of questions. The first stated: 'The importance of some influences on journalism may have changed over time. Please tell me to what extent these influences have become stronger or weaker during the past five years in Australia.' Respondents were then read a list of 12 items, and asked to rate each on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'a lot weaker', 2 'somewhat weaker', 3 'did not change', 4 'somewhat stronger', and 5 'a lot stronger'. A second question stated: 'Journalism is in a state of change. Please tell me whether you think there has been an increase or a decrease in the following aspects of work in Australia.' This list also included 12 items, with respondents asked to again rate them on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'decreased a lot', 2 'decreased somewhat', 3 'did not change', 4 'increased somewhat', and 5 'increased a lot'. Items for both questions were developed on the basis of the literature reviewed earlier. In order to compare journalists' responses in relation to RQs 2 to 4, interviewers also recorded the type of medium for which respondents worked primarily, their geographic location, as well as whether they worked for a public or privately-owned media organisation.

*Sample overview*

Of the 605 respondents interviewed for the larger survey, 474 had worked as a journalist for at least five years. Thus, the remainder of this paper examines only those 474 journalists' responses. Table 1 provides an overview of some of the demographics of this subset of respondents.

*--- Insert Table 1 around here ---*

Those journalists with at least five years' experience were on average 40 years old, had almost 18 years of work experience and their salary was in the A$72-90,000 range. The comparison between those journalists with at least five years' experience and those with less than five years demonstrates some important trends in Australian journalism in recent years. Among those employed in the past five years, women represent more than two-thirds, which points to an accelerated shift towards a feminisation of journalism. However, this is only numerical and not related to power structures, with men still dominating senior positions (Hanusch, 2013). Membership in a professional association, such as a journalists' union, demonstrates a strong shift towards a de-unionized journalism culture in the past five years, with only one-third of recent entrants being members of a professional association. In line with many other countries, the results also point to an increasingly university-educated workforce, with nine in ten recruits in the past four years holding a university degree. Increasingly, these recruits also hold a journalism degree, with

eight out of ten journalists with less than five years' work experience having specialised in journalism at university.

## Results

### Changes in influences

An examination of journalists' responses to the question about changes in a variety of influences over the past five years underlines some much-observed trends discussed earlier (Table 2).

*--- Insert Table 2 around here ---*

Audience involvement and interaction has had the most profound impact on journalists, with the top four items all related to this aspect. The strongest change has been in the use of social media, such as Twitter or Facebook, with almost all journalists saying its influence had become somewhat or a lot stronger. In fact, 87.2 per cent said social media's influence had become a lot stronger, and only 12.2 per cent that it had become somewhat stronger. User-generated content (UGC) is placed second, with nine out of 10 respondents noting its influence had become stronger, followed by audience feedback and audience involvement in news production. This findings links in with notions of increased audience interactions discussed earlier, and is evidence of journalism's integration in a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006). It is likely that such changes are also increasingly playing into the tension between professional control and open participation in journalism (Lewis, 2012; Singer et al., 2011).

The next-ranked items are primarily related to economic aspects. Eight out of 10 respondents thought profit-making pressures had become stronger, while seven out of 10 thought audience research and competition were stronger. Audience research can be grouped with economic aspects as it relates more to an organisation's efforts at telling its journalists how to produce stories that will attract a bigger audience, rather than the more direct audience interactions signified by the four top-ranked items. In addition, public relations and advertising were deemed to have become stronger influences by six out of 10 journalists. Along with these changes, journalists also experienced stronger pressure towards sensational news. Just over half the respondents believed this was the case, and only 4.9 per cent believe there was less such pressure now than five years ago.

Little change was experienced in the influence of journalism education. Roughly similar numbers believe journalism education had become a stronger and weaker influence, and the mean score (3.06 of 5) suggests little change overall. This is despite the strong increase in university-educated journalists, although it should be noted that this development may be longer term than merely five years. Henningham's (1993) study noted that only around 39 per cent of Australian journalists had a university degree, which demonstrates the enormous change in this aspect over the past 20 years.

A much-discussed aspect of journalistic practice in recent years has been the perceived drop in journalistic ethics, made particularly prominent by the phone-hacking events in Britain, and a government inquiry into the media in Australia (Cathcart, 2012; Flew & Swift, 2013). Increased audience participation has also led journalists themselves to question ethical standards, as noted in a survey of Norwegian journalists (Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2010). The findings for Australian journalists support such notions, with 42.5 per cent of respondents saying journalism ethics had actually become a weaker influence, compared with only 17.4 per cent who thought it had become a stronger influence.

On the organisational level, we can observe some further interesting trends (Table 3).

*--- Insert Table 3 around here ---*

On the level of private versus public ownership, differences are mostly related to economic influences. Journalists in privately-owned media are significantly more likely to believe that competition-related influences have become stronger than their colleagues in publicly-owned media. A test to measure the size of this effect points to a small-to-medium size effect (Cohen's $d$=0.336). Significant differences also exist in relation to public relations, advertising considerations and pressure towards sensational news. Surprisingly, however, it is journalists in publicly-owned media who perceive these three influences as having become stronger. Again, the effect sizes for each of these three influences are small-to-medium (public relations: $d$=0.373; advertising considerations: $d$=0.356; pressure toward sensational news: $d$=0.377). As the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) does not carry advertising, and the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) only a relatively small amount, one would have expected this trend to be the reverse. There are two possible explanations for this finding. First, it may be that even journalists in public-service media are feeling increasing pressure from commercial influences. While ratings may be less important in public-service media, they are still relevant, particularly at a time of decreasing, or at least stagnant, financial support for such media. Increasingly, such media are expected to demonstrate their public value, and part of this relates to audiences. Indeed, a study of Dutch public service broadcasting suggests that the trend towards sensationalism does not only apply to commercial, but also publicly-owned media (Vettehen & Nuijten, 2006). Assuming this may be a relatively new trend for PSB organisations, it may explain why journalists working for these media see stronger pressure toward sensational news. However, a second explanation relates to the phrasing of the original question, which asked journalists to state whether influences had become stronger in Australia. As such, responses may not necessarily reflect journalists' own experience of such influences, but rather be a general comment on Australian journalism as a whole.

In relation to journalists' primary publishing platforms, we can see differences in audience feedback and involvement in news production on one hand, and public relations and advertising considerations on the other. First, newspaper journalists are significantly more likely than their colleagues in broadcast and magazines to believe that audience-related aspects have become more influential. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to identify differences between the three groups of journalists shows significant results for both audience feedback ($F$(2, 440)=11.78, $p$<.001, $\eta^2$=.051) and audience involvement ($F$2, 437)=6.07, $p$<.01, $\eta^2$=0.27). Games-Howell post-hoc analyses[1] show differences specifically between both newspapers and broadcast, as well as newspapers and magazines[1]. The effect sizes are small-to-medium (for audience feedback: between newspapers and broadcast: $d$=0.358; between newspapers and magazines: $d$=0.430; for audience involvement: between newspapers and broadcast: $d$=0.241; between newspapers and magazines: $d$=0.307). ANOVAs were also significant in terms of the commercial influences from public relations ($F$(2, 439)=4.05, $p$<.05, $\eta^2$=.018) and advertising considerations ($F$(2, 434)=4.59, $p$<.05, $\eta^2$=.021). Games-Howell tests show that magazine journalists believe more strongly that these influences have increased. In terms of public relations, magazine journalists are significantly more likely than newspaper journalists to say this influence has become stronger, althoughthis appears to be a rather small effect ($d$=0.308). Magazine journalists are also more likely than their newspaper or broadcast colleagues to say advertising considerations have a stronger influence. Again, the effect sizes are relatively small ($d$=0.272 and 0.311, respectively). Hence, it appears that influences from audience interaction have been strongest in newspapers, while magazines have been more strongly affected by economic implications.

Audience-related differences were also found between local and metropolitan news organisations. Here, journalists in metropolitan media were significantly more likely to perceive stronger influence from social media, user-generated content and audience research. Effect sizes are relatively small, however ($d$=0.228, 0.327 and 0.298, respectively). Nevertheless, this finding shows that the impact of audience interaction is stronger in metropolitan news organisations. One explanation may be that local news organisations have tended to lag behind metropolitan ones. Vine (2012) notes this trend, but also argues that digital technologies are beginning to make their mark in

local newspapers. Her study showed editors 'appear to be enthusiastic about social networking capabilities, and are embracing, or ready to embrace, interactivity such as that offered by Facebook and Twitter' (Vine, 2012: 170).

*Changes in aspects of work*
Technical aspects dominate the ranking of changes in various aspects of journalistic work, demonstrating the way in which news work has transformed in recent years (Table 4).

*--- Insert Table 4 around here ---*

All but 17 of the journalists responding to this item suggested the use of search engines had increased over the past five years, with the remainder seeing no change. Similarly, 85.3 per cent said the importance of technical skills had increased. This is not surprising given recent technological developments, and there is a long history of journalists experiencing a changing technology environment, both in Australia and elsewhere (Deuze & Paulussen, 2002; Garrison, 1999; Henningham, 1995; Örnebring, 2010; Quinn, 1999). Indeed, as technologies continue to evolve at increasingly rapid pace, this is unlikely to change in the future. But a further significant change in journalistic work is related to work conditions. Almost eight in ten respondents said average working hours of journalists had increased. A similar number also said the time available for researching stories had decreased. Again, anecdotal evidence has long suggested this, and the finding is similar to that found recently in Norwegian journalists (Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2010).

A further increase relates to journalists' interaction with their audiences. Three out of four said these interactions had increased over the past five years, a finding in line with the stronger impact of audience-related influences discussed earlier. As the sample parameters showed, university education in general, and in journalism specifically, has been on the rise in Australia, and respondents noted their importance had generally increased. Little change was found in terms of journalistic freedom – both within organisations (journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions) and across media more broadly (the amount of press freedom in Australia). A strong decline was noted by journalists in relation to quality. More than half said the credibility of journalism had decreased, as had the quality of journalistic standards. This finding is reminiscent of a similarly low regard for the quality of journalism identified by O'Donnell et al.'s (2012) interviews with Australian newspaper journalists.

On the organizational level, journalists in public-service media experienced a stronger increase in the importance of technical skills, with $d$=0.566 suggesting a medium-size effect. These journalists were also more likely to believe the importance of a university degree had increased, as well as the importance of a degree specifically in journalism or a related field. The effect sizes were small-to-medium ($d$=0.485 and 0.312, respectively). Further, public-service media journalists are more likely to complain about lack of time, with significantly more of them arguing that the time available for research stories had decreased, a medium-sized effect ($d$=0.483). Arguably, then, resource implications and technology have had a stronger impact on public service media than on commercial media.

Comparatively fewer differences appear in relation to the platform for which journalists work primarily. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) found significance differences in the importance of a university degree ($F$(2, 434)=6.95, $p$<.01, $\eta^2$=.031), the quality of journalistic standards ($F$(2, 436)=4.16, $p$<.05, $\eta^2$=.019) and the time available for researching stories ($F$(2,439)=4.86, $p$<.01, $\eta^2$=.022). Post-hoc tests (Games-Howell) revealed that the main differences were between magazines on one hand, and newspapers and broadcast on the other. Magazine journalists were significantly less likely than both newspaper ($d$=0.415) and broadcast journalists ($d$=0.249) to believe the importance of a university degree had increased. They were, however, significantly more likely than newspaper journalists to believe the quality of journalistic standards had decreased ($d$=0.271). This may be linked to the earlier finding that magazine journalists experienced a stronger impact

from economic influences. At the same time, magazine journalists appear to still have more time for researching their stories, as they are significantly less likely than broadcast journalists. The effect size for this difference ($d$=0.318) is relatively small, however, and it may merely be a function of the publication cycle, with most magazines published weekly or monthly, while the other media publish daily or multiple times a day.

A relatively large number of differences are found in relation to geographic location. Journalists in metropolitan media are significantly more likely to believe the importance of technical skills ($d$=0.256) and the interactions with audiences ($d$=0.417) have increased. This may be because audience interaction has been a more immediate change for metropolitan journalists, and that regional journalists may merely be lagging in this area. At the same time, local journalists have always had closer relations with their audiences (Richards, 2013). Hence, even new technologies may not have changed these interactions with audiences as they were already at a high level. Metropolitan journalists are also more likely to think that the time available for research has decreased ($d$=0.254), and that the credibility of journalism has decreased ($d$=0.403). On the other hand, local journalists believe that a degree in journalism or a related field has become more important ($d$=0.300), and that the relevance of journalism for society has increased ($d$=0.259). They are also more likely to believe that press freedom has improved ($d$=0.236).

**Discussion**

The results presented here provide empirical evidence for a number of intuitive hypotheses. In relation to influences on their work, journalists experience the strongest increase in audience interaction brought on by technological innovation. Indeed, technical aspects were considered the most important changes in terms of work aspects. The strongest increase in influence was in social media and user-generated content, followed closely by more generic audience feedback and audience involvement in news production. These findings are interesting in that these influences are deemed to have increased more strongly than economic ones. One reason for this may be that audience interactions and technical skills are experienced more immediately by journalists. Research on influences in journalism has found that journalists tend to rank those influences more highly, which have a direct impact on their work, even though they may not always be the most influential (Hanitzsch et al., 2010). Another important finding should be taken as a warning for the quality of journalism. Journalists are very concerned about ethics, with a majority saying ethical standards are less influential. They also believe that journalistic standards more generally are dropping, that there has been an increase in sensationalism, and that more generally the credibility of journalism has decreased. While one may argue that journalists may be of a critical nature and as such always harsh critics of their own industry, even to the extent of cynicism, the fact the overwhelming majority subscribe to this crisis narrative means it should be taken seriously.

On the organisational level, the study found a number of differences depending on which platform or media type journalists work for, as well as the geographic location of their organisation. Journalists working for public-service media argue that economic influences and sensationalism have become stronger, while they also claim to have less time and a stronger demand for technical skills. It was noted that public service media are not immune from tendencies toward sensationalism (Vettehen & Nuijten, 2006), and, given public-service media's role in social innovation as part of their charter (Flew, 2009), one would expect that technical skills be more in demand. The literature review in this article has noted the impact of transformations particularly on newspaper journalists, and this study found that indeed these journalists most strongly experienced an increase in audience influences. Economic impacts were experienced the most strongly at magazines, however, pointing to the turmoil in the magazine industry in recent years. In terms of their geographic location, metropolitan journalists experienced a much stronger impact from audience interaction and related influences, such as social media and user-generated content. Potential explanations are that metropolitan organisation have been more active in the use of new technologies for audience

interactions, but also the fact that regional journalists have always had a relatively high level of interaction with their audiences.

This paper has provided a mere snapshot of Australian journalists' experience of change in their industry at a particularly transformative time. Given the current environment of accelerating technological innovation, unresolved challenges to established business models, and a broader shift toward participatory cultures, it would appear that change will be a constant for some time to come. Yet, very rarely have scholars inquired into the way in which journalists experience specific changes in their industries. Further examining such experiences will also be of benefit for journalism educators, as they prepare the journalists of the future who will be working in a fast-paced and fast-changing environment. As the industry continues to transform, it will be important to keep track of the impact of change on journalists. Particularly, more in-depth questions need to be asked in relation to the ways in which these changes affect journalistic culture. Does increased audience engagement and feedback lead journalists to reformulate news values? Will they become more likely to cater only to what their audiences want to know, rather than what they feel they ought to know? To what extent may the organisational context play a part in any changes in journalistic culture? Such questions will be important to explore in future research.

One limitation of this study is that survey data can paint only a broad picture. In-depth interviews may yield valuable insights into the interplay between the various types of changes that journalists experience. A further limitation of this study is that it relies on journalists' own perceptions, which may be coloured by a variety of influences. The results therefore need to be seen in this context, and the fact that what journalists say they do may not always be what they actually do. Ideally, future studies will generate evidence that can triangulate such survey results with actual journalistic behaviour, for example through newsroom observations or content analysis. Thus, it is hoped that this paper can provide a basis for future studies that inquire into the way in which journalists experience change.

## Endnotes

[1] While an ANOVA can only identify whether there are significant differences overall among three or more groups, post-hoc tests allow researchers to identify which particular groups are different from each other. Games-Howell post-hoc tests are used in the case of unequal variances or unequal group sizes, which was the case in this study.

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**Table 1: Sample parameters**

|  | 5 years and more experience (N=474) | Less than 5 years' experience (N=131) | Total (N=605) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age (years) | 40.56 | 25.61 | 37.31 | *** |
| Experience (years) | 17.78 | 2.5 | 14.5 | *** |
| Salary (Scale 1-10) | 5.07 | 3.21 | 4.66 | *** |
| Political stance (Scale 0-10) | 4.32 | 4.41 | 4.34 | |
| Gender (female) | 51.9% | 68.7% | 55.5% | *** |
| Full-time employment | 85.9% | 96.2% | 88.1% | |
| Member in a professional association | 51.8% | 33.6% | 47.8% | *** |
| Holds a university degree | 79.3% | 92.4% | 82.1% | *** |
| Specialised in journalism at University | 70.1% | 81.1% | 72.7% | * |

*p<.05; ***p<.001

**Table 2: Changes in the influence of a variety of factors**

|  | N | Mean | SD (Standard Deviation) | Influence somewhat or a lot stronger (in %) | Influence somewhat or a lot weaker (in %) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social media, such as Twitter or Facebook | 468 | 4.86 | 0.39 | 99.4 | 0.2 |
| User-generated contents, such as blogs | 468 | 4.58 | 0.70 | 92.3 | 1.7 |
| Audience feedback | 466 | 4.19 | 0.74 | 84.8 | 2.1 |
| Audience involvement in news production | 461 | 4.14 | 0.80 | 81.6 | 2.4 |
| Profit-making pressures | 462 | 4.10 | 0.79 | 80.4 | 2.2 |
| Audience research | 448 | 3.89 | 0.78 | 71.6 | 3.2 |
| Competition | 467 | 3.75 | 0.99 | 69.1 | 13.9 |
| Public relations | 465 | 3.73 | 0.83 | 63 | 4.9 |
| Advertising considerations | 459 | 3.69 | 0.82 | 59.5 | 5 |
| Pressure toward sensational news | 463 | 3.61 | 0.77 | 54.5 | 4.9 |
| Journalism education | 416 | 3.06 | 1.02 | 33.7 | 28.1 |
| Ethical standards | 464 | 2.74 | 0.87 | 17.4 | 42.5 |

Note: Mean range: Min: 1 (a lot weaker), Max: 5 (a lot stronger)

**Table 3: Changes in influence on organizational level (using mean scores)**

| | Ownership | | | Platform | | | | Geographic location | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Private | Public | | Newspapers | Broadcast | Magazines | | Local | Metropolitan | | |
| Social media, such as Twitter or Facebook | 4.86 | 4.90 | | 4.84 | 4.90 | 4.85 | | 4.80 | 4.89 | * | 4.86 |
| User-generated contents, such as blogs | 4.58 | 4.58 | | 4.61 | 4.48 | 4.64 | | 4.42 | 4.64 | ** | 4.58 |
| Audience feedback | 4.20 | 4.14 | | 4.33 | 4.02 | 3.95 | *** | 4.14 | 4.22 | | 4.19 |
| Audience involvement in news production | 4.12 | 4.25 | | 4.26 | 4.02 | 3.94 | ** | 4.06 | 4.17 | | 4.14 |
| Profit-making pressures | 4.08 | 4.23 | | 4.13 | 3.99 | 4.17 | | 4.06 | 4.11 | | 4.10 |
| Audience research | 3.89 | 3.90 | | 3.88 | 3.84 | 3.89 | | 3.73 | 3.96 | ** | 3.89 |
| Competition | 3.78 | 3.45 | * | 3.76 | 3.66 | 3.91 | | 3.69 | 3.77 | | 3.75 |
| Public relations | 3.69 | 4.00 | * | 3.63 | 3.81 | 3.92 | * | 3.62 | 3.77 | | 3.73 |
| Advertising considerations | 3.66 | 3.96 | * | 3.69 | 3.60 | 3.97 | * | 3.71 | 3.69 | | 3.69 |
| Pressure toward sensational news | 3.58 | 3.86 | * | 3.62 | 3.69 | 3.45 | | 3.59 | 3.61 | | 3.61 |
| Journalism education | 3.07 | 2.98 | | 3.12 | 3.05 | 2.85 | | 3.21 | 3.00 | | 3.06 |
| Ethical standards | 2.76 | 2.59 | | 2.84 | 2.66 | 2.66 | | 2.86 | 2.69 | | 2.74 |

Note: Mean range: Min: 1 (a lot weaker), Max: 5 (a lot stronger)

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

**Table 4: Changes in various aspects of journalistic work**

| | N | Mean | SD (Standard Deviation) | Increased somewhat or a lot (in %) | Decreased somewhat or a lot (in %) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The use of search engines | 466 | 4.70 | 0.53 | 96.3 | 0 |
| The importance of technical skills | 463 | 4.28 | 0.80 | 85.3 | 2.8 |
| Average working hours of journalists | 461 | 4.01 | 0.75 | 77 | 1.9 |
| Interactions of journalists with their audiences | 457 | 3.87 | 0.99 | 74.9 | 11.1 |
| The importance of having a university degree | 460 | 3.66 | 0.94 | 50 | 6.8 |
| The importance of having a degree in journalism or a related field | 458 | 3.44 | 0.94 | 41.3 | 11.8 |
| The relevance of journalism for society | 465 | 3.36 | 0.91 | 45.5 | 18.1 |
| Journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions | 454 | 2.98 | 0.75 | 20 | 20.7 |
| The amount of press freedom in Australia | 462 | 2.94 | 0.66 | 14 | 21.2 |
| The credibility of journalism | 463 | 2.51 | 0.74 | 8.2 | 55.3 |
| The quality of journalistic standards | 462 | 2.48 | 0.85 | 13 | 57.6 |
| Time available for researching stories | 464 | 1.98 | 0.91 | 6.1 | 78.9 |

Note: Mean range: Min: 1 (decreased a lot), Max: 5 (increased a lot)

**Table 5: Changes in various aspects of journalistic work on organizational level (using mean scores)**

| | Ownership | | | Platform | | | | Geographic location | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Private | Public | | Newspapers | Broadcast | Magazines | | Local | Metropolitan | | |
| The use of search engines | 4.70 | 4.73 | | 4.74 | 4.67 | 4.61 | | 4.65 | 4.72 | | 4.70 |
| The importance of technical skills | 4.23 | 4.68 | *** | 4.27 | 4.35 | 4.17 | | 4.14 | 4.34 | * | 4.28 |
| Average working hours of journalists | 4.00 | 4.06 | | 3.96 | 4.08 | 4.02 | | 3.94 | 4.04 | | 4.01 |
| Interactions of journalists with their audiences | 3.86 | 3.98 | | 3.87 | 3.80 | 3.94 | | 3.59 | 3.99 | *** | 3.87 |
| The importance of having a university degree | 3.61 | 4.06 | ** | 3.79 | 3.63 | 3.31 | ** | 3.75 | 3.62 | | 3.66 |
| The importance of having a degree in journalism or a related field | 3.41 | 3.70 | * | 3.50 | 3.46 | 3.20 | | 3.64 | 3.36 | ** | 3.44 |
| The relevance of journalism for society | 3.37 | 3.24 | | 3.29 | 3.47 | 3.39 | | 3.52 | 3.29 | * | 3.36 |
| Journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions | 2.99 | 2.94 | | 2.97 | 3.01 | 2.98 | | 3.02 | 2.97 | | 2.98 |
| The amount of press freedom in Australia | 2.93 | 2.98 | | 2.93 | 2.96 | 2.95 | | 3.04 | 2.89 | * | 2.94 |
| The credibility of journalism | 2.51 | 2.50 | | 2.52 | 2.57 | 2.41 | | 2.72 | 2.43 | *** | 2.51 |
| The quality of journalistic standards | 2.51 | 2.27 | | 2.58 | 2.42 | 2.27 | * | 2.49 | 2.48 | | 2.48 |
| Time available for researching stories | 2.02 | 1.59 | ** | 2.01 | 1.84 | 2.26 | ** | 2.14 | 1.91 | * | 1.98 |

Note: Mean range: Min: 1 (decreased a lot), Max: 5 (increased a lot)

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001