

Career Opportunities in Journalism

Journalists report on current affairs and other events for publications in print and electronic media, or for broadcast on radio or television. Reporters are sensitive to news of breaking events, often observing such events, examining documents, interviewing people and writing stories on laptops to be submitted electronically. News writers may re-write the information, previously submitted by reporters, prior to publication or broadcast.

News reporters may specialize in fields such as politics, foreign affairs, business, arts, sports, health, or science. Increasingly, the work is being done by news teams encompassing reporters, editors, photographers and graphic artists.

Reporters on morning papers may often work from late afternoon to midnight. Those on afternoon or evening papers may work from early morning to mid afternoon. Long hours and irregular schedules can be a part of the job. In contrast, reporters and writers on magazines, work regular daytime hours. Different sub-fields will have various schedules as well as job-specific tasks. A foreign correspondent, for example, may be required to travel (or relocate) more often than a local business reporter. A legislative correspondent would need to be available when Congress is in session. Not all journalists are writers and reporters. Other careers include behind-the-scenes staff such as directors, editors, advertising and promotion specialists, producers and station managers.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

Typical entry to the field is through internships, summer or part-time work with newspapers or broadcasters. Large publications and broadcast stations seldom hire recent grads, preferring to hire persons who have 3-5 years experience at smaller media organizations. In 2003, the salary range for full-time jobs in journalism extended from \$14,000 to more than \$100,000 with a median annual salary of \$29,000. Journalists may also work as freelancers (being paid by the article) and publish through several different venues.

Qualifications Necessary/Application Procedures to Enter Field

A Bachelor's degree with a specialization in Journalism, Broadcasting or in Liberal Arts is widely preferred. However, some employers look for subject-matter specialties such as Economics, Political Science or Business, as well as a foreign language. It is important for journalists to keep "clips" (published articles) of all their previous work. Computer skills are essential, especially for students planning to work for an on-line publication. A familiarity with databases and computer graphics is very helpful. An internship or practical experience is expected before entry into the field.

Sample Employers

Wherever there is a daily or weekly newspaper, local television or radio station, magazines or news media organization, there will be opportunities for employment. There is an emergence of twenty-four hour news and specialty networks and there are also numerous smaller publications that focus on law, politics, economics, government and defense on a local, national or an international scope. Students are urged to use a portfolio to showcase their written, oral and graphics related communications skills. A sample videotape of reporting, editing or producing will be needed to apply for broadcasting positions.

Demand and Future Challenges of Profession

As communications is increasingly being done in team settings, the ability to have strong communications skills, interpersonal skills as well as cultural sensitivity, is gaining in importance.

Resources For More Information

Associations

- *American Society of Newspaper Editors*, www.asne.org
- *National Newspaper Association*, www.nnaweb.org
- *Newspaper Association of America*, www.naa.org
- *Opportunities in Public Affairs*, www.opajobs.com
- *Society of Professional Journalists*, www.spj.org/index.asp
- *International Center for Journalists*, www.icfj.org
- *Wetfeet Corporate Recruitment Solution*, www.wetfeet.com

Directories:

- *Editor and Publisher International Year Book*
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, US Dept. of Labor (2000)
- *International Affairs Directory*, Seymore, Bruce (1992)

Internet Resources

- *Careers in Newspapers* www.asne.org - Provides information and links to online issues of the ASNE Reporter.
- *Detroit Free Press, Jobs Page* - <http://www.micareerbuilder.com/> - Jobs and articles about the field of journalism.
- *Dow Jones Newspaper Fund* - <https://www.newsfund.org/> - Career guide and internship information.
- *JournalismJobs.com* - <http://www.journalismjobs.com>
- - Career articles, jobs and internship, and other helpful information.
- *National Writer's Union* - <http://www.nwu.org>- Career resources for freelance writers.
- *Writers Digest* - <http://www.writersdigest.com> - Provides tips and information on how to get published in magazines and books - especially helpful are the "Writers Guidelines" and "Market of the Day" sections.
- *Wetfeet* www.wetfeet.com

Publications

- *Careers in Journalism*. Jan Goldberg, McGraw Hill, 2005.
- *Careers in International Affairs*. Edited by Maria Pinto Carland and Lisa A. Gihring, Georgetown University Press, 2003.
- *Editor and Publisher International Year Book*. Editor & Publisher, 86th Ed. 2006.
- *News Media Yellow Book*. Leadership Directories, 2006.

Opportunities in Journalism Careers. D. L. Ferguson and J. Patten, McGraw Hill, 2001.