

Causes for concern

The state of New Zealand journalism in 2015

Abstract: This survey of New Zealand journalists, completed in late 2015, shows the impact of the rapid move to a digital news environment. Journalists are more educated, but working longer hours and feeling more pressure, both ethically and resource-wise, than they were only two years ago. Technological changes are felt acutely, particularly the use of social media and user-generated content. Journalists are concerned that advertising and commercial pressures are stronger, while overall standards are weakening. This study also shows, for the first time, that women are seriously disadvantaged in pay and promotion despite making up most of the workforce. Despite these challenges, overall job satisfaction remains at similar levels to previous surveys and journalists' own commitment to ethical standards and journalism's fourth-estate role remains strong.

Keywords: attitudes, employment, ethics, gender, journalists, journalism education, New Zealand, survey

*JAMES HOLLINGS (Massey University),
FOLKER HANUSCH (University of Vienna),
RAVI BALASUBRAMANIAN (Massey University) and
GEOFF LEALAND (Waikato University).*

LIKE most countries, New Zealand journalism is experiencing significant change, with most major media organisations having restructured in the past two-to-three years to meet new technological and commercial pressures involved with the move to online news gathering and dissemination. All the main media organisations have moved or are moving to online news, with converged newsrooms serving both online outlets and offline outlets such as print, radio or television. The decline in off-line advertising revenue and the slow growth of digital advertising income is putting additional pressure on news media organisations, which have responded by cutting journalist positions, especially in subediting. Many middle-and-upper management positions have also changed or been disestablished. Simultaneously, the rapid growth of social media has provided journalists with new news sources and dissemination outlets, while also introducing new ethical dilemmas about intrusion into personal social media spaces.

These changes raise important questions about their impact on New Zealand journalists. Earlier surveys of New Zealand journalists have generally confirmed that they position themselves within the Anglophone tradition, seeing themselves as independent, objective reporters giving the public important information (Hannis, et al. 2014; Hollings, Samson, Tilley, & Lealand, 2007). These surveys have also noted concerns about rising commercial and technological pressures due to the move to digital journalism and about the lack of ethnic diversity in the workforce. A particular concern, noted in both quantitative surveys and qualitative research, has been gender inequality, but there has been no reliable data to confirm its extent across the workforce. A 2007 survey found that women, although predominating in the workforce, earned less than men, but did not control for experience, rank or age (Hollings, et al., 2007). In a study of New Zealand women journalists, Strong (2011) found they were leaving journalism early, in part because of the predominantly masculine newsroom culture, but did not quantify pay or rank discrimination. A 2013 survey found women outnumbered men in most roles, except in senior management, but drew no conclusions about pay (Hannis, et al., 2014).

In order to examine what these developments in the transformation of journalism mean for journalists' professional views and backgrounds, this article reports on the findings of a 2015 survey of New Zealand journalists. The study was conducted as part of the Worlds of Journalism Study (www.worldsofjournalism.org), the first-ever global survey of journalists, which encompassed more than 60 countries.

Methodology

In order to define who qualified as a respondent for this study of New Zealand journalists, we relied on established definitions such as those by Weaver and Wilhoit (1986), who define a journalist as someone who has some editorial responsibility over news content. Only professional journalists were surveyed, i.e. those who earned at least 50 percent of their income from paid work for news media and who were involved in producing and editing journalistic content, editorial supervision or co-ordination. In line with the broader framework for the study, we excluded amateur journalists, such as bloggers or citizen journalists. We included a wide range of publishing platforms in our approach, such as newspapers, magazines, television stations, radio stations, online media and news agencies.

While in the past it has often been difficult and time-consuming to identify journalists in New Zealand, the spread of available databases has allowed for improved efficiency. Using two public databases targeted at public relations practitioners who want to reach journalists, we were able to identify a total of 2415 unique email addresses. We conducted considerable cross-checking and deeper

examination of random entries to ensure they were current and exhaustive of the actual number of journalist positions in individual news organisations. While we were satisfied that the vast majority of journalists were captured across the two databases, we also recognised that not all news workers may have been listed. Our conservative estimate assumes that the New Zealand journalist population is no more than 3000.

Following the identification of journalists' email addresses, we sent invitations to all 2415 accounts, with a link to the survey, which was hosted on the Survey Monkey platform. The questionnaire had been developed collaboratively by the wide range of investigators involved in the Worlds of Journalism Study and we used the standard questionnaire. Two questions, on job satisfaction and experience of reporting practices, were added for the New Zealand context. Following the original invitation, sent on 30 November 2015, two reminders were sent to those who had not responded, with each one week apart. The survey was closed on 14 January 2016. Individual reminders were also sent to incomplete responses a maximum of two times. Of the 2415 accounts, 19 respondents opted out of the survey, while 117 invitations could not be delivered. A further 15 respondents emailed us to state they did not qualify for the survey criteria of what constitutes a journalist. The total number of valid emails of journalist respondents for the purpose of response rate calculation was therefore 2283. In total, 656 started the survey; however, 117 responses needed to be excluded because they did not answer any of the substantial questions, or turned out not to be journalists. Thus, the final number of valid responses was 539, resulting in a response rate of 23.6 percent. Considering the study was conducted via an online survey, this is a relatively high response rate. We estimate this gives our results a margin of error of 5 percent with 99 percent confidence, or 3.8 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

Results

Age

Journalists in this survey were slightly older on average than in previous surveys. The median age was 44 years and the mean age 43.16 years. This is considerably older than the 2013 survey sample, where the estimated median was 38 years and estimated mean was 40 years (Hannis, 2014). In 2007, the estimated median was 39 years. As each journalist's exact age was collected in this survey, we can give a precise median and mean, rather than the estimated median and mean of previous surveys. For brevity, we have collated ages into bands. These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: New Zealand journalists by age

	Frequency	Percent
20 years or less	3	0.6
21 - 30 years	106	21.1
31 -40 years	95	18.9
41 - 50 years	122	24.3
51 - 60 years	124	24.7
More than 60 years	53	10.5
TOTAL	503	100

Employment details

The vast majority of our respondents appeared to be in relatively secure employment, with 87 percent stating they had a full-time contract. Only 6 percent were employed part-time and another 6 percent were freelancers. Most (88 percent) worked for one newsroom, while another 7 percent worked for two. Almost one-quarter had other paid jobs, suggesting that a not insignificant minority need to supplement their income through non-journalistic work. Only one-third (33 percent) belonged to some kind of professional association, a result that is almost identical to 2013. More than one-third (38 percent) worked on a specific beat, of which the economy/ business (16 percent) sports (14 percent) and crime/police/ the courts/ emergency services (9.4 percent) were the most common.

Gender

As in previous surveys (Hannis, 2014; Hollings, 2007; Lealand, 2004), most New Zealand journalists are women. However, this numeric majority does not result in increased power, as this survey showed women are still disadvantaged in a range of ways. As Table 2 shows, women are on average six years younger than men and have 5.3 years less work experience. This demonstrates that journalists from both genders are, on average, joining the industry at around the same age, i.e. when they are 26 to 27 years old. Yet, women are significantly under-represented in junior and senior management roles, where their numbers are far fewer than those of men. While only half of men work in non-management roles, that is the case for two-thirds of women. While at first sight the bias towards men in management roles may be because they are more experienced, closer examination shows that is not the case. In fact, the five-year gap in experience holds true in both junior and senior ranks, thus negating any role that experience may play. Given that women have predominated in the profession since at least 2007 and probably several years before that, this suggests that

women are not being considered equally for promotion. Similarly, women are also paid significantly less, an aspect further examined in the following section. Adding to these aspects is the fact that women tend to be significantly more likely to have a university degree. Women also appear to be in more tenuous employment conditions, with slightly fewer of them in full-time employment, but this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 2: Key demographics of New Zealand journalists

	Female	Male
Age (mean)	41	47
Experience (mean)	14.4	19.7
Salary (median, after tax)	\$44,104	\$55,552
Rank (in percent)		
Senior manager	14.9%	23.5%
Junior manager	19.2%	26.3%
Non-management staff	65.9%	50.2%
University degree (in percent)	89.3%	80.7%
Full-time employment	84.7%	90%

Income

In 2015, the median income was \$49,639 after tax (calculated following Jefcoat’s formula for calculating the median from banded data (1995). This was an increase of 5.36 percent in real terms since 2013 (\$47,110 after tax in 2015 currency value, calculated using the RBNZ inflation calculator, using the first quarter of 2013 and last quarter of 2015 as start and end points (RBNZ, 2016). The mean income for 2015 after tax rose 6.1 percent in real terms from \$52,317 in 2013 to \$55,543. Converted into before-tax figures, using the IRD online calculator (IRD, 2016), median income rose 6.4 percent to \$61,000, from \$57,328, again in 2015 dollars, while mean income rose 7.1 percent from \$64,767 to \$69,400. Over the approximately two years between surveys, this is a rise of about 3 percent per annum in real terms.

However, these broad increases conceal significant differences, with experience, location, gender, rank and education determining how much a journalist will earn (Table 3). Not surprisingly, how long journalists have been in the job is still the most important predictor for how much they will be able to earn. A multiple regression of various potential influences reveals journalists’ experience accounts for the largest share of influences on salary, explaining just over one-third of the variance in the model ($R^2=.343$, adjusted $R^2=.334$, $F(6, 426)=37.1$,

Table 3: Predictors of New Zealand journalists' salary

Variable	β [95% CI]	B	sr ²	p
Experience (in years)	0.056 [0.042, 0.07]	0.346	0.095	***
Gender (1=Female)	0.666 [0.355, 0.976]	0.172	0.027	***
Rank-and-file journalist	-0.617 [-0.95, -0.283]	-0.156	0.020	***
Location (1=Regional/Local)	-1.022 [-1.333, -0.711]	-0.257	0.064	***
Education (1=University Degree)	0.703 [0.119, 1.288]	0.096	0.009	*
Specialised Education (1=studied journalism)	-0.173 [-0.498, 0.153]	-0.043	0.002	

Notes:

N=400; CI=Confidence Interval; *p<.05; ***p<.001; B=unstandardised; β =standardised regression coefficients; sr²=squared semi-partial correlations for each predictor in a regression model.

This model shows the factors predicting salary level are experience, gender, rank, location and having a university degree.

p<.001). Second-most important is a journalist's location, with regional and local journalists earning significantly less than their counterparts in metropolitan areas. Gender is also a significant influence here, with the median after-tax salary of men being 26 percent higher than that of women. Unsurprisingly, rank is also an important criterion, with junior and senior managers more likely to earn more. At the same time, experience appears still more important than rank. Finally, journalists' education matters, with those who have earned a university degree more likely to have a higher income. However, it does not seem to matter whether journalists have studied journalism. Those who specialised in journalism during their degree were not more likely to earn a higher income than those who did not.

Table 4: New Zealand journalists by job description

	Number	Percent
Senior management	109	20.2
Middle management	120	22.3
Rank and file	310	57.5
TOTAL	539	100

Position in newsroom and experience

Rank and file journalists continue to make up the bulk of the workforce, accounting for almost two thirds of respondents. The relatively high proportion of senior management is probably due to the large number of small independent media outlets captured in this survey (Table 4). Again, this may have influenced experience, with a high proportion (two-thirds) having more than 10 years' experience (Table 5).

Table 5: New Zealand journalists experience in years

	Number	Percent
1 year or less	N/A	N/A
More than 1 year but less than 2	24	4.8
2 or more but less than 5	73	14.5
5 or more but less than 10	72	14.3
10 years or more	334	64.4
Total	503	100

Ethnicity

Despite the growth in Indigenous media in recent years, with the advent of a Māori Television Service and the establishment of news organisations targeting Pasifika and Asian New Zealanders, the vast majority of the workforce remains European in origin. However, this survey did show an increase in Māori journalists compared to previous surveys, which suggests the workforce may be slowly becoming more representative, at least of Māori (Table 6).

Table 6: New Zealand journalists' ethnicity

	Number	Percent
NZ European	434	86.1
Māori	40	7.9
Pacific peoples	9	1.8
Asian	8	1.6
Other	13	2.4
Total	504	100

Platforms

For the 2015 survey, journalists could select more than one medium, reflecting changes in workplace practice, where news workers increasingly work across a variety of different distribution platforms. Organisations that had a significant offline presence as well as significant online sites (e.g. Stuff, *NZ Herald*, Television New Zealand, and Radio New Zealand) were coded for their main offline medium as well as for online. Only those journalists whose organisation had no offline presence were coded for online only. For example, Stuff and *NZ Herald* rely on their print media to generate much of their copy and were therefore considered to be both print and online. The results reveal the strong impact of convergence on New Zealand journalism, with almost 86 percent of news workers now publishing across more than one platform. In contrast, very few work in only one medium.

Table 7: New Zealand journalists by medium 2015

	Frequency	Percent
Newspaper	271	50.2
Magazine	86	16
Radio	89	16.5
Television	58	10.8
Multi-platform	463	85.9
Online only	23	4.3
Other (e.g. news agency)	3	0.6
Total	539	100

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 because multiple mentions were possible.

Job satisfaction

Despite the various challenges for New Zealand journalists, job satisfaction remains quite high. Almost four in five (78.6 percent) stated they were ‘somewhat’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their job, compared with 82.1 percent in 2013. A t-test of the job satisfaction means revealed no statistically significant difference and we can therefore note that there has been no significant shift in job satisfaction.

Table 8: New Zealand journalists’ job satisfaction

	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	136	33.5
Somewhat satisfied	183	45.1
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	27	6.7
Somewhat dissatisfied	47	11.6
Very dissatisfied	13	3.2
Total	406	100

Job autonomy

More than three-quarters of respondents (78 percent) said they had either ‘complete freedom’ or ‘a great deal of freedom’ when it came to selecting stories. Similarly, most journalists (78 percent) said they had either ‘complete freedom’ or ‘a great deal of freedom’ in deciding what aspects of a story should be emphasised. Seven percent said they had either ‘no or little freedom’. These results do not appear connected with the fact that our 2015 sample included more junior and senior managers. Many respondents said they participated in editorial and newsroom co-ordination, such as attending editorial meetings or assigning reporters.

Almost two thirds (58 percent) said they participated ‘very often’ or ‘all the time’ in such activities. However, almost a quarter (22 percent) said they ‘rarely or almost never’ took part.

Role perceptions

Of 18 possible roles journalists might undertake in their jobs, we asked respondents to rate the importance of each role in their work using a five-point scale, where 1 was unimportant and 5 was extremely important (Table 9). The rank order of these roles remains much the same as in a previous survey conducted in 2013 (Hannis, 2014). The highest-rating role was ‘Report things as they are’ (a mean rating of 4.57). Other highly important roles (in descending order) were ‘Let people express their views’ (3.96), ‘Be a detached observer’ (3.95), ‘Provide analysis of current affairs’ (3.83), ‘Provide information people need to make political decisions’ (3.54) and ‘Monitor and scrutinise political leaders’ (3.69). As in 2013, journalists saw their main roles as being to report objectively and independently in order to inform the citizenry. The least important roles were ‘Support government policy’ (1.37), ‘Convey a positive image of political leadership’ (1.46), ‘Set the political agenda’ (2.0) and ‘Be an adversary of the government’ (2.08). Respondents thus did not see themselves as being necessarily a supporter or opponent of the government. They thought it more important to ‘provide entertainment and relaxation’ (3.12) and ‘provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience’ (3.27) than to ‘support national development’ (2.63) ‘motivate people to participate in political activity’ (2.72) or even just to ‘provide advice orientation and direction for daily life’ (2.7). As in 2013, journalists appear to have a strong belief in their role as the Fourth Estate, but not to the extent of promoting social change.

In addition to the question above, respondents were asked to provide answers to the open-ended question: ‘In your own words, what are the three most important roles of journalism?’ More than 500 individual responses were recorded, from succinct one-liners to paragraph-length. By identifying recurrent words and phrases these responses were assigned to one of four categories. The first two categories dominated responses and comprised:

1. Responses which privileged aspects of professionalism or craft in journalism, as in the need to ‘inform’, ‘educate’, provide ‘objective/unbiased/non-partisan/balanced’ news coverage, as well as maintaining high standards of writing and reportage. In this respect, journalists were regarded as agents in processes of news gathering and dissemination. Two typical responses were: ‘Honesty of reporting; communication of the facts; share a balance of opinions’, and ‘There’s only one; to subjectively report the news in an even-handed manner that allows the reader to make a fully informed decision on any given topic’.

Table 9: Roles of New Zealand journalists

	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Very or extremely important (%)
Report things as they are	532	4.57	0.635	94
Let people express their views	526	3.96	0.978	71.4
Be a detached observer	530	3.95	0.995	71.5
Provide analysis of current affairs	526	3.83	1.025	67.9
Monitor and scrutinise political leaders	521	3.69	1.297	61.7
Monitor and scrutinise business	523	3.6	1.259	57.6
Provide information people need to make political decisions	527	3.54	1.291	61.1
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	527	3.27	1.194	43.5
Provide entertainment and relaxation	530	3.12	1.149	36.7
Advocate for social change	521	3.07	1.254	39
Influence public opinion	515	2.8	1.225	27.7
Motivate people to participate in political activity	518	2.72	1.339	31.3
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	522	2.7	1.241	26.1
Support national development	502	2.63	1.231	24.5
Set the political agenda	506	2.42	1.177	18.1
Be an adversary of the government	494	2.08	1.146	11.9
Convey a positive image of political leadership	513	1.46	0.8	3.5
Support government policy	504	1.37	0.705	1.4

2. Responses which argued for journalists as watchdogs or guardians of the public good, in a fourth estate role which held the powerful accountable to their readers, listeners and viewers. In this respect, journalists were regarded as advocates for a greater good. Two typical responses were: ‘Be the voice—to ask, challenge and explore on behalf of the public from a position of independence; tell the story—to inform, detail and explain to that public from a position of integrity; be the record—to chronicle the important, interesting and noteworthy from a position of authority’, and ‘keeping check on power—holding

government, business and other influencers to account and defending the media's freedom to do so.'

3. Responses which incorporated both of the above two roles, as in 'inform; entertain; hold people accountable or hold power to account; inform; entertain'.
4. Two other roles, which were cited by a small number of journalists, which pointed to the need for news organisations to be profitable and specific cultural agendas as in, 'deliver the information/news in simple language, easy to understand. In my case, translate the news accurately in Samoan to inform our listeners in their language'.

Education

More journalists appear to be entering the profession with a higher-level degree (Table 10). This probably reflects the fact that some New Zealand journalism schools are now offering journalism as a Masters-level qualification and these graduates are beginning to make their way into the industry. For example, in 2013 only a 10th of journalists had a Master's degree; in this survey 15 percent had. On the other hand, fewer journalists in this survey had a degree (85 percent, compared to 91 percent in 2013).

Table 10: Qualifications of New Zealand journalists

	Frequency	Percent
Doctorate	1	0.2
Master's degree	78	15.5
College/Bachelor's degree or equivalent	348	69.3
Undertook some university studies but no qualification	37	7.4
Completed high school	34	6.8
Did not complete high school	4	0.8
TOTAL	502	100

Ethics

Most journalists believed they should adhere to professional norms; almost all respondents (96 percent) agreed with the statement 'Journalists should always adhere to codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context' (Table 11). Within this broad agreement, however, there were nuances; 59 percent of respondents agreed with the statement 'What is ethical in journalism depends on the specific situation', while a third disagreed. Rank and file journalists (mean 3.4) were more likely to agree with this statement ($F=4.82$, $df=2$, $p<.01$)

Table 11: Ethics

	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Agree (%)
Journalists should always adhere to codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context	534	4.64	0.649	96.1
What is ethical in journalism depends on the specific situation	530	3.24	1.414	59.2
What is ethical in journalism is a matter of personal judgment	533	2.63	1.362	38.1
It is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it	522	2.63	1.348	33.8

than senior managers (mean 2.95). A total of 38 percent (2013: 40 percent) agreed with the statement ‘What is ethical in journalism is a matter of personal judgment’, (while 52 percent disagree), with rank and file again being more likely to agree (mean 2.81) than junior management (mean 2.30), ($F=7.045$, $df=2$, $p<.001$). Almost the same proportion (34 percent) agreed that ‘It is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it’. While almost half (48 percent) disagree with this statement. This suggests that rank and file journalists are less rigid about some of these ethical issues than their managers. There were no significant gender differences in the responses.

Reporting practices

The survey listed 10 common journalistic practices that involved an ethical dimension and asked respondents whether they could be justified in obtaining an important story, with 1 ‘being always justified’, 2 ‘justified on occasion’, and 3 being ‘never justified’. The most acceptable practices were ‘Using confidential business or government documents without authorisation’ (mean rating 2.07), ‘Using hidden microphones or cameras’ (2.23), ‘Using re-creations or dramatisations of news by actors’ (2.28).

It appears that New Zealand journalists are usually comfortable with deceptive and intrusive practices in order to gain information, but are not when it comes to publishing (dramatisation by actors is not counted here as a deceptive dissemination practice, because viewers are usually alerted to the use of actors) (Table 12). This suggests that journalists see a clear distinction between newsgathering and news dissemination and, by inference, believe they can make ethical judgements about when to disseminate information gained through deception.

However, they are also much divided about the acceptability of some newsgathering practices. In particular, about half think it ‘acceptable’ to use personal

Table 12: Reporting practices among NZ journalists

	Rank	Regarded as acceptable (%)
Using confidential business or government documents without authorisation	1	93
Using hidden microphones or cameras	2	76
Using re-creations or dramatisations of news by actors	3	69
Getting employed in a firm or organisation to gain inside information	4	50
Making use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission	5	49
Exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story	6	47
Paying people for confidential information	7	36
Reporting practices: claiming to be somebody else	8	26
Publishing stories with unverified content	9	23
Accepting money from sources	10	2

information without permission, on occasion, whereas half think it ‘never justified’. This is one practice which appears to be causing journalists some conflict, with a significant change in acceptability since 2013. We think this is most likely due to the increasing pressure from news organisations on journalists to use and access public social media accounts for stories.

As one said:

At a newspaper I previously worked for, we would occasionally take images off Facebook to accompany stories—typically, these would be court stories and the images would be of offenders taken from their public Facebook pages. I understand the jury is still out over whether Facebook images are private or not, but I was never certain we were doing the right thing.

Likewise, a majority of journalists thought it ‘never justified’ to exert pressure on sources for a story, pretend to be someone else, pay for information, publish unverified content or accept money. One said, in relation to whether they had exerted pressure on unwilling informants:

I have certainly talked people around when they’ve had doubts about participating in a story but I have never threatened, blackmailed or bribed anybody.

Another said:

Talking someone into a story despite their objections is a matter of degree.

If it crosses the line into bullying, then no. They must always know they have the choice not to give information.

The acceptability of using unverified content seems to depend on what journalists thought it meant. As one said, it is fine if verification is taken in the strict sense, as meaning content that is not attached to a named source:

On occasion, I have been instructed to use the word that my paper ‘understands’ that such a situation is the case. That is only done when you know a fact to be true, but you cannot get someone to be quoted on the record. I have hardly ever had a complaint after using the phrase ‘understands’ for content that cannot be independently verified.

The ranking of acceptability of these practices remained very similar between 2013 and 2015.

By far the most unacceptable practice remains accepting money from sources.

Influences on the job

Journalists experience many pressures on the job and we wanted to see how they felt various pressures were affecting them (Table 12). The survey asked them to rate how much 25 possible influences affected their work as journalists, with 1 being ‘not influential’ and 5 being ‘extremely influential’. Unsurprisingly, given the strong adherence to journalistic codes of ethics noted above, the strongest influence was ‘Journalism ethics’ (with a mean rating of 4.17). This was followed by ‘Time limits’ (3.87) ‘Information access’ (3.83), ‘Media laws and regulation’ (3.79) and ‘Availability of newsgathering resources’ (3.71). This is virtually identical to 2013, with the exception that time limits (ranked fourth then) have become significantly more pressing. As in 2013, the weakest perceived influence was ‘Pressure groups’ (1.93), ‘Owners’ and ‘Profit expectations’ (2.21).

Change

The dramatic changes in news brought about by the switch to digital dissemination and the rise of social media are reflected in journalists’ perceptions of change in their industry. The survey asked them to rate 23 elements that may have altered over the past five years in New Zealand, with 1 being ‘weakened a lot’ and 5 being ‘strengthened a lot’. ‘Social media, such as Facebook or Twitter’ strengthened the most, with a mean rating of 4.8, followed by ‘the use of search engines’ (4.63), ‘user-generated content, such as blogs’ (4.4), ‘Profit-making pressures’ (4.35), ‘Advertising pressures’ (4.07) and Working hours (4.03). There are significant shifts from 2013—while the ranking of the top three change elements is the same, the amount of perceived change has strengthened. Also, advertising pressures and working hours have now entered the top five, replacing ‘The importance of technical skills’ (4.0) and ‘Audience feedback’ (also 4.0).

The increasing commercial pressures on journalists also showed in those elements identified by respondents as having weakened the most. These were ‘time available for researching stories’ (1.76), ‘the credibility of journalism’ (2.25), ‘ethical standards’ (2.4), and ‘journalists’ freedom to make editorial decisions’ (2.69). Clearly, then, journalists are feeling keenly the impact of new media and time pressures on their work practices.

Discussion

The findings presented in this article show the effects of the significant changes taking place in the New Zealand journalism workforce, with several rounds of restructuring and consequently redundancies taking place since the last survey in 2013. The difficult commercial environment is reflected in the perceived increase in profit-making pressures, advertising pressures, time pressures and working hours. The accelerating move to digital and online forms of newsgathering and news dissemination can be seen in the increase in use of social media and search engines. What is concerning is that journalists feel these changes have affected news quality, with a perception that the credibility of journalism, ethical standards and freedom to make editorial decisions have all fallen.

It is also of concern that women journalists, despite making up the majority of the workforce for at least the past decade, still lack parity with their male counterparts. Men with the same experience earn more than women and women of equal rank (except at the senior level) are also likely to be paid less. Women are also less likely to make it into the higher ranks of the profession. Given that women have predominated in the profession since at least 2007 and probably several years before that, this suggests that women are not being considered equally for promotion. This is similar to the pattern found in a recent survey of Australian journalists, where despite women predominating in the profession, they were disadvantaged in pay and promotion (Hanusch, 2013).

Another concern is that despite evidence of some improvement, Māori, Pasifika, and Asians remain under-represented in newsrooms. Māori make up only 7.9 percent of the workforce, despite making up 15 percent of the general population. This gap is similar to Australia, where only 1.8 percent of journalists identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, despite making up 2.5 percent of the population there (Hanusch, 2013).

In summary, journalists are better educated, but feel they are working longer hours, and feeling more pressure, both ethically and resource-wise, than they were only two years ago. Given all this, some may find it surprising that overall job satisfaction has remained high. It may be that the perceptions about declining standards are only that and the move to a digital environment has produced gains, such as in enhanced autonomy on the job, that have offset losses. Perceptions are not always accurate: Although journalists in this survey think it has become

more important to have a degree, especially one in journalism, there was actually a drop in the proportion of such-qualified journalists in this survey, compared to a previous survey. On the positive side, journalists are better educated than they have ever been, and overall adherence to ethical standards remains high.

It is clear that New Zealand journalists, despite these pressures, continue to take their role as guardians of democracy very seriously. The large number of independent operators captured in this survey suggests that the digital revolution is opening new opportunities for journalists to start their own smaller outlets, a challenge that appears to have been taken up especially by older journalists.

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Dr James Hollings is senior lecturer in the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.
J.H.Hollings@massey.ac.nz

Dr Folker Hanusch is professor of journalism at the University of Vienna, Austria.

Dr Ravi Balasubramanian is senior lecturer in the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University.

Dr Geoff Lealand is associate professor in Screen and Media Studies at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.



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