

INTRO

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Edited by Grant Hannis

INTRO

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO JOURNALISM
IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

MASSEY TEXTS

EXERCISES

There are practical exercises with model answers for all the chapters in this book. These exercises can be found online at www.jeanz.org.nz

“Journalism is more than a job - it’s a lifestyle. You get to meet the most amazing people and do just about anything you want through the contacts you make. It’s a huge, changing, exciting environment to live in. I often think how incredible it is that I get paid every week for doing something so cool.”

DEBBIE GREGORY

NEW ZEALAND JOURNALIST

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Introduction

We live in revolutionary times.

The world of communication has undergone numerous revolutions in the past. Perhaps the first were the development of drawing and speech, although exactly when these occurred is unknown. The next was the invention of writing, which seems to have occurred about 5000 years ago. The next was the development of printing, which occurred in Europe in the 15th century, although printing had been invented in Asia long before that.

As technology developed, so the revolutions in communication accelerated. The 19th century saw the development of the telegraph and the industrialisation of printing. The 20th century saw radio and television. The most recent revolution – the one we’re living through now – is the digital one. This revolution has presented exciting new opportunities for journalists in finding and telling news. But it has also thrown down the gauntlet to the conventional business model for journalism by eroding its traditional markets, making it all the more important that journalists become multimedia experts.

This book reflects this revolution. It includes chapters on the new digital world, including web-based reporting, digital photography and using social media. But there is also much in this book about the fundamentals of journalism, including news writing, newsgathering and covering specialist rounds. Radio and television journalism are also discussed. All these topics remain as vital as ever. As fake news floods the internet, the basic journalism skills practised by professional, well-trained journalists are more valuable than ever.

The book also reflects the unique place of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand and the country’s multicultural society, with chapters on reporting Māori affairs and reporting on diversity.

For all of the chapters there are exercises with model answers available online. Go to www.jeanz.org.nz

Journalism education is a partnership between educators and practitioners. That is why this book contains chapters written by educators and journalists, and why the chapters include contributions from working journalists.

As the editor of this book, I am profoundly grateful to all the educators and journalists who contributed to *Intro*. I am also grateful to Massey University Press for publishing this new edition.

As you embark on your career in journalism, I invite you to re-read the quote from Debbie Gregory at the front of this book. Journalism is a wonderful career. Enjoy it!

Grant Hannis
Editor



PART A

Finding the news



1

Understanding journalism

First things first

Grant Hannis, Massey University; Allan Lee, AUT University; Charles Riddle, Waikato Institute of Technology; Catherine Strong, Massey University; Greg Treadwell, AUT University

Journalism is an exciting, challenging, busy and rewarding career. As a journalist, you will get the opportunity to inform, influence and entertain your audience. You may write for a news website or local community newspaper, you may anchor the national television news, you may be the court reporter, or you may manage a chain of newspapers. Whatever your role, you will meet people, learn about their lives, and interpret their world for your audience. You may even provoke radical change.

This book considers the main skills that the novice journalist needs to know. But before we get into the details, we need to understand the bigger picture. In this chapter we'll discuss the history of journalism in New Zealand, how modern newsrooms operate, the challenges the industry faces and its likely future.

We can define journalism as words and/or images on matters of current interest, published for a wide audience.

The history of journalism in New Zealand

Today's media scene is a far cry from the time when there were only two television stations producing New Zealand news, a handful of radio stations, and no internet news. People mostly had to rely on daily newspapers to find out what was going on in their community.

The desire to learn the news has always been in our blood. In the pre-colonial period Māori would have relied on oral news, as preliterate societies everywhere did. The early New Zealand colonists were very keen to have newspapers. So keen, in fact, that the first issue of the first paper, *The New Zealand Gazette*, was actually published in London in 1839. Issue number 2 was printed by Samuel Revans in Wellington's Hutt Valley in 1840 (Scholefield, 1958).

Journalists have freed the wrongly convicted, helped bring the guilty to justice and even helped bring down a corrupt US president. Those stories will be found elsewhere in this book.

Also in 1840, Barzillai Quaife published the *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* in Kororāreka (later renamed Russell). The paper was needed by Governor Hobson to make official decrees, but when Quaife questioned the government policy of undertaking inquiries before Māori land could be sold to settlers, Hobson closed the paper down. Later papers met a similar fate. The first paper to have a stable run was the *Southern Cross*, which began publishing in Auckland in 1843. It was followed by *The New Zealander* in 1845. *The New Zealander* eventually closed. *The New Zealand Herald*, started in 1863 by W.C. Wilson, was far more successful. The *Southern Cross*, run by A.G. Horton, merged with the *Herald* in 1876. The *Herald* was a morning paper, and an evening competitor, the *Auckland Star*, commenced publication in 1870 (Hastings, 2013).

The colonial government also began publishing in Māori, including *Te Karere o Nui Tireni* ("The Messenger of New Zealand"). With the outbreak of the colonial wars, Māori began publishing their own papers, including Waikato's *Te Hokioi E rere atu-na* ("The warbird soaring above").

Other papers sprang up around the country, including Wellington's *Evening Post* (1865), and the country's first daily newspaper and first to be produced using industrial-age printing technology, the *Otago Daily Times* (1861). *The Press* in Christchurch also began in 1861. New Zealand's oldest surviving paper, the *Wanganui Chronicle*, commenced publication in 1856.

One of the very few dailies established in the 20th century was *The Dominion*, first published in Wellington in 1907, the same year New Zealand became a dominion. Much later, the paper became part of the stable of newspapers owned by INL, which also included *The Evening Post*, Christchurch's *The Press*, the *Sunday Star-Times* and the *Nelson Mail*. INL sold its publishing assets to Australian company Fairfax in 2003. Fairfax's New Zealand operations are now called Stuff.

The other major newspaper chain to emerge and survive was Wilson and Horton, which owned *The New Zealand Herald*, and later bought the *Bay of Plenty Times* and the *Wanganui Chronicle*. Wilson and Horton was eventually sold to Australian company APN. In 2016, the New Zealand operations were spun off and floated on the New Zealand sharemarket as NZME.

Evening papers slowly began to lose popularity to television. This resulted, for instance, in the closure of the *Auckland Star*, and the 2002 merger of *The Evening Post* with *The Dominion* to become *The Dominion Post*.

Both Stuff and NZME supply news copy online, via such sites as www.stuff.co.nz and www.nzherald.co.nz. Each company also shares copy between its stable of newspapers, in a form of internal news agencies.

Sunday papers emerged in the 1960s, with a range publishing today, including the



New Zealand journalists are among the most free in the world.

Sunday Star-Times and the *Herald on Sunday*. Along with specialist business newspaper *National Business Review*, the “Sundays” are the country’s only national newspapers.

Magazines have also proven popular in New Zealand. The *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly* began publishing in 1932, and the *New Zealand Listener* in 1939. *Metro* was launched in 1981, and its sister publication, *North & South*, in 1986. There are now a host of specialist magazines for myriad tastes.

Radio broadcasting began in New Zealand in the 1920s, but for many years was state-owned. Setting up a radio station in New Zealand was also tightly controlled, leading to pirate Auckland radio station Radio Hauraki broadcasting in the 1960s. Radio New Zealand (now known as RNZ) was established as an independent government-owned agency with its own news service in 1975 (Day, 2000).

Gradually controls were relaxed, and RNZ’s commercial stations were sold to the private sector. There is now a proliferation of private stations, including the Newstalk ZB and Radio Live stations. There has also been enormous growth in the number of Māori radio stations.

Television broadcasting started in New Zealand in 1960. For many years, New Zealand was serviced by one television network, the government-owned New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC). The NZBC covered both radio and television, and NZBC journalists prepared news reports for both media. In 1975, the government split NZBC into three organisations: RNZ, Television One and Channel 2.

The two television stations originally both ran news programmes, but this eventually ended. In the mid-1980s, the government opened up the television market, initially with the arrival of TV3 (whose news service is now called Newshub), and latterly with various regional stations and pay TV stations such as Sky. Three competing news

Some newspapers continue to be owned independently, such as the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Gisborne Herald*.

For details on the history and development of Māori radio broadcasting in New Zealand go to www.irirangi.net



RICK NEVILLE

Rick is editorial director of the Newspaper Publishers' Association, which represents the country's newspapers. He has had a 45-year career in newspaper and magazine publishing, including editorships of daily newspapers and senior roles at APN (now NZME) and INL (now Stuff). He says the role of journalism is "to tell people the truth of what's going on around them, so they know, and understand, what's happening and how it might affect them".

He is proud that "New Zealand journalism has largely held to principles of truth and independence. Our media outlets are mostly free from partisan influences, which has meant journalists have been able to go about their work unconstrained by the political or business interests of their owners."

There are some elements of New Zealand journalism he is uncomfortable with. One is "an increasing 'pack attack' approach evidenced by the new shock-jock style of some television political reporters. They appear to think they are bigger than the story." He also says "quite a lot of our sports journalism is still lifeless and dull".

He describes the future of journalism as "clouded, because of the fragmentation of media outlets caused by the internet and the inability of the new media to generate profits". At the moment, he says, "most serious journalism in this country is written by journalists on newspapers and magazines, which are under strong attack from the new media, including publishers' own websites. Paywalls, in whatever form, cannot come quick enough."

systems can now be found on Television One, Prime and Newshub. There has also been a Māori presence on television, especially with the news programme *Te Karere*. The Māori Television station began broadcasting in 2004. There are also now a range of online-only news outlets, like newsroom.co.nz and scoop.co.nz.

New Zealand journalists have a huge advantage over journalists in many other countries in the freedom to report and write the news. New Zealand media is one of the most free in the world – rating in the top 20 (Reporters Without Borders, 2017). Even journalism students have the freedom to cover local government proceedings, court cases, and political media conferences.

The newsroom

The pressure of unrelenting deadlines means life in the modern newsroom is never dull. In fact, most newsrooms work at only two speeds: busy and feverish. Journalists and editors live by the clock. There are the continuous deadlines of the news websites, the hourly deadlines of radio news, the daily deadlines of the newspapers and main TV news. Newsrooms can be intimidating to young recruits who are often expected to write stories without much supervision or feedback.

Journalists' roles are broadly similar across print, broadcast and online newsrooms, yet their job descriptions and job titles differ between the platforms. In a print newsroom like *The Dominion Post* in Wellington, reporters and photographers work under the direction of editors who assign them to stories and who make the tough calls about story ranking and placement. While the overall boss at a newspaper is called *the* editor, there are other editors, too, including the business editor, the sports editor and the features editor.

Broadcast newsrooms are no less hectic. Radio journalists at news-based stations RNZ National, Newstalk ZB and Radio Live focus on gathering audio grabs from newsmakers for the next bulletin, never more than 30 minutes away at peak times. A senior staffer known as the news director or chief reporter assigns stories, helps with scripts and organises news bulletins. Another ranks stories and compiles the final bulletin. Radio reporters are either out at news events, interviewing sources over the phone, or writing and editing stories. Reporters and on-air producers often work together to contact and secure interviews with newsmakers.

More than any other platform, television news production is all about teamwork. Stories get to air thanks to a partnership between the reporter, the camera operator, and the video editor. Senior newsroom staff at TVNZ, Newshub, Prime and Māori Television have a variety of titles, including news producers (mid-range journalists who don't appear on camera but help the reporting team to research, write and package a story), assignment editors (senior journalists who decide what stories are covered and direct reporters and technical staff) and executive editors (who take overall responsibility for news and current affairs programmes).

Television and print newsrooms have always run like factory assembly lines where journalists work towards a daily deadline, be it the evening news bulletin or the 11pm press run. At key stages in the production cycle, senior editors hold news conferences to direct reporting resources to the top stories and to determine what goes on the front page or leads the bulletin.

Once, all journalists worked in single-platform newsrooms, but most news organisations today operate across two or three platforms in what are known as converged or digital newsrooms. It's called converged journalism because all the old media technologies – written words, photography, audio and video – have converged on internet news sites. Although a newspaper is very different from a TV news show, a newspaper's website is very similar to a TV news show's website.

In learning multi-platform storytelling skills, journalists have had to adapt to new technologies, new audiences, new demands from those audiences, and a transformation in the routines and culture of their workplaces. Radio stations like RNZ may include visual items that are broadcast online and even on pay TV. A Stuff reporter at a regional newspaper can expect in one shift to be filing several text stories, still photographs, a blog, slideshows, audio, video and possibly a piece to camera as she meets the needs of the Stuff website, its mobile app and one or more newspaper titles. Similarly, a Newshub reporter is no longer filing just for broadcast: she too is filing text, still images and perhaps a blog post for newshub.co.nz and mobile platforms. Online-only news organisations like scoop.co.nz, with

Producing quality journalism to deadline is no solo effort. It requires high levels of teamwork coupled with clear lines of responsibility and authority.

no antecedents in traditional media, have always been multimedia publishers.

There is no single definition or model for convergence in the newsroom, but media companies worldwide have opted for what Deuze has called “at least some form of cross-media cooperation or synergy between formerly separated staffers, newsrooms and departments” (Deuze, 2008, p. 8). In practice, digital newsrooms are located somewhere on a continuum: at one end is minimal convergence with little more than cross-promotion happening between, say, a newspaper and its website; the mid-point is regular content sharing between platforms; while complete convergence is where editors routinely use the strengths of each platform to best tell each story. Convergence has also involved developing cross-media cooperation.

Physically, newsrooms have tended to be open-plan offices with reporters at one end and editors at the other. The overall look is slightly dishevelled, with newspapers, media releases and reports strewn everywhere. Journalists are not known for being tidy. There is a constant hum of activity and ringing of phones. In larger newsrooms, reporters are seated within departments such as general news, sports and business. The move to multi-platform publishing has brought with it new ideas on newsroom layout, with one recent trend being work stations lined up like spokes on a wheel leading out from the central editors’ hub. The theory is this layout improves communication between team members.

One of the spokes is the online team. Deuze says an ongoing debate since news websites were introduced in the 1990s has been “whether to integrate the online journalists into the main radio, television or print newsroom, or to set up separate office space for them” (Deuze, 2008, p. 13). In New Zealand, online teams were initially set up as separate operations, but the model now has them integrated into the heart of the main newsroom. A trend some digital newsroom researchers are reporting is a gradual flattening of strict hierarchies and a devolution of decision-making to mid-level editors (Robinson, 2011).

Journalism is generally a competitive industry, with each news outlet and each journalist striving to be the first with the news and to break big stories. But there is also a cooperative aspect to journalism. Within a newsroom, journalists may work together on big stories, especially stories across different media. News outlets may also cooperate, such as when journalists from different organisations worked together on the Panama Papers, a vast cache of leaked documents detailing global tax avoidance (Obermaier & Obermayer, 2017).

Journalists may also act collectively on points of principle. For instance, accounting firm EY used to sponsor business journalism awards in New Zealand, but in 2017 disqualified an article that criticised one of EY’s clients. Believing EY’s actions were prompted by a conflict of interest, other journalism organisations withdrew their entries and declined to attend the awards dinner. EY had no option but to abandon the awards, which were replaced by new business journalism awards with no commercial sponsorship (Smellie, 2017; Hawkins, 2017).

Converged journalism

Today’s journalism means your stories have a potentially huge audience, right from

There used to be teams of sub-editors in newsrooms, who would check reporters’ articles for grammar, structure, etc. prior to publication. But these days reporters are increasingly expected to sub their own work. This reduces costs and means material can be quickly uploaded. For details on grammar and structuring news stories, see Chapter 14 and Appendix 1.

Journalists haven’t always backed each other. In 1982, then Prime Minister Rob Muldoon, unhappy about journalist Tom Scott’s criticisms of him, made Scott leave a Beehive media conference. The other journalists present did nothing (Te Ara, 2017).

PAUL THOMPSON

Paul is the chief executive of RNZ. He has been a journalist since he was 17.

“Journalism improves people’s lives by making them think and giving them pleasure and knowledge,” he says. “It also has a powerful positive effect on wider society. People of influence and organisations behave better, and make better decisions, when they are under independent – and at times irreverent – scrutiny.”

He is most proud of journalism’s scoops, which are when a journalistic investigation breaks a story. “Every journalist feels immense pride when they realise that their endeavour has revealed information that would otherwise have remained hidden.”

One thing that disappoints him in journalism is “inaccuracies”. He is also concerned with the way journalists sometimes use their power. “The media wield immense power that, if misused, has a dramatic effect on individuals.”

He says the future of journalism is “bright but it will be different. The advertising subsidy that has nourished newsrooms in commercial media for decades is weakening, so we have to look at ways to be leaner, more efficient and intensely focused on the content that is truly valued by audiences.”



the start of your career. Even if you produce stories for a tiny community newspaper with a small circulation, it is probably also loaded online and viewed throughout the world. Every story you produce may have an impact much wider than what you originally intended.

Your audience may be reading, viewing or listening to your story. And they may be doing this on their smartphone, home computer, a standard newspaper, or whatever. Converged journalism means the journalist needs to produce stories for all of these media. This requires the ability to visualise a story, and also to know the sound opportunities to make it into an audio story.

On top of this, you have direct contact with your audience in the form of online comments, internet polls, tweet conversations, etc. Being a journalist is now a two-way conversation with your readers/listeners/viewers. Previously, journalists didn’t really know what their readers thought about a topic or the way a story was written unless they received a letter to the editor. Today’s massive (and sometimes frank) audience feedback can be daunting, but it makes for better reporting to know immediately if something is wrong or right.

Being a journalist in the era of new media is breaking new ground. Many older journalists have not dealt with multi-platform reporting nor with social media interaction with their audience. This is unique to 21st-century journalism. Students who gain new technology skills are empowered for a solid career in the future. They have the flexibility to shift in whatever direction the media happens to go. A survey

Even if you plan to concentrate on online video or audio stories, these will be uploaded online with text. That means you’ll still need strong grammar skills.

Female, white, young and paid the average

New Zealand newsrooms were once a male domain, but that has changed. A 2013 survey of the full-time journalism workforce by Massey University and Waikato University found women comprised 57 per cent of newsroom staff. By contrast, across all New Zealand industries, women comprised 41 per cent of the full-time workforce (Hannis, Hollings, Pajo & Lealand, 2014).

And it was a disproportionately white workforce. A hefty 83 per cent of the journalism workforce was New Zealand European, 5 per cent Māori, 2 per cent Pasifika and 1 per cent Asian. Across the New Zealand population generally it was a different story, with New Zealand Europeans comprising 74 per cent of the population, Māori 15 per cent, Pasifika 7 per cent and Asians 12 per cent.

And it was a young workforce. A third of the journalism workforce was aged 30 years or younger, and almost 60 per cent of the journalism workforce was aged 40 years or younger. Across the entire New Zealand full-time workforce, only about 25 per cent of workers were aged 30 years or younger and about 45 per cent aged 40 years or younger.

The journalists' average annual before-tax income was estimated at \$60,000. This was basically the same as the average income of \$59,000 for the entire full-time workforce. Nearly 60 per cent of journalists earned the average or less.

All figures are from Hannis, Hollings, Pajo and Lealand (2014).

Crowdsourcing is when a news outlet makes a database available online and asks the online community to trawl through the material for newsworthy items. The news outlet then publishes the results.

of working journalists who had learned converged skills said they had a greater confidence in their future career (Strong, 2008). They felt that multimedia skills gave them another dimension to their employability. Sure, it's hard work, with continuous deadlines and myriad skills required, but it's exciting and new.

In addition to being posted on your own news organisation's website, your online stories can easily be passed around through social media. An example of the impact was the prolific tweeter Sultan Al-Qassemi during the Middle East democratic uprisings, called the Arab Spring. @SultanAlQassemi was considered one of the most reliable sources of news on the Arab Spring (Fastenberg, 2011), and yet he wasn't a journalist, and didn't originate any news stories. He simply retweeted breaking news stories. Al-Qassemi monitored dozens of television, radio and online news programmes during the time of the uprising, both in English and in Arabic (Al-Meiri, 2011). He quickly learned which ones were accurate and which ones weren't. He would retweet the most accurate accounts, giving credit to the originating news agency, such as Al-Arabiya or Reuters. Other news media learned to depend on him.

In essence, Al-Qassemi took over the role of the editor or programme producer in a large newsroom. He determined the news value and validity of the information, then retweeted it to his 200,000 followers, who in turn retweeted to all their followers. He told followers that they helped save people's lives with the retweets of accurate Arab Spring information (Al-Meiri, 2011). Protesters in Egypt told him that his accurate and up-to-the-minute tweets helped them avoid certain streets when there were bloody attacks occurring.

The rapid dissemination through social media can be a problem, especially when