

Irish Journalists at Work

Values, Roles
& Influences



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Dr. Kevin Doyle who provided invaluable assistance with the survey questionnaire of the Irish component of the *Worlds of Journalism* project. Thanks are also due to the School of Communications at Dublin City University, to the project's Executive Committee and to Prof. Thomas Hanitzsch and Dr. Corinna Lauerer at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich, Germany. Support with the circulation of the questionnaire was received from the National Union of Journalists, Local Newspapers Association, News Brands, Press Photographers Association of Ireland, Independent Broadcasters of Ireland and Magazines Ireland. Particular thanks are due to the journalists who set aside time to complete the survey.

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>>> 1. BACKGROUND

Over a decade ago, in 2011, two American academics, Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, edited a book with the provocative title *Will the Last Reporter Please Turn Out the Lights: The Collapse of Journalism and What Can Be Done to Fix It*.¹ The book's context was very much the economic meltdown of the news industry in the United States. Thirty-two contributors considered various structural and financial factors driving, what was described as, the collapse of journalism. The two editors actually went further in the first sentence on the opening page of their introductory chapter as they declared – 'American journalism is in an existential crisis'.

Over the following decade, this 'crisis scenario' was readily applied to the news industry and journalism in other countries, including Ireland. A collapse in advertising revenues and declines in newspaper sales threatened the viability of long-established print titles; for radio and television, audiences and advertising initially held up but the reach of multinational global media companies, coupled with the arrival of new social media platforms, also eventually upended established business models for existing broadcast outlets.

Long-term structural and technological change, combined with new audience preferences, brought questions about the financial viability – indeed, the very future – of Irish journalism, not far removed from the doomsday analysis in *Will the Last Reporter Please Turn Out the Lights*. Back in 2010, the then Director General of RTÉ, Noel Curran, spoke about fragmentation and uncertainty in the Irish broadcast sector and the dramatic impact of the global media's unfettered access to Irish audiences. Over the following decade, 'doom and gloom' became the catchphrase for the domestic news industry. International trends in the globalisation of content delivery combined with the consolidation of domestic ownership have not been harbingers of positive news for Irish media outlets and their journalists. The transition to digital business models continues to cause advertising revenues to decline, audience numbers remain under threat, jobs lost and salaries reduced.

Print sales of the *Irish Independent* declined from just under 88,000 copies every day in 2019 to 36,000 in 2023 (digital subscription data is unavailable); in the peak Celtic Tiger years of 2000-2003 the newspaper was selling in the region of 170,000 copies every day. Similarly, daily sales of the *Irish Times* reached a historic high of just over 120,000 copies in 2001; by way of contrast, the paper sold an average of 56,000 print copies in the first half of 2019 (along with another 22,000 digital subscriptions).

In the local newspaper sector, circulation for local paid-for weekly titles has halved since 2010 while those employed have also declined by a similar number.² By 2023, many local convenience stores no longer stock physical newspapers.³ Several titles have closed. The *Irish Daily Star Sunday* ceased publishing in 2011 while over a decade later, in 2022, a short-lived attempt to grow *The Times Ireland* ended when a daily online edition was shut following the earlier closure of a sister daily print paper

¹ Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard (eds), *Will the Last Reporter Please Turn Out the Lights: The Collapse of Journalism and What Can Be Done to Fix It* (News Press, 2011).

² 'Closure of local Irish newspapers set to 'accelerate' after loss of 17 titles since 2008', *Irish Times*, 24 November 2022.

³ 'About 40 shops in Dublin city area have stopped selling newspapers', *thejournal.ie*, 7 August 2023.

in 2019.⁴ Other titles have also disappeared including 17 local newspapers. In the summer of 2022, the *Fingal Independent*, owned by Mediahuis (previously Independent News & Media) closed after almost 40 years in business.

Broadcast services like RTÉ continue to command significant audience attention even in a digital space; at the end of 2022, just under half (47%) of Irish adults used an RTÉ digital service. Domestic media outlets like RTÉ and Virgin are, however, seeing audiences, especially younger audiences, migrating to the multitude of other audio and screen offerings available online.

In addition to the disruption caused by the digital transition, the media sector in Ireland has had to deal with the post-2008 economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022. Cost reduction measures have become familiar ‘asks’ of staff including pay freezes and salary reductions. Early in 2022, the *Irish Times* announced pay cuts and a recruitment ban across the organisation to offset falls in advertising revenues. Pay cuts, reduced hours and temporary layoffs have also been realities for editorial and commercial staff at the Bauer Media Ireland (previously Communicorp, which owns Newstalk, Today FM and other local radio stations), Mediahuis Ireland and many local media outlets. Staff at RTÉ will face another round of cutbacks in 2024.

The years between the publication in 2016 of the first report based on the Irish component of the international *Worlds of Journalism* survey and this latest report, which draws on new survey findings would from this brief review, at least, tend to confirm the doomsday outlook for Irish journalism. Yet over these years, there has also been significant ownership change in the Irish media sector – which given the level of activity may indicate that there are still some positives in the sector. In mid-2018, the *Irish Times* received regulatory approval to acquire the *Irish Examiner*. A year later, the titles owned by Independent Newspapers were purchased by Mediahuis, a Belgian-based media operator. This transaction included national titles such as the *Irish Independent* and the *Sunday Independent*. Mediahuis subsequently sold a 50% stake in the *Irish Daily Star* to Reach, the British publisher (previously known as Trinity Mirror).

There was also ownership change in the broadcast sector – most specifically, the 2021 acquisition of the national stations, Newstalk and Today FM by Bauer Media Group, the Hamburg-based international multimedia operator. The latter deal involving radio stations held by the Communicorp Group also included 98FM, Spin 1038 and Spin South West. In the television sector, Liberty Global rebranded its Irish television interests in 2018 as Virgin Media One (formerly TV3), Virgin Media Two (formerly 3e) and Virgin Media Three (formerly, UTV Ireland). In the online news space, a number of new entrants have also emerged in recent times including *The Currency*, a digital-only publisher specialising in business and finance news, established in 2019.

The media sector in Ireland may not be in a terminal crisis but market transition is still well underway. The level of ownership change and start-up activity may indicate that there is future commercial viability in the sector, albeit at a different level of profitability from the Celtic Tiger era. The ramifications of lower profitability will most likely be fewer outlets and fewer jobs. A wider discussion is therefore needed about protecting pay rates and career prospects for those who continue to work in Irish journalism.

This study shows Irish journalists to be resilient in the face of these developments, remaining committed to core journalistic values in providing news to the public while adhering to high ethical standards in how that news is generated. In the Irish media sector’s navigation through the

⁴ ‘News Ireland to cease publication of its Times Ireland daily service’, *Irish Independent*, 28 June 2022.

continuing structural and digital changes, the stability offered by Irish journalists remains a huge asset.

In this report specific results and characteristics are discussed in relation to how they vary by age and gender. Ultimately, the survey findings allow for discussion on important aspects of Irish journalism such as what influences and motivates journalists in their work, and what impact online engagement is having on how they do this work.

The findings are based on data from a sample of 364 national and local journalists working in various media outlets including broadcast, print and digital in the Republic of Ireland. The traditional classification of journalism – print or broadcast – is, however, no longer useful as the vast majority of journalists work across different platforms.

This study is part of a wider international research project founded to assess the state of journalism across the globe. The Irish component of the project is managed by Dublin City University, and this is the second time Ireland has participated in the project (the previous survey was in 2016). On this occasion, 120 countries are involved and the first cross-national results will be published in 2025. This report is based on a preliminary analysis of Irish data gathered in 2021. More background information is provided in the Appendix.

The main findings from this *World of Journalism* survey of Irish journalists include:

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Seven in ten (73%) Irish journalists are employed on full-time permanent contracts; another 14% work as freelancers;
- 43% earn between €44,000 and €88,000 – 49% of women journalists earn below this average, 33% of men earn below this.

BACKGROUND OF IRISH JOURNALISTS

- The majority are men but male domination continues to decline – this survey found 56% of journalists were men, 44% were women;
- 85% of Irish journalists have a third-level qualification (the national average is 53%).

ROLES, MOTIVATIONS & ETHICS

- Almost four in five respondents (77%) see their role to monitor and scrutinise those in power;
- 86% resist the idea that their role is to convey a positive image of political leaders;
- 37% say it is very/extremely important in their role to provide entertainment;
- 31% say it is very/extremely important in their role to attract the largest audience;
- 75% approve of using hidden recording devices on occasion, while 71% approve of using confidential documents on occasion;
- 17% say feedback from the audience is very/extremely influential.

DAY-TO-DAY WORK

- Text remains the most dominant format to produce work in, with 80% of journalists saying they produce text content often or always;
- 55% of journalists rely on social media in some form each day;
- 58% say they have felt stressed in their work with significant variations between groups: 71% of women are 'often/very often' stressed compared with 49% of men, while journalists aged under 30 are more stressed than those aged 50+.
- 61% are a member of a trade union.

SOCIAL VALUES

- Irish journalists hold a clear 'left-of-centre' position, and they have moved further left since the mid-2010s;
- 55% of Irish journalists are not affiliated with any particular religion.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

- 21% have 'often/very often' experienced demeaning and hateful speech, while 19% have faced public discrediting of their work;
- 34% of journalists have faced some kind of legal action against them in the past five years, while 52% said media law and regulation was extremely or very influential on their work.

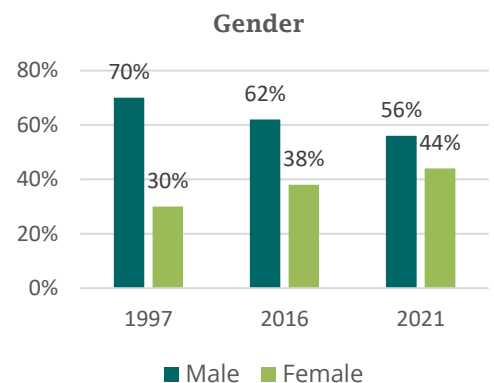
>>> 2. PROFILE & BACKGROUND OF IRISH JOURNALISTS

The background of journalists is important to document as it may impact their view of the world as well as the stories and sources they prioritise. When asked in this *Worlds of Journalism* survey how influenced they are by their own 'personal values and beliefs', almost half (47%) of Irish respondents said 'slightly/moderately', with more than a quarter (26%) saying 'very/extremely'. Given this context, understanding the values and upbringing of journalists is important to determine what beliefs, motivations or experiences they might bring to their work. This section explores demographic information including gender, education, social class, disability, ethnicity, religious affiliation and political orientation.

Among the journalists surveyed, the average age of respondents was 43. Some 17% of journalists were under 30, 50% were in the 30-49 age category, while 33% were aged 50+. These age categories are used throughout this report for further analysis of certain questions.

Gender

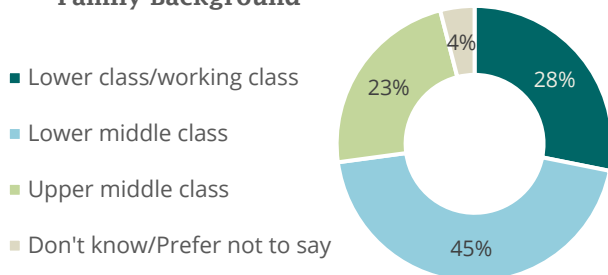
The majority of journalists in Ireland are men but the male domination of the sector continues to decline. This survey found that 56% of journalists in Ireland were men while 44% were women. The gender balance in the 2016 *Worlds of Journalism* study was 62:38; a separate earlier study reported a 70:30 gender ratio.⁵ However, when considered in the context of managerial/executive positions, a larger gender gap becomes evident: only 25% of those in 'top management' roles are female (46% in mid-management are female, while 45% in non-management roles are female).



Socio-economic Background

Capturing socio-economic background or social class is challenging given the many complex, fluctuating factors at play. Nevertheless, it remains a key pillar in evaluating any profession's composition. Journalists were asked: *Thinking of your childhood and early family life, how would you categorise your socio-economic background?*

Family Background



This relies on respondents' own assessment of their upbringing rather than evaluating details on their family income or parents' professional/educational status. Regardless, it appears that Irish journalism is clearly a middle-class profession, with two-thirds (68%) categorising themselves as either lower middle class or upper middle class.

⁵ See Mary Corcoran (2004). The Political Preferences and Value Orientations of Irish Journalists. *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 13(2): 23-42; Kevin Rafter and Stephen Dunne (2016) *The Irish Journalist Today*.

Education

The survey findings show that 38% of Irish journalists have an undergraduate degree and 45% have a postgraduate degree. Overall, 85% of Irish journalists have a third-level education, compared with the national average of 53%.⁶ A further 6% of Irish journalists only completed secondary school, compared with 29% of the national population.

85%

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When qualifications are broken down by age category, it is clear that an undergraduate or postgraduate degree is now the norm for entry into Irish journalism in the 2020s. Among the under-30s surveyed, 63% had a Bachelor's degree and 38% had a Master's degree. This contrasts with the over-50s where 14% had only completed secondary school and 9% had some third-level training but not a degree.

When asked about training or education in journalism specifically (rather than any third-level subject qualification), two-thirds (68%) of respondents said they had some professional journalism training – this increased to 91% among the under-30s. Across all ages, 36% of journalists have a university/college qualification in journalism specifically, 13% have a journalism apprenticeship, and 17% have a short-term training qualification.

Disability

Respondents were asked whether they had a disability or condition (physical or mental) which had a substantial or long-term effect on their ability to perform regular daily activities.

- 88% said no, while 2% preferred not to answer. The remaining 10% indicated that they had some kind of disability, and of these 4% indicated a mental/behavioural condition, 5% indicated a physical condition, and 1% said they had a condition but did not wish to disclose what kind.
- The overall figure of 10% is slightly below the national figure in Ireland where 13.5% of the population has a disability of some kind.⁷ The World Health Organisation estimates that 16% of the world's population has a disability.⁸

Interpretations of disability vary, and no strict criteria were provided in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, these findings still provide a baseline figure for disability among Irish journalists which has not been previously documented.

In the UK, an annual Ofcom report captures employment diversity data at the main broadcasters: in the 2021-2022 report, 9% of employees across the major broadcasters in the UK had a disability.⁹

⁶ *Education Attainment Thematic Report 2022*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin.

⁷ *Census of Population 2016*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin.

⁸ *Disability Facts*, World Health Organisation, 2023.

⁹ *Equity, diversity and inclusion in television and radio: 2021-22*, Ofcom November 2022.

Ethnicity & Race

The ethnic and racial composition of Ireland's population has changed significantly in recent decades. This *Worlds of Journalism* survey offered an opportunity to examine whether or not these changes have been reflected in the profile of Irish journalists.

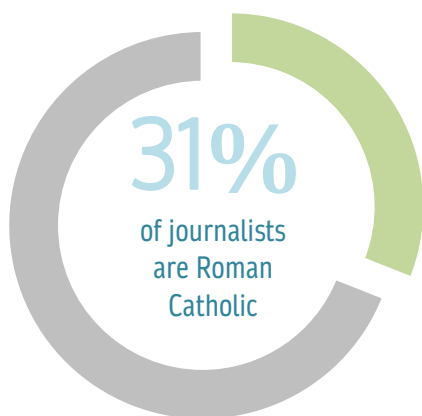
The survey asked a question about which ethnic group/background respondents belong to, using the same categories as the CSO census.¹⁰ The 2022 census found that 77% of the population was 'White Irish', and 10% was 'Any other white background'. Among the journalists surveyed in this study:

- 87% identified as 'White Irish', and 5% as 'any other White background'.¹¹
- 0.5% reported being from an Asian background (7.5% of respondents declined to answer).

One caveat should be noted here with the presentation of these particular results. We do not suggest that there are no Black, Arab or other Asian journalists working in Ireland, as observation of media reports and programming tell us otherwise, even if it is a notably small cohort. Ultimately, the findings are limited to those who responded to the survey request, and therefore cannot be taken as fully representative for this question.

Nevertheless, the survey findings are perhaps indicative of how rare journalists from non-White backgrounds still are in Ireland, and that Irish journalism as a sector is clearly 'out of step' with the demographic profile of the general population today. Census data from the UK shows 13% of journalists are non-White but that figure is in the context of a more ethnically diverse population overall.¹²

Religion



When asked whether they consider themselves to be affiliated with any particular religion, 35% of Irish journalists said 'yes' while 55% said 'no' (10% did not answer this question). This figure for no affiliated religion is considerably higher than the 2016 Census data which showed that 9.8% of the population had no religion.

Among the 35% who answered 'yes' on religious affiliation, the vast majority (89%) were Roman Catholic, with 4% Church of Ireland, and non-denominational Christianity also present (2.5%) while Quaker, Hindu and Buddhist were each noted by a small number of respondents. When considered in the context of the entire sample, the findings show that 31% of Irish journalists identify as Roman Catholic, which compares with 69% of the general population, according to the 2022 census.

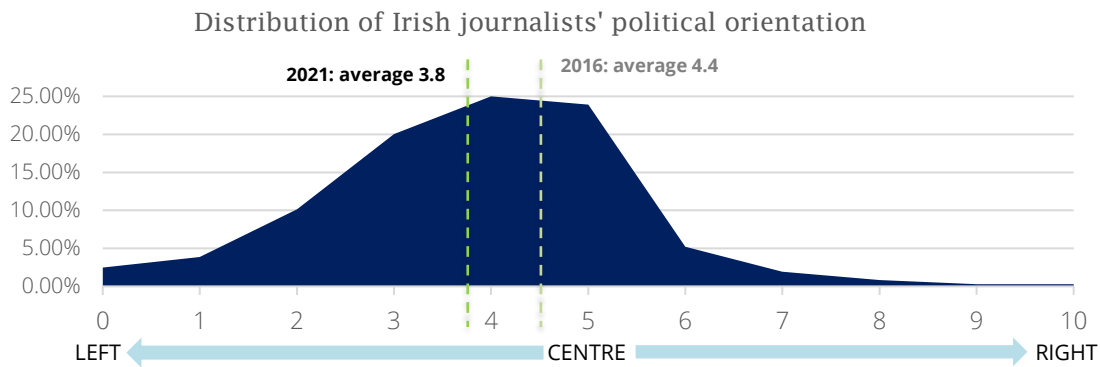
In considering how secular, or not, Irish journalism is, it is worth noting that 'religious groups and institutions' are considered the least influential factor/source for Irish journalists, with just 1% saying they are 'very/extremely influential', 17% saying 'slightly/moderately influential', and 48% saying 'not influential' (the remaining 34% of respondents said they were not relevant to their work or did not answer). Other sources of influence are further discussed in part 3.

¹⁰ The *Worlds of Journalism* survey used the categories from the 2016 Census. Some of the ethnic minority categories were updated for the 2022 Census, but the "White Irish" category emphasised here remained the same.

¹¹ White (Irish Traveller) and White (Roma) were also potential responses but none were recorded.

¹² Mark Spilsbury, *Diversity in Journalism: An update on the characteristics of journalists*, National Council for the Training of Journalists, May 2022.

Political Orientation

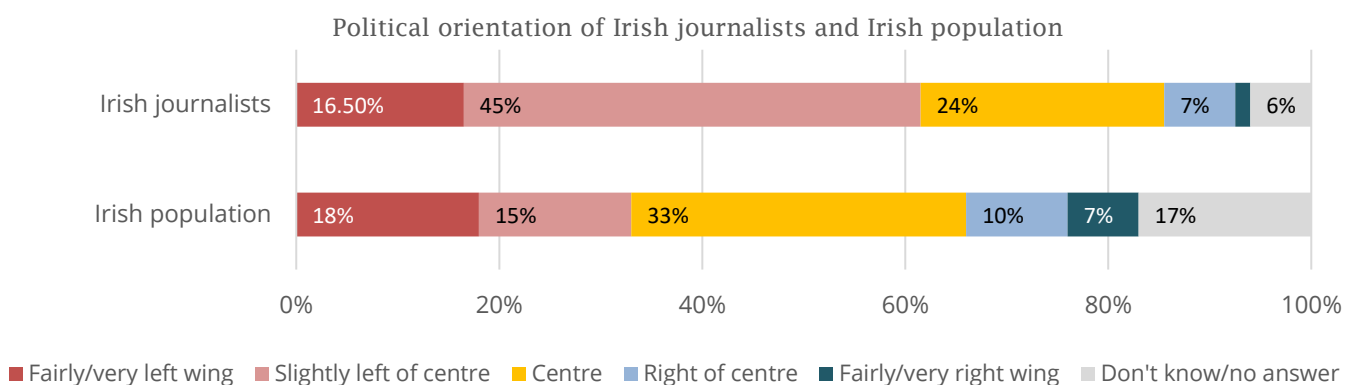


In this survey, 71% of Irish journalists said ‘being a detached observer’ was extremely or very important to them. Nevertheless, journalists’ potential political biases are an evergreen concern, especially in an era of anti-journalist sentiment, concerns around ‘fake news’ and misinformation, and uncertainty about trust in individual journalists and news organisations.

Respondents were asked to place themselves on a scale of 0 to 10 in terms of political identification as left, right or centre (where 0 is left, 10 is right, and 5 is centre). Almost a quarter (24%) positioned themselves on ‘5’, in the centre, while slightly more (25%) opted for ‘4’ – the most popular response, indicating a slightly left-of-centre position amongst Irish journalists.

Most notably, 61.5% identified as left-leaning (between 0-4), while 8.5% identified as right-leaning (between 6-10). Overall, the mean position was 3.84 across all Irish journalists indicating a clear left-of-centre position. This self-described political identification has actually moved further left since the previous *Worlds of Journalism* report in 2016 when the mean position was 4.4. The latest findings show a strong variation by age: the under-30s were furthest ‘left’ at 2.8 against the 30-49 age category (3.93), and the 50+ age group (4.15).

It is also worth comparing journalists’ positioning to the general population. We used a recent survey to do this, one which asked the political orientation of participants.¹³ As illustrated below, when compared with the findings of Irish journalists in this study, it would suggest that right-leaning views are perhaps under-represented among Irish journalists relative to the general population, while left-leaning views are over-represented.



¹³ See Murrell, Park, Robbins & Wheatley (2023) *The Digital News Report - Ireland*. The survey, a representative sample of 2,000 adults in Ireland, is focused on news habits but includes a question about political orientation. We adapted the *Worlds of Journalism* 10-point scale as 0-2 (fairly/very left wing); 3-4 (slightly left of centre); 5 (centre); 6-7 (right of centre); 8-10 (fairly/very right wing).

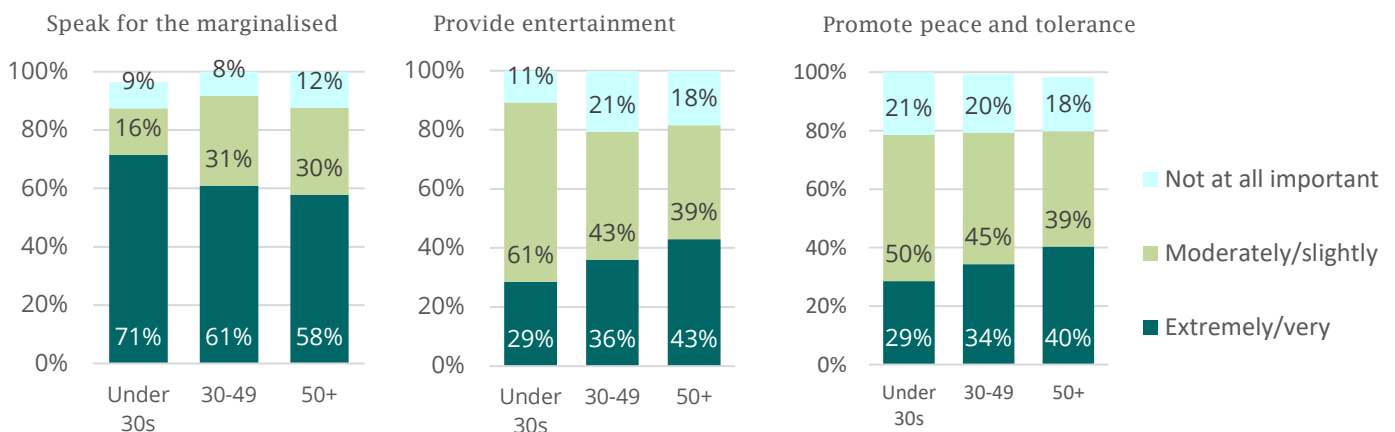
>>> 3. ROLES, VALUES & ETHICS

This *Worlds of Journalism* survey shows strong resistance to the ideal that Irish journalists exist to propagate the priorities of the government or political establishment. Rather, the survey finds Irish journalists are motivated by holding those in power to account. There is a strong endorsement of the watchdog/accountability role of journalism and journalists in public life as detached observers. There is also some support for the idea of journalists as campaigners or advocates for social change, but this varies by age.

When asked how they perceive their role as journalists:

- Almost four in five respondents (77%) indicated that they saw their role to monitor and scrutinise those in power;
- Some 71% said that they saw themselves as ‘detached observers’ from governmental structures.

Younger journalists are more attached to the idea of their work ‘shining a light on society’s problems’ – almost 60% of those aged under 30 consider this role as extremely important whereas the corresponding figure for those in the 30-49 and 50+ age categories is just below 50% respectively. The survey findings also show that younger journalists are less attached to seeing themselves as ‘detached observers’ and to monitoring and scrutinising those in power. Illustrated below are three further categories where age-related distinctions are notable. Perhaps surprisingly, older journalists are more attached to ‘providing entertainment’ and ‘promoting peace and tolerance’ suggesting an openness to journalism’s role beyond purely detached, ‘serious’ reporting. Conversely, younger journalists are more committed to ‘speaking on behalf of the marginalised’, perhaps again indicating a keen social advocacy role.



The survey findings show that there is a high level of attachment to principles of trust and impartiality – over four in five journalists (83%) said facts should be allowed to speak for themselves in stories (either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this stance). Almost 90% agree/strongly agree that a journalist should inform the public when a source’s claim is not truthful. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) agree/strongly agree that it is possible to represent objective reality in their reporting.

Importance of Journalistic Roles

	Very/Extremely important	Slightly/Moderately important	Not at all important
INFORMING THE PUBLIC			
Educate the audience	83%	15%	1%
Counteract disinformation	82%	14%	3%
Discuss future implications of current events	66%	29%	5%
Provide analysis of current affairs	61%	30%	9%
Provide information people need to form political opinions	59%	31%	10%
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	17%	46%	36%
HOLDING POWER TO ACCOUNT			
Monitor and scrutinise those in power	77%	19%	4%
Be a detached observer	71%	25%	3%
Support efforts to protect public health	44%	40%	16%
Support national development	23%	49%	26%
Convey a positive image of political leaders	2%	12%	86%
Support government policy	1%	21%	77%
CAMPAIGNING AND MOBILISING PUBLIC			
Shine a light on society's problems	80%	16%	3%
Speak on behalf of the marginalised	62%	27%	10%
Let people express their views	60%	35%	5%
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	50%	40%	10%
Promote peace and tolerance	36%	43%	20%
Advocate for social change	35%	46%	18%
Influence public opinion	20%	51%	29%
Set the political agenda	14%	45%	40%
Motivate people to participate in politics	13%	50%	37%
ENTERTAINING AND ENGAGING THE PUBLIC			
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	49%	41%	10%
Provide entertainment and relaxation	37%	45%	18%
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	31%	52%	16%

Few journalists in Ireland believe they have a role in promoting a positive image of public institutions – a sizable 86% rejected the idea that this was their job when reporting the news. A slightly smaller number – but still a significant majority – resisted the proposition that their role was to ‘support government policy’, as 77% said this idea was ‘not at all important’. In a related finding, 86% rejected the notion that their job was to convey a positive image of political leaders.

In some respects, the fact that 21% of Irish journalists indicated that ‘supporting government policy’ was ‘slightly/moderately important’ may have been influenced by the context of the 2020-22 Covid-19 crisis. In a related response, 44% of Irish journalists agreed that supporting efforts to protect public health was ‘very/extremely important’, which could be seen as a ‘Covid effect’ on how some journalists perceived their role in Ireland during the height of the global pandemic.

This ‘campaigning role’ and helping to mobilise public opinion was considered in the context of those outside the main holders of power in society – views were more evenly divided when asked in more

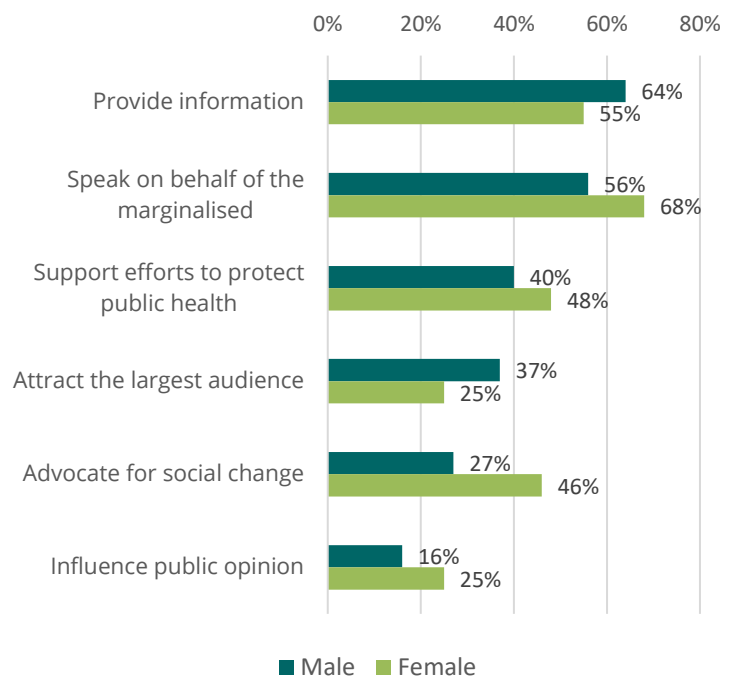
general terms if the role of journalists was to promote peace and tolerance, advocate for social change or influence public opinion.

In a further sign of the strength of adherence to impartiality as a principle of Irish journalism, 85% of respondents said setting the political agenda was either not important or only slightly/moderately important to their role as journalists. A similar response (87%) was offered in rejecting the proposition that the role of the journalist was to motivate people to participate in political life.

Alongside a strong embrace of the ‘watchdog’ role of journalists, Irish respondents in the *Worlds of Journalism* survey also overwhelmingly endorsed the idea of their work being directed to provide the public with necessary information. In this regard, educating and informing the public (83%: very/extremely important) and counteracting disinformation (82%: very/extremely important) emerged as two key roles of journalism in Ireland.

Whether or not women journalists function fundamentally differently from male counterparts is complex. It is overly simplistic to suggest that more women in newsrooms automatically brings more women into stories or leads to different types of editorial content, but Irish media history shows that women in key positions can influence coverage¹⁴. When asked about the importance of different ‘roles’ in this survey, there was not always an evident gender difference, but illustrated are six roles with a notable gender gap: a 19-point gap is evident in ‘advocate for social change’ and a 12-point gap in ‘speaking on behalf of the marginalised’ with women more attached to those roles. In contrast, men are more motivated than women to ‘attract the largest audience’ and ‘provide information people need to form political decisions’.

Different values between males/females
(% who said extremely/very important)



Commercial Challenges

Delivering the dual journalistic roles of being a watchdog and providing information is frequently limited by the commercial motivations of media organisations, in particular, for those outlets which are dependent on advertising revenues and subscriptions/audience numbers.

The need to attract audiences and generate profits does not always sit comfortably with public-interest motivations – some stories and issues, no matter how worthy, always struggle for attention on a news list. This reality is generally expected to be a bigger issue for privately owned and commercially driven media outlets where a ‘softer’ news focus may dominate to secure audience numbers.

There is evidence of this conflict – public interest versus entertainment – in the perceived roles of Irish journalists as reported in this *Worlds of Journalism* survey. When asked about their role in entertaining and engaging the public with their work, the responses were fairly evenly divided:

¹⁴ Mark O’Brien (2021). Writing a Sexual Revolution: Contraception, Bodily Autonomy, and the Women’s Pages in Irish National Newspapers, 1935–1979. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 30(1), pp.92-11

- 49% said it was very/extremely important in their role to emotionally connect with audiences against 41% who said it was slightly/moderately important (10%: not important);
- 37% said it was very/extremely important to provide entertainment against 45% who said it was slightly/moderately important (18%: not important);
- 31% said it was very/extremely important in their role to attract the largest audience against 52% who said it was slightly/moderately important (16%: not important).

Taken in the round, these responses may not be unduly concerning, especially when considered against the strong embrace of public interest values reported elsewhere in this survey. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that not insignificant numbers of respondents believe it is very or extremely important in their role to consider what are essentially commercially driven scenarios: connecting with the audience (49%); providing entertainment (37%); and attracting a large audience (31%).

49%
said connecting with
the audience was very/extremely
important in their work

Influences on Journalists

Notwithstanding the increased public attention on the financial viability of media organisations in Ireland and elsewhere, no change was reported on the impact of profit expectations of employers on the work of Irish journalists. In the *Worlds of Journalism* survey in 2016 some 59% said that profit expectations had little or no influence on how they did their jobs; the related figure in the current survey was also 59%.

When asked about the main 'influences' on their work, respondents opted for non-commercial sources such as:

- internal ethical guidelines in their respective organisations (61% said this was very/extremely important);
- having access to information (58% said this was very/extremely important);
- relevant legislation and external regulation (52% said this was very/extremely important);
- the impact of senior editorial colleagues/managers (51% said this was very/extremely important).

By comparison, the number of respondents in the survey who indicated that commercial issues significantly influence their ability to work as journalists was relatively small as a group. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to fully discount the numbers who indicated that certain influences which could be classified under the broad heading of commercial pressures were somewhat influential (either very/extremely important or slightly/moderately important):

- 66% said audience research and data (such as rating and circulation figures);
- 35% said the owners of their organisation;
- 32% said profit expectations;
- 33% said advertising expectations had some influence.

In this wider context, there can be little doubt about the impact of commercial considerations on the ideals of journalism – and how Irish journalists see their roles. Moreover, the prevalence of commercially motivated values points to a need for sector-wide reflection to ensure that the declared attachment to public interest aims of holding those in power to account, and providing information to the public, are adequately delivered.

Influential factors on journalists

	Very/ extremely influential	Slightly/ moderately influential	Not influential	Not relevant/ no response
Journalism ethics	61%	28%	4%	7%
Access to information	58%	35%	3%	4%
Media laws and regulation	52%	38%	6%	4%
Editorial supervisors/higher editors	51%	41%	3%	5%
Time limits	48%	40%	5%	7%
Editorial policy	41%	41%	10%	7%
Availability of news-gathering resources	35%	48%	8%	10%
Relationships with news sources	29%	51%	11%	10%
Your peers on the news staff	28%	55%	8%	9%
Your personal values and beliefs	26%	47%	16%	11%
Scientists or health experts	21%	45%	17%	17%
Audience research and data, for example, ratings, circulation and web metrics	21%	54%	13%	12%
Feedback from the audience	17%	67%	14%	2%
Self-censorship	17%	35%	28%	20%
Competing news organisations	13%	68%	15%	4%
The owners of your news organisation	10%	25%	35%	30%
Issue advocacy groups	9%	44%	29%	18%
The business managers of your news organisation	8%	33%	35%	25%
Colleagues in other media	8%	63%	21%	7%
Public relations	7%	42%	39%	12%
Politicians	7%	32%	39%	21%
Government censorship	7%	18%	46%	29%
Business people	7%	25%	45%	23%
Your friends, acquaintances and family	6%	52%	30%	12%
Profit expectations	6%	26%	33%	35%
Advertising considerations	6%	27%	35%	32%
Government officials	6%	31%	40%	23%
Police	5%	24%	38%	32%
Religious groups and institutions	1%	17%	48%	34%

The necessity of ensuring that these commercial considerations do not negate the public interest role of Irish journalists may also need to be considered in the context of the ongoing debate in Ireland – which accelerated in 2023 – about how to fund public service broadcasting.

Other factors beyond commercial realities also influence the work of journalists in Ireland and internationally, as outlined in the table above. These factors include external influences such as having access to information, relationships with sources, feedback from audiences, the influence of public relations practitioners, and national laws and industry regulations. There are also internal influences on how journalists operate – those influences within their organisations – that similarly go beyond commercial activities. Such internal influences include the editorial preferences of employers/owners, the role of editorial management and time limitations. Related internal influences also include those specific to individual journalists such as their own personal beliefs and values.

The survey findings show that among the main internal influences, journalism ethics is the dominant factor (61%, very/extremely important) alongside the role of editors (51%) and time constraints (47%). When asked about the external influences on how they do their work, the three main areas identified were access to information (58%, very/extremely important), media laws and regulation (52%), and relationships with news sources (28%). It is also worth noting the journalists' responses regarding particular sources they may interact with: only 7% said public relations was very/extremely influential, with the same response given for both politicians and business people, and slightly lower for government officials (6%). Issue advocacy groups were marginally higher (9%), but this set of results points to the journalists' overall belief that they function independently of these stakeholders.

52%

said that media laws and regulation were extremely or very influential in how they do their work

Ethics

As outlined above, journalism ethics was deemed the most influential factor in how journalists do their work, so achieving high standards remains a strong principle of Irish journalists. As with the 2016 survey results, the latest *Worlds of Journalism* findings point to a very strong commitment to professional ethical codes (both internal and external) as well as a recognition of the influence of these ethical frameworks on the work of journalists.

Alongside a commitment to adhering to professional standards, the latest findings also highlight an acceptance of certain practices in circumstances where those practices deliver a news story. In this regard:

- 75% approve of using hidden recording devices on occasion;
- 71% approve of using confidential documents on occasion;
- 73% approve of using personal material of public figures on occasion (against 43% who approve of using similar material of 'ordinary people').

As in the previous 2016 survey, certain work practices are frowned upon. In this latest survey, 97% of journalists disapproved of the idea of taking money from sources in any circumstances; 92% rejected the idea of producing promotional stories.

There was more ambiguity about paying sources for stories – 68% of respondents did not approve of paying for confidential information in any circumstances but 30% indicated that payment may be acceptable depending on the scenario. There was also a divergence of opinion about the receipt of free goods or services (from sources/participants in a story). Some 70% said it was unacceptable in any circumstances to take free goods/services although 29% indicated that taking free goods/services may be acceptable on occasion.

68%

did not approve of paying for confidential information in any circumstances

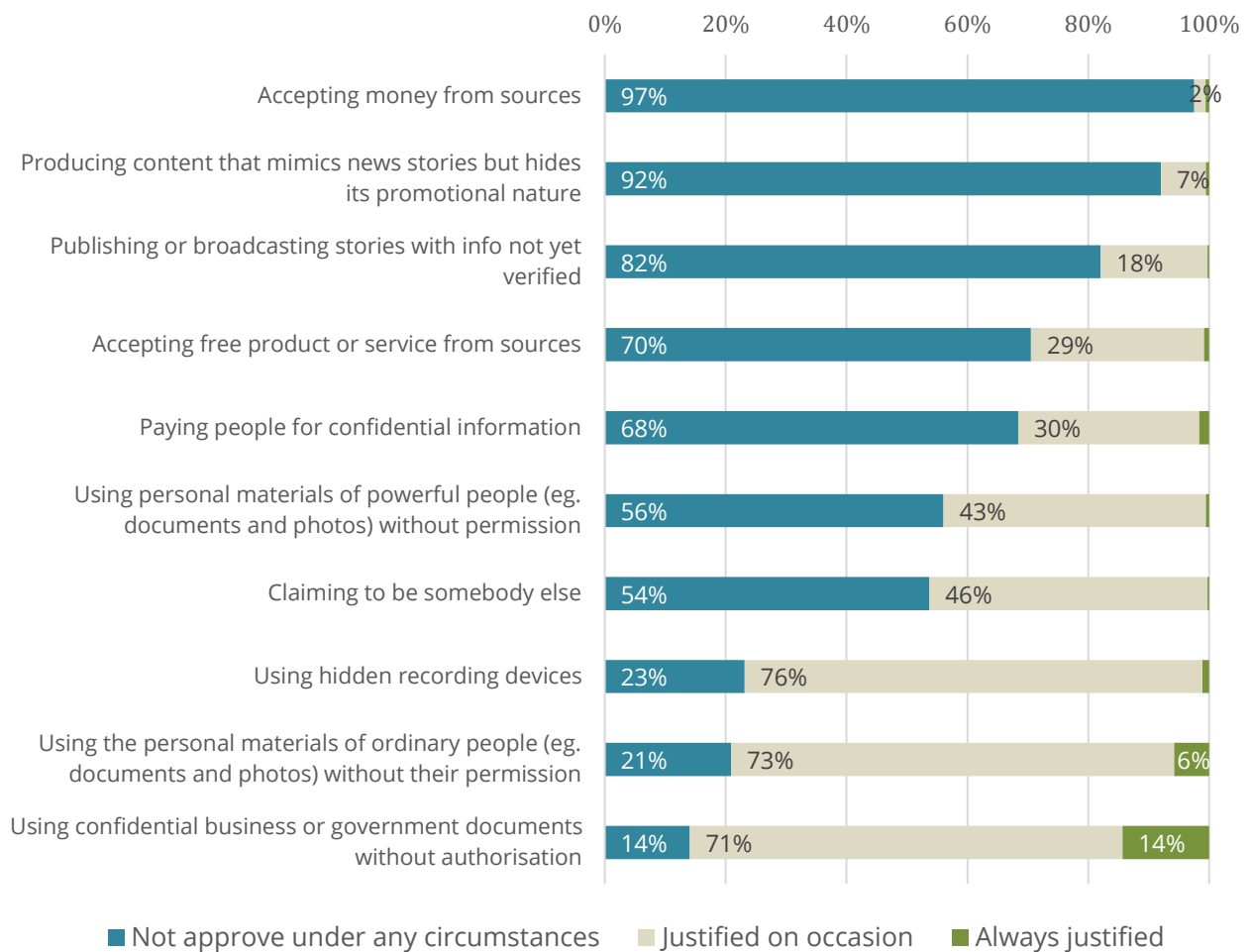
Many of these issues are explicitly covered by internal guidelines in media outlets such as Virgin Media's published code of conduct for staff. A similar RTÉ document states that 'relatively low value bona fide gifts and hospitality are permissible in specific circumstances'. Given the *World of Journalism* findings – and the controversy over hospitality gifts which emerged in RTÉ in 2023 – there may be a need for media organisations and editorial staff to refresh their awareness of existing rules.

Regarding gender differences on ethical matters, 20% of male journalists felt using confidential documents was ‘always justified’, while only 8% of female journalists agreed. In terms of hidden recording devices, 20% of male journalists said they did ‘not approve under any circumstances’, and this figure increased to 28% for female journalists.

Elsewhere, when given various statements about potential actions, behaviour and personal perspectives, the findings included:

- Almost two-thirds (63%) of journalists disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement ‘What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment’;
- 47% disagreed/strongly disagreed that ‘Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what’s true and what’s not’;
- Around one in three (36%) journalists agreed that journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work – 40% disagreed/strongly disagreed (24% neither agreed nor disagreed);
- 89% of journalists agreed/strongly agreed that journalists should alert audiences when a source’s claim is untruthful.

Ethical situations facing journalists



>>> 4. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS & WELL-BEING

Employment Status & Working Hours

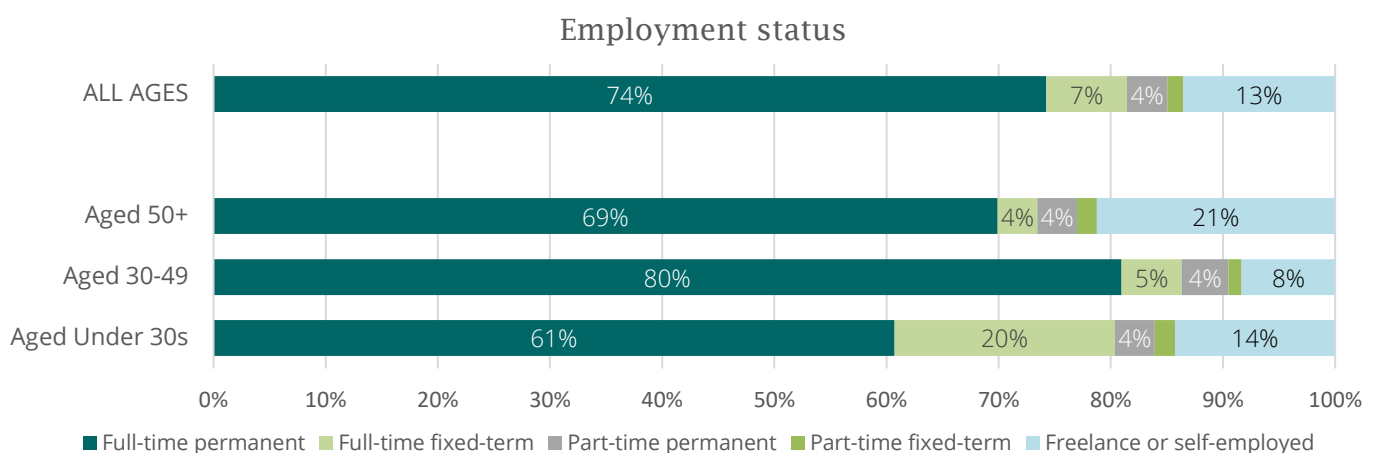
Job security is a crucial factor allowing journalists to do their job and pursue reporting that may not lead to immediate publication or commercial 'success', or may be too risky or costly without employer support. These results show that three-quarters (74%) of Irish journalists are employed on full-time permanent contracts while just over 3% have a similar status but work part-time; 8% have fixed-term contracts (full-time or part-time) while another 14% work as freelancers. Male journalists are more likely than their female counterparts to be employed in full-time permanent positions (76% of men versus 69% of women).

74%
are employed on full-time, permanent contracts

One in four journalists reported that their employment status had changed due to the Covid-19 crisis with a marginally higher impact on female journalists. Almost half of those who had changed status had previously been permanent and full-time, while one-third had previously been freelance. This finding suggests that the Covid pandemic was associated with shifting conditions which may have been either positive or negative for journalists in terms of contract stability and regularisation (it is probably too early to determine the long-term impact of these changes).

Despite considerable attention on the precarious nature of employment in the industry, the results are almost identical to the previous *Worlds of Journalism* survey when 75% of journalists were in this 'permanent, full-time' category. Crucially, however, the latest figures show a dip to 61% among journalists aged under-30, as illustrated below. In this younger age group, 20% are employed on fixed-term contracts and 14% are working without a contract, as freelance or self-employed.

Notably, the freelance/self-employed category is most common among the over-50s age group (21%). This finding may suggest that some journalists, perhaps impacted by cutbacks and layoffs over recent decades, have remained in the sector but without formal employment contracts in place.



One in three journalists works in a specific area or beat (such as politics, sport or business) whereas the majority (65%) work on general topics. There is little difference in gender or age in terms of working in a specialist editorial area, suggesting a normalised pattern across the sector, and the proportion working in specialist roles is in line with the 2016 survey.

This consistency over recent years may reassure some of those concerned about an increasing ‘despecialisation’ of reporting and a turn towards general roles and responsibilities in which journalists may lack the expert knowledge to dig deeply into more complex areas, or be easily led and influenced by sources within that sector. Conversely, it may simply now be the case that the ‘despecialisation’ process in newsrooms is effectively complete following a period of cutbacks and redundancies, and that this is the level of specialist staff which newsroom managers believe are needed; those specific positions as subject-specific correspondents and editors will perhaps always be filled, even by junior staff with fewer years of experience that would have been required in the past.

42.9
the average numbers of hours that
a journalist in Ireland works

When asked how many hours they work, the average response was 42.9 hours, with an average of 33 hours of those working from home (as the survey was undertaken during the Covid pandemic this may have changed in more recent times).

Most survey respondents said that the ‘majority/all their work-related income’ came from journalism whereas 21% said it was between 75-99% of their income, while just 7.5% said it was below 75%.

Salaries

Respondents were asked about their annual salaries, based on 10 brackets: the average salary across all participants fell into the €44,000-€55,000 bracket. Two in five respondents (43%) said they earned between €44,000 and €88,000. More than a third (37%) earned less than the average: 49% of women journalists earned below the average, and 33% of men earned below.

43%
earn between €44,000-€55,000

At the higher end of the salary scale, 12% earn more than €88,000: when this is broken down by gender, 5% of women earned more than €88,000, compared with 18% of men. In the survey, 12 respondents said they earned more than €130,000, 10 of whom were men.

Unsurprisingly, older journalists earned higher salaries, on average. Among the under-30s, the average salary was in the €22,000-€33,000 category; for women under 30, the average dipped towards the higher end of the €11,000-€22,000 bracket. Women earned less than men across all three age categories.

Among full-time journalists specifically, the gender pay gap was smallest at local/regional level, however, this should be taken in the context that the salaries at this level are lower than elsewhere – they averaged at the lower end of the €33,000-€44,000 bracket. Full-time journalists working at transnational outlets earned the highest amount on average, in the €55,000-€66,000 bracket. Overall, national-outlet journalists earned towards the higher end of the €44,000-€55,000 bracket on average, but it fell to the lower end for women at national outlets, and it moved into the higher €55,000-€66,000 bracket for men at national outlets.

Union Membership

When asked about trade union/other labour group membership, 61% of respondents said they were a member. This figure represents a slight decrease from the 65% recorded in the previous *Worlds of Journalism* survey in 2016. The figure for union membership is highest among TV journalists (87%), news agency journalists (66%) and newspaper journalists (65%). When the overall figure is broken down, the survey results show:

- 69% of local/regional journalists are members compared with 60% of national journalists;
- 65% of men are members compared with 55% of women.

Interestingly, the figure for union membership decreases to 45% among those working in 'internet native' outlets. The finding would suggest that the more recent wave of digital start-ups are less union-focused. Nevertheless, these figures are far above the national average for trade union membership, which is at 23% of the workforce.¹⁵

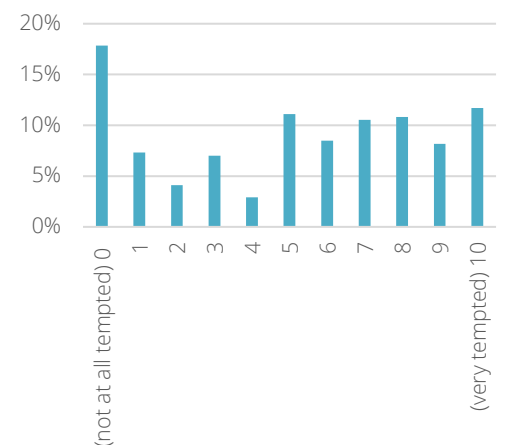
Sustainability of Career

Given the turbulence in the sector over recent decades, it is worth exploring whether journalism is seen as a desirable, sustainable career. We asked how tempted journalists were to leave the sector over the previous five years. On a scale of 0-10 (where 0 is not at all tempted and 10 is very tempted), the average was 5.05, but was highest among those aged 30-49 (5.42), suggesting this was a point for re-evaluating careers. Interestingly, older journalists reported being less tempted to leave journalism over the previous five years, which may point towards greater stability emerging in the sector.

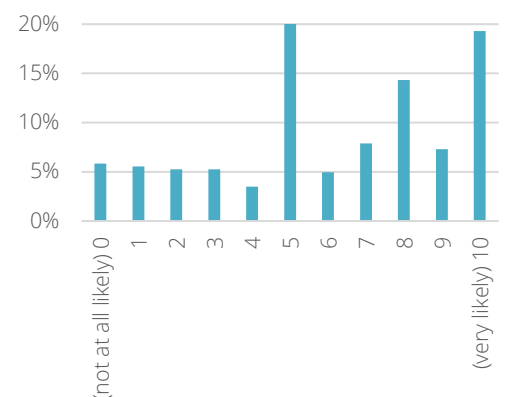
When the results are visualised, we can see almost one in five (18%) said 0, stating they were not at all tempted to leave. The cohort most tempted were women aged 30-49 (5.9) and women aged 50+ (5.8), while the least tempted were men aged 50+ (3.8). Interestingly, among the under-30 age group, women were less tempted than men to leave, suggesting that the temptation to exit may come for women as they get older.

A related question was asked about the likelihood of still working in journalism in five years' time, where 0 was 'not at all likely' and 10 was 'very likely'. The average response was 6.08, and slightly lower among the 50s+, suggesting some may be thinking about spending their final working years outside of journalism. Like the previous question, there is a clear commitment to the industry among a certain cohort, with one in five selecting 10, saying they would very likely still be working in the sector (and responses leaning more towards that higher side of the scale). The most common response, however, was a more moderate 5, indicating an uncertainty about whether journalism will be an enduring career choice.

Temptation to leave journalism over the past five years



Likelihood to still be working in journalism in five years' time



¹⁵ *Labour Force Survey 2021*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin.

Stress and Well-Being

Respondents were asked about their history of negative experiences related to their work as a journalist. There are clear positives for Irish journalists, especially when considering the more violent and extreme physical encounters which impact the working lives of journalists in other countries:

- 99% said they had never experienced arrest, detention or imprisonment;
- 92% never experienced any other physical attack;
- 90% had never experienced any sexual assault or sexual harassment.

Nevertheless, there are other challenges faced by Irish journalists in doing their job, as recorded in the findings:

- 25% had experienced surveillance over the previous five years;
- 21% had 'often/very often' experienced demeaning or hateful speech;
- 19% had experienced public discrediting of their work;
- 16% 'often or very often' had their personal morality questioned (23% recorded this as 'sometimes');
- 11% had experienced stalking.

Most respondents noted concern about their mental health and well-being rather than their physical health. The survey found that 47% agree/strongly agree that they are concerned about their emotional and mental well-being, compared with 26% who agree/strongly agree they are concerned about their physical well-being.

47%

are concerned
about their mental health
and wellbeing

With almost half of journalists saying they are concerned about their emotional/mental wellbeing; 58% said they had felt stressed in their work over the previous six months.

These findings varied significantly by age and gender:

- 71% of women are 'often or very often' stressed compared with 49% of men;
- Younger journalists more stressed 'often or very often' (73% of under-30s), compared with 45% of those aged 50+.
- The most stressed demographic are female journalists aged 30-49 (79% who are 'often or very often'), while the least stressed group was men aged 50+ (42%)

20%

of women journalists said they had
experienced workplace bullying over
the previous five years

Respondents were also asked if they had experienced workplace bullying over the past five years: 20% of women said either sometimes/often/very often, compared with 14.5% of men who answered the same (overall, the average was 16.5%).

Autonomy

The level of freedom and independence journalists have to do their work is another important factor in assessing the state of journalism in a country. When asked about the freedom of the news media in Ireland, 65% of respondents said they had a great deal/complete freedom, with only 6% saying little or no freedom at all.

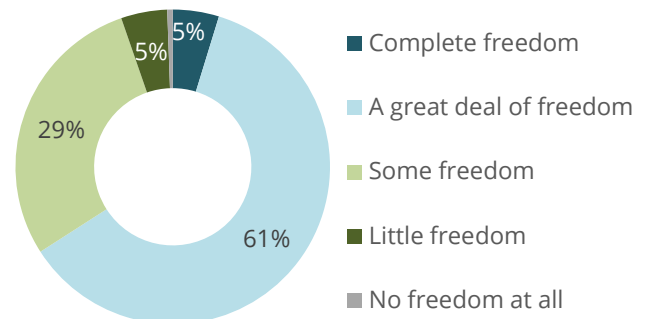
When attention shifted to the individual journalist's day-to-day work, one in ten respondents recorded that they have complete freedom to personally select the news stories they work on; a further 53% said they have a great deal of freedom while 29% said they have some freedom. Less than 10% said they have little or no freedom in determining their news stories.

Similar levels of autonomy were recorded when survey respondents were asked about the freedom they personally have in determining the specific focus (the news angle) of their stories. The findings show a very slight decline in the autonomy Irish journalists say they have over their stories (from the results reported in the 2016 study). In the previous survey in 2016, some 72% of journalists said they had a great deal of, or complete, freedom in choosing what angle to highlight when preparing a news story; the comparable figure in this survey was 69%.

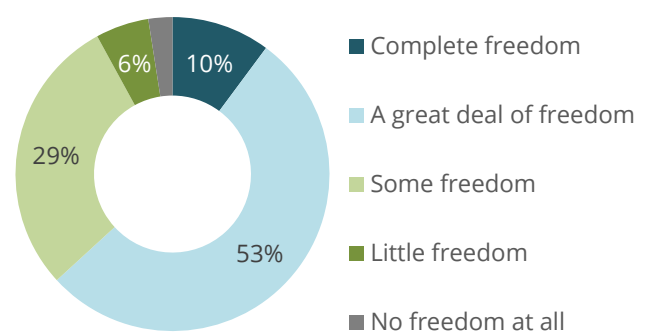
When asked about the freedom they personally have in their work:

- 63% said they had a great deal/complete freedom in selecting the stories they work on;
- 8% said they have little or no freedom in selecting their stories;
- 69% say they have a great deal/complete freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasised.

How much freedom does the news media have in Ireland?



How much freedom do you personally have in selecting the stories you work on?



34%

have had legal action taken against them in the past five years because of their journalistic work

While these levels of autonomy are relatively positive in an international context, it is worth noting the long-standing concerns around media law in Ireland which is reflected elsewhere in the survey responses.

As highlighted previously, more than half (52%) of journalists said media laws and regulation are very/extremely influential on their work, while one in three journalists (34%) said they had some legal action taken against them in the past five years because of their work, with 6% saying it had happened often or very often.

>>> 5. WORKING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Day-to-Day Formats

Respondents were asked about what format they produce work in. Interestingly, text remains the most dominant output, with it being a regular format for 82% of journalists. This finding may appear surprising given the other digital storytelling formats now available and the general convergence of newsrooms over recent decades. However, it is worth noting that photography (42%) is the second-most common format. This would appear to point to the use of smartphones by journalists to take pictures as part of their reporting coupled with the use of social media as dissemination and traffic-building channels in all media outlets.

As noted previously, one-third (35%) of Irish journalists work on a specific beat or subject area with two-thirds focused on more general work, and this is consistent across age and gender.

How often do you produce content in these formats?			
	Often/Always	Rarely/Sometimes	Never
Text	82%	10%	4%
Photographs	42%	33%	17%
Multimedia stories	32%	41%	20%
Audio	28%	38%	26%
Video	21%	39%	32%
Graphics	15%	42%	34%

Resources & Commercial Pressures

Respondents were asked about a long list of potential influences on their work, many of which relate to the pressures of a newsroom environment (see part 3). These pressures are not necessarily new as many of these constraints and limitations have always been part of a journalist’s job. The new digital aspects of the industry – such as pressure to quickly publish or to update stories – clearly, however, bring additional demands.

- Time limits are seen as very/extremely influential for 48% of Irish journalists, while a further 40% said time limits were slightly/moderately influential;
- Despite heightened time pressure in online news, 82% of journalists maintained that they would not approve the publishing information that is not yet verified under any circumstances, but 18% said it was justified on occasion;
- More than two-thirds (68%) said that competing news organisations were only slightly/moderately influential, compared with 13% who said they were very/extremely influential.

82%

said publishing information that is not yet verified is not acceptable under any circumstances

When looking at profit or ownership aspects of the media industry, many Irish journalists resist any suggestion that they are beholden to the commercial or managerial influences. Only 10% said that owners were very/extremely influential (compared with 35% who said they were not influential at all). The figures for 'very/extremely' decreased further to 7% when asked about the influence of profit expectations, while only 6% of respondents said advertising considerations were very/extremely influential on their work.

The trend towards branded content and native advertising is growing, as evidenced by departments such as the *Irish Times Content Studio*, as well as the interspersing of sponsored posts throughout news feeds on a variety of outlets' websites and apps. However, there remains a scepticism from journalists towards the blurring of advertising/editorial boundaries in published content: 92% said that 'producing promotional content that mimics news content' is not something they approved of under any circumstances, while just 7.5% say it is justified on occasion.

Audience Engagement

The quick, accessible, two-way exchanges of information between journalists and their audience is a key feature of digital journalism, whether that comes via feedback through email, reaction in comment sections, or popularity of posts on social media.

Newsroom analytics software such as Google Analytics or Chartbeat provides in-depth detail on how audiences are accessing and consuming online content. This information allows editors, managers and reporters to see how popular, or not, certain stories are with audiences.

Although many observers suggest there has been a shift away from traditional 'clickbait' and focus on longer, more 'engaged' digital viewers, there is still an underlying emphasis on performance and audience habits which this software facilitates. These metrics can be coupled with audience comments on news websites and social media (discussed further below) to help gauge the public response to stories.

Journalists were asked how important audience reaction was in their work:

- 17% said feedback from the audience was very/extremely influential, while 67% said slightly/moderately influential;
- 21% said audience research was very/extremely influential, while 54% said slightly/moderately.

Respondents were also asked about the audience in the context of their professional roles, and whether producing content which might be popular on these metric/analytic platforms was a key driver in their work.

Getting some kind of emotional response from their work was considered extremely/very important to almost half (49%) of Irish journalists, while attracting the largest audience resonated with 31%. Providing entertainment was deemed extremely/very important for 36% (with 18% insisting it is not at all important).

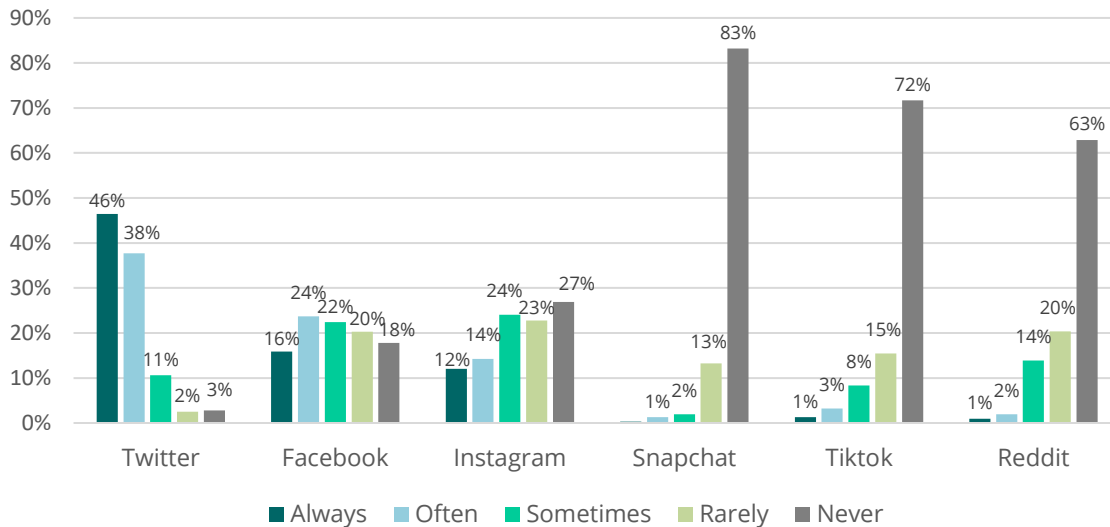
17%

of journalists said that feedback from the audience was very or extremely influential

Use of Social Media

Social media is now an important part of the daily work of Irish journalists: 55% rely on social media in some form each day, while 27% use it frequently but do not rely on it, 13% use it occasionally, and only 5% said they don't use it.

As illustrated in the chart below, Twitter (now X) is the most popular social network for journalists, with more than 80% of journalists saying they use the platform always or often. In the aftermath of Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter and subsequent changes to the platform, as well as various controversies, there may be an impact on future use of the platform by media professionals.



The findings also found that beyond Twitter, Facebook and Instagram were more commonly used by Irish journalists while Snapchat, TikTok and Reddit were rarely used.

Respondents were asked to select the two most common reasons why they use social media in their work. As shown on the accompanying table, seeking information – staying up-to-date, and finding story leads/ideas – are the most common reasons, followed by more communicative functions such as promoting their outlet and contacting potential sources. Interacting with the public, other journalists, and monitoring public reaction to their work were less of a priority, suggesting engagement with audiences is a secondary use for Irish journalists in an online environment.

Reasons given for using social media

To stay up to date on what is happening	57%
To find story leads/ideas	46%
To promote the outlet I work for	40%
To contact potential sources	31%
To promote myself as a journalist	27%
To interact with the public	14%
To monitor public reaction to my work	11%
To interact with other journalists	2%

Given the significant influence of social media platforms in journalism, there is an added spotlight and pressure on journalists in online activity and, in particular, in how they conduct themselves online. Concerns around showing potential biases or sharing comments or material on social media that might potentially reflect poorly on their outlet have led some organisations to issue social media guidelines around how their staff act in online spaces.

When asked if they feel in any way constrained in what they can post on social media based on their organisation’s social media guidelines, almost half (49%) of respondents said they did not really feel constrained, but ‘were conscious of what I post’.

This finding would suggest that Irish journalists have internalised and accepted the guidelines. When coupled with the 37% who feel very or a little constrained, it is clear that navigating social media is another pressure for journalists.

Having a presence on social media can bring its own problems in terms of interactions with the public, with journalists often being exposed to hostility online.¹⁶ Respondents who use social media were asked about exposure to social media-based abuse/harassment related to their work or public profile as a journalist:

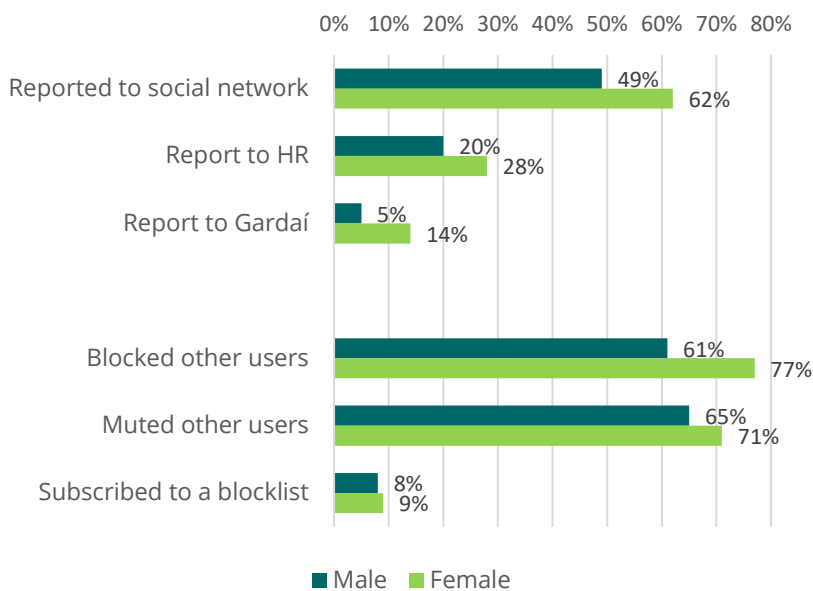
- 13% said they experienced it daily or weekly, 14% said at least monthly, with a further 26% saying it happened a few times a year;
- 31% said rarely, while 17% said they do not encounter it.

There was not a substantial gender discrepancy in the survey results in terms of frequency of exposure to hostile content. More men than women said they were exposed to social media-based abuse/harassment on a daily basis, while more women than men said it was a monthly (or more often) occurrence. Overall, the figures were slightly higher among journalists with visible roles (reporters, editors, hosts/presenters, columnists).

37%

feel constrained in what they can post on social media because of their organisation’s social media guidelines

Responses to social media hostility

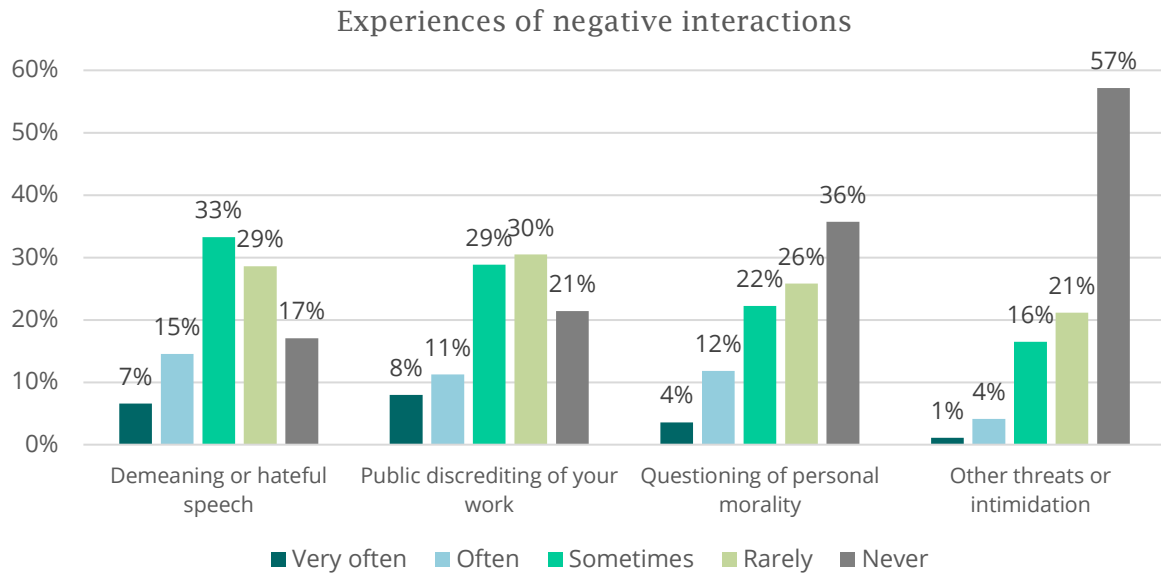


In terms of how they reacted to this social media hostility, the survey respondents were asked if they have taken action to minimise or report online abuse/harassment related to their work as a journalist.

As illustrated, there was a gender-based difference evident here, with women more likely to take some kind of action, perhaps indicating because they felt it was necessary to take further action, or the material they received was more seriously abusive or threatening (in either a professional or personal sense).

¹⁶ Dawn Wheatley, *Social media and online hostility: Experiences of women in Irish journalism* (DCU, 2023).

The abuse or hostility which journalists face online may be associated with a more general wave of anti-journalistic sentiment over the past decade, fuelled by claims of ‘fake news’. More than half (55%) of Irish journalists said they sometimes/often/very often experience demeaning or hateful speech directed towards them, while 48% noted some kind of public discrediting of their work. Although not exclusively an online or digital issue, it is important to note that social media and online comments can act as platforms to facilitate attacks on journalists.



APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

This report is part of the international *Worlds of Journalism* research project which will publish global results in 2025. The survey questionnaire was prepared and agreed by the Executive Committee of the *Worlds of Journalism* project. Fieldwork for the Irish survey was undertaken in 2021 and involved professional journalists from the Republic of Ireland. The survey was completed online by participants and was completely anonymous.

For the purposes of the Worlds of Journalism study:

A **journalist** is defined as someone who regularly seeks, describes, analyses, interprets, contextualises, edits, produces, presents or portrays fact-based information about affairs of potential interest to the general public (news), in any text, sound and/or or visual form or medium, as part of a process of providing or interpreting this information to a more generalised group of people than those previously familiar with it, and without expectation of deriving personal benefit from this information being made available.

A **professional journalist** is someone who meets the definition of a journalist and who considers their activity, income, or time as a journalist to be their main or most important occupation because it provides financial sustainability.

A total of 364 journalists completed the survey which – based on the sample and response rate – meets the minimum statistical requirements of the *Worlds of Journalism* project.

While there is no agreed figure on the number of journalists in Ireland, the 2016 census recorded 3,604 people as 'Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors'. This is likely an overestimation for the purpose of our study, as it may include those who work in the wider communications sector but produce some content of a journalistic nature.

Among our respondents:

- 16% were from local/regional outlets; 66% were from national outlets; 11% were from transnational outlets;
- 23% worked in outlets which had a broadcast background; 57% a newspaper background; 14% an internet native background; 3% magazine background; 3% news agency background;
- 54% of respondents overall were in non-management roles, 26% in middle management, 10% in top management roles (10% did not respond to this question);
- 17% were aged under 30, 50% were in the 30-49 age category, while 33% were aged 50+.

The survey questionnaire was standardised across countries for the *Worlds of Journalism* study. In some instances, however, it was possible to make minor modifications to question wording to account for local circumstances and to include some additional questions unique to the country involved.

