The State of Journalism 2022

Social media habits, reporting strategies, PR pitching preferences and more

A STUDY BY MUCK RACK
Research partners
About this survey

WE SURVEYED 2,547 JOURNALISTS FROM JANUARY 4th to JANUARY 25th, 2022.

- **Role:** 64% are full-time journalists, editorial writers or bloggers, 19% are full-time freelance journalists and 12% create journalistic content but supplement their income with other work. Of the 5% that listed ‘Other,’ write in responses included editorial functions such as editor, blogger and producer.

- **Experience:** 32% have been a journalist for 20+ years. 25% have been a journalist for 10-20 years. 21% have 6-10 years experience, while 5% have 1-2 years experience. Finally, 1% have under 1 year of journalistic experience.

- **Medium:** 74% of journalists primarily report in online formats. Of those, 41% report online (with a print edition) and 33% report online (with no print edition). From the respondents who selected 'other,' the most common format was print with online editions. Most journalists surveyed produce content in at least one additional medium monthly.

- **Beat:** The average journalist covers 4 beats (this is up from last year’s 3 beats). The most popular industries covered by survey respondents are Politics, Government and Legal, Arts and Culture, Business and Finance, Energy and Environment and Education.

See extended audience breakdown in Section 4.
Executive Summary

- Fewer journalists agree that the way companies share information is outdated—44% this year vs. 61% last year, indicating that companies are stepping up the way they share information.
- The average journalist covers 4 beats. Last year, the average journalist covered 3 beats.
- Most journalists surveyed create content in at least one medium in addition to their primary medium. Online (38%), print (25%) newsletter (17%) and podcast (15%) were the top additional mediums.
- For the third year in a row, 58% of journalists are optimistic about their profession.
- Fewer journalists said that CEOs and company PR pros are credible sources for reporting. However, more journalists find social media personalities (17% vs. 12% last year) and celebrity spokespeople (14% vs. 12% last year) more credible than they did last year.
Social media, news consumption and reporting
83% say their work has been affected by COVID-19

That's a decrease from last year's 86%.

The number of journalists covering more stories about the pandemic and/or health and wellness has also decreased slightly from last year's 65%.

How has economic uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work?

- More stories about COVID-19 and/or health and wellness: 61%
- More stories about remote work and/or virtual communication: 34%
- Layoffs/furloughs at my outlet(s) have increased my workload: 21%
- COVID-19 has not affected my reporting: 17%
- Less news to cover as companies postpone new releases: 17%
- More stories about the Great Resignation: 15%
- Personal layoff(s) have meant less work in general: 14%
For the third year in a row, 58% of journalists are optimistic about their profession.

Are you optimistic about the journalism future?

Source: The State of Journalism 2019, 2020 and 2021
Journalists covering Fashion & beauty, Religion are the most optimistic

65% of journalists covering Religion and 64% of journalists covering Fashion & beauty are optimistic about their profession.

On the other hand, the most pessimistic groups are Weather (48%) and Crime (46%).
Around a third of journalists say audience trust in their coverage has increased.

Do you feel that your audience’s trust in coverage of your area of journalism has increased or decreased in the past year?

- Increased: 32%
- It's the same: 47%
- Decreased: 22%
Health & wellness, Agriculture and Religion said trust increased the most

39% of journalists covering Health & wellness, Agriculture and Religion said that audience trust in the coverage of these industries increased.

Journalists covering Weather and Regional/Local said said audience trust decreased (29% and 28% respectively).
Most journalists turn to online newspapers or Twitter first for news

57% of journalists get their news from online newspapers or magazines, down from 58% in 2021. 18% get their news from Twitter (up from 16% last year).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In general, where do you go first for your news?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online newspapers and magazines</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newspapers or magazines</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV/cable news</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other social media platforms</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcasts</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TikTok</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
More journalists value Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Reddit and TikTok

Compared to last year, more journalists value Twitter (77% vs. 76%), LinkedIn (24% vs. 23%), Instagram (18% vs. 15%), Reddit (9% vs. 7%) and TikTok (4% vs. 2%).

What social network is most valuable to you as a journalist?

- Twitter: 77%
- Facebook: 39%
- LinkedIn: 24%
- Instagram: 18%
- YouTube: 16%
- Reddit: 9%
- TikTok: 4%
- Snapchat: 1%
Journalists plan to spend more time on Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube this year

Do you expect to spend more or less time on the following social networks this year?

- Twitter: 39% More, 46% No difference, 12% Less, 6% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- LinkedIn: 29% More, 50% No difference, 12% Less, 9% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- YouTube: 25% More, 40% No difference, 15% Less, 9% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- Instagram: 25% More, 19% No difference, 58% Less, 6% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- TikTok: 17% More, 19% No difference, 39% Less, 12% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- Facebook: 16% More, 33% No difference, 51% Less, 8% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- Reddit: 14% More, 27% No difference, 8% Less, 8% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
- Snapchat: 2% More, 17% No difference, 16% Less, 72% I don’t use this platform and don’t plan to use it this year
60% of journalists consult a company’s social media in their reporting

Compared to 2021, more journalists consult with a company’s social media: 60% this year vs. 58% last year.
More journalists are tracking coverage on social media this year

Last year, 62% of journalists said they track how many times their stories were shared on social media—this year, 64% do.
What makes a story shareable?

- Subject connected to a trending story: 71%
- Contains an image or infographic: 65%
- Exclusive and/or surprising data: 57%
- Easily localized/made relevant to your target audience: 54%
- Contains a video: 25%
- Brevity: 20%
- Involves a relevant social media influencer: 12%
- Quotes from a company spokesperson: 8%
Event coverage in 2022
53% of journalists plan to attend more in-person events in 2022.

Compared to 2021, do you plan on attending more or fewer in-person events in 2022?

- More 53%
- The same 33%
- Fewer 14%
Sports, Fashion & beauty and Politics & government journalists will cover more events.

Tech & telecommunications and Automotive had the highest number of journalists that said they’d attend fewer events.
46% of journalists say an event going virtual doesn’t affect their likelihood of covering it.
Sports and Food & dining journalists are less likely to cover virtual events

Those who said they’re more likely to cover virtual events include Tech & telecommunications, Science, Health & wellness and Energy & environment.
62% of journalists prefer Zoom for virtual events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate website</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitch</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>Webex</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>YouTube</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Top 10 events journalists plan to cover in 2022

1. UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)
2. World Economic Forum
3. World Conference on Climate Change and Sustainability
4. TED
5. Comic-Con
6. SXSW
7. Government Social Media Conference
8. E3
9. Future of Finance
10. TechCrunch Disrupt
Media relations: pitching preferences and more
44% of journalists agree or strongly agree that the way companies share information is outdated.

This marks a significant decrease from last year, when 61% of journalists agreed or strongly agreed.

The jump indicates that companies are stepping up the methods they use to share information.

Those that agreed said companies are not tech-savvy and/or information is not validated.
Journalists covering Tech & telecomms most likely to agree that the way companies share information is outdated

Automotive (58%), followed by Food & Dining (57%) and Health & Wellness (57%) are the most likely to disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art &amp; culture</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business &amp; finance</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy &amp; Environment</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion &amp; beauty</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; dining</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; wellness</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; Govt.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional/Local</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech &amp; telecomm.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</table>
60% of journalists say their relationship with PR pros is mutually beneficial

This year, more journalists call their relationship with PR pros a partnership (8%) vs. last year (6%).

Fewer say the relationship is antagonistic (16% vs. 18% last year) and fewer say it’s a necessary evil (16% vs. 17% last year).
59% of journalists are just as likely to respond to pitches as last year.

There was an uptick in the % of journalists who are more likely to respond: 23% this year vs. 22% last year.

Fewer say they’re less likely to respond: 18% this year vs. 22% last year.

Compared to a year ago, I am:

More likely to respond to pitches: 23%

Less likely to respond to pitches: 18%

Just as likely to respond to pitches: 59%
Journalists covering Religion, Fashion & beauty more likely to respond to pitches

Journalists covering Automotive had the highest % of those who say they’re less likely to respond to pitches.
Poorly timed and impersonal pitches will still get ignored

Similar to last year, bad timing was the leading reason for journalists rejecting pitches (24%), followed by lack of personalization (22%). Under ‘Other’ numerous journalists said they will reject irrelevant, off-topic, not localized and/or poorly written pitches.

Why do you immediately reject otherwise relevant pitches?

- Bad timing: 24%
- Lack of personalization: 22%
- Confusing subject line: 15%
- Too lengthy: 13%
- Large attachments: 3%
- Other (please specify): 23%
1:1 email still #1 for pitching, 5% hate phone pitches a little less

1:1 email remains the top channel PR pros use to pitch journalists.

Interestingly, more journalists say they prefer phone pitches: 15% this year vs. 10% last year.

Under “Other,” Whatsapp was a popular write-in preference.
Most journalists want to receive pitches early in the work week

On what day of the week do you prefer to receive pitches?
(Please rank from 1-7, with 1 being your most preferred day)
67% of journalists prefer to receive pitches between 5am and 12pm

When is the best time for you to receive a pitch?

- Early morning (5am-9am): 34%
- Late morning (9am-12pm): 33%
- Overnight (11pm-5am): 12%
- Early afternoon (12pm-3pm): 11%
- Late afternoon (3pm-6pm): 5%
- Evening (6pm-11pm): 5%
Half of journalists receive 1-5 pitches daily, or 5-25 per week

Journalists covering Fashion & beauty receive the most pitches: 23% get 6-10 and 10% get 51+ pitches weekly.

How many pitches do you receive on an average business day?
51% of journalists publish 5 or more stories per week

The number of journalists publishing a high volume of weekly stories (8 or more) is growing: 33% this year vs. 31% last year.

Journalists covering Weather publish the most stories: 43% publish 11+ stories per week.
80% of journalists say a quarter or more of their stories originate from pitches

This is down slightly from last year when 81% said that a quarter or more of their stories originated from pitches.

The % of journalists who said ‘A quarter’ of their stories came from pitches fell from 61% last year to 59% this year.

The portion who said ‘Half’ grew from 14% to 15%.
68% of journalists prefer pitches less than 200 words

The outliers? Food & dining and Travel have the most journalists that are OK with pitches that are more than 200 words (35% and 34% respectively).
90% of journalists say at least 1 follow up email is acceptable

Compared to last year, journalists are open to more follow ups: 31% are open to 2 vs. 30% last year.

Additionally, 5% of journalists are open to 3 follow ups this year vs. 4% last year.
85% of journalists are OK with a follow up within a week of the initial email.

Similar to last year, the majority of journalists say it’s acceptable to follow up within one week.

Slightly more say it’s OK to follow up within 1-2 weeks (11% this year vs. 10% last year).
Fewer journalists find CEOs, company PR pros credible

While the majority find academic subject matter experts credible (84%) fewer journalists named CEOs (66% vs. 74% last year) and company PR pros (50% vs. 55% last year).

On the other hand, more journalists find social media personalities (17% vs. 12% last year) and celebrity spokespeople (14% vs. 12% last year) credible than they did last year.
79% of journalists are at least somewhat more likely to cover a story if offered an exclusive

There was an increase in the % of journalists who say they’re much more likely to cover a story with an exclusive: 50% this year vs. 46% last year.

If offered an exclusive, how much more likely are you to cover the story?

- Much more likely: 50%
- Somewhat likely: 29%
- No more likely: 8%
- Less likely: 1%
- It really depends: 13%
Profile of a journalist: demographics, popular mediums and more
The average journalist covers 4 beats

Last year, the average journalist covered 3 beats. The most popular beat covered by survey respondents was Politics, Government and Legal.
83% of those surveyed are full-time journalists

Which of the following best describes you?

- I’m a full-time journalist, editorial writer or blogger: 64%
- I’m a full-time freelance journalist: 19%
- I write some journalistic content, but supplement my income w/ other work: 12%
- Other (please specify): 5%
How would you categorize the scope of your coverage?

- International: 30%
- National: 33%
- Local/Regional: 36%
- Trade: 6%
Where are you based?

- USA: 53%
- UK: 11%
- Asia: 8%
- Africa: 6%
- Canada: 6%
- Europe: 5%
- Australia: 2%
- South America: 1%
- New Zealand: 1%
- Other (please specify): 7%
How old are you?

- Under 20: 0%
- 20-30: 24%
- 31-40: 28%
- 41-50: 19%
- Over 50: 29%

How long have you been a journalist?

- Under 1 year: 1%
- 1-2 years: 5%
- 3-5 years: 16%
- 6-10 years: 21%
- 10-20 years: 25%
- 20+ years: 32%
Online (with a print edition) is the most popular medium

Just under three quarters of journalists primarily report in online formats. Of those, 41% report online (with a print edition) and 33% report online (with no print edition). From the respondents who selected 'other', the most common format was print with online editions.
74% of journalists surveyed produce content in an additional medium.

After online and print, newsletters (17%) and podcasts (15%) are the most popular.

Of the 5% who selected 'Other', the most popular mediums were social media, videos, and blogs.

In addition to your primary medium, do you also produce content at least once a month in any of the following?

- Online: 38%
- Print: 25%
- Newsletter: 17%
- Podcast: 15%
- Radio: 9%
- TV: 8%
- Other (please specify): 5%
- I do not produce content in any other medium: 26%
Thank you!

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