

medianet.



Australian Media Landscape Report





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About Medianet

Executive summary

The 2026 Australian Media Landscape Report highlights a profound transformation within the industry, marked by a turn in technology adoption and a shifting economic reality for journalists.

For the first time, generative AI has become a mainstream tool, with 54% of journalists now using it in their work—a significant jump from 37% only a year prior. However, this adoption coincides with deep anxiety, as 93% of respondents expressed concern over the impact of generative AI on the integrity of journalism and 22% report (up from 16% the previous year) that they or someone they know lost work in 2025 due to AI adoption in the workplace. Money remains the most pervasive personal challenge for the fourth year

in a row, cited by 45% of journalists, while the most common salary bracket has slipped to \$60,000–\$79,999.

When it comes to how journalists source information, a shift is underway. Not only did press releases overtake industry and professional contacts as the top story source for the first time, but social media usage has declined. For PR professionals, the relationship with the media is now defined by a demand for personalisation; 60% of journalists say evidence that a source understands their interests is the top factor for building trust. They also see the PR profession as a bridge between them and valuable spokespeople and other gatekeepers of information. For most, PR professionals are

important to their success. Journalists, however, remain highly sceptical of AI in this space, with 78% stating that receiving AI-generated pitches decreases their trust in PR content, while 48% claim they can “almost always” detect machine-written copy.

The digital landscape is fragmenting as journalists seek autonomy outside traditional newsrooms. Nearly half of all respondents are now running or considering alternative platforms like Substack or podcasts, primarily driven by a desire for creative freedom. This move towards independence mirrors a broader exodus from traditional social media, as professional usage of Twitter/X plummeted to 36% in 2025—down from 73% in 2019—while Meta-owned platforms like

Instagram and WhatsApp have surged professional use.

Respondents’ outlook on the future is sharply divided. While 53% maintain some level of optimism, citing “green shoots” in independent and hyperlocal media, 47% are not optimistic at all. Detractors describe a “dumpster fire” of job insecurity, media ownership concentration, and a “race to the bottom” driven by traffic-chasing models. Ultimately, the report depicts an industry at a tipping point, where the rise of AI-driven search and summaries is viewed as the greatest threat to public interest journalism, forcing a necessary but painful evolution in how news is produced and consumed.

About the report

Welcome to the Medianet 2026 Australian Media Landscape report. This report is based on a survey conducted in January 2026 to provide insights into the work and preferences of Australian journalists and respond to some of the challenges they are facing in the industry.

Respondents were invited to participate via professional email addresses stored in Medianet's media contacts database. A total of 803 journalists participated in the anonymous survey, providing comprehensive insights into technological shifts in media content, journalists' preferences and challenges, and the broader media landscape over the past 12 months.

Survey participants were invited to enter a draw to win a monetary gift card. Responses were analysed confidentially, and all identifying information about respondents was removed to maintain anonymity.

Of the 803 respondents, 69% worked in digital journalism, 53% worked in print, 18% worked in radio, 12% worked in TV and 13% worked in podcasting.

The information presented in this report includes quantitative results, qualitative insights and quotes from respondents. Quotes were selected to reflect common themes shared among many of the responses. They do not necessarily represent the views of Medianet.

Acknowledgement of Country:

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which this report was written. We recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

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- Darla Tejada
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- Phil McLean
- Yang Zhou
- Amena Shakir
- To all respondents of the survey for sharing their views about the industry.

Please note: This survey was intended to provide a snapshot of the experiences of journalists, not a comprehensive study into the state of the media industry. Responses received may not fully reflect an accurate sample of Australian journalists.

Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number. Where these do not add up to 100, this is due to respondents being able to select more than one answer to the question or rounding.

Respondents

803



69%

Digital



53%

Print



18%

Radio



13%

Podcasting



12%

TV

Snapshot of the media industry

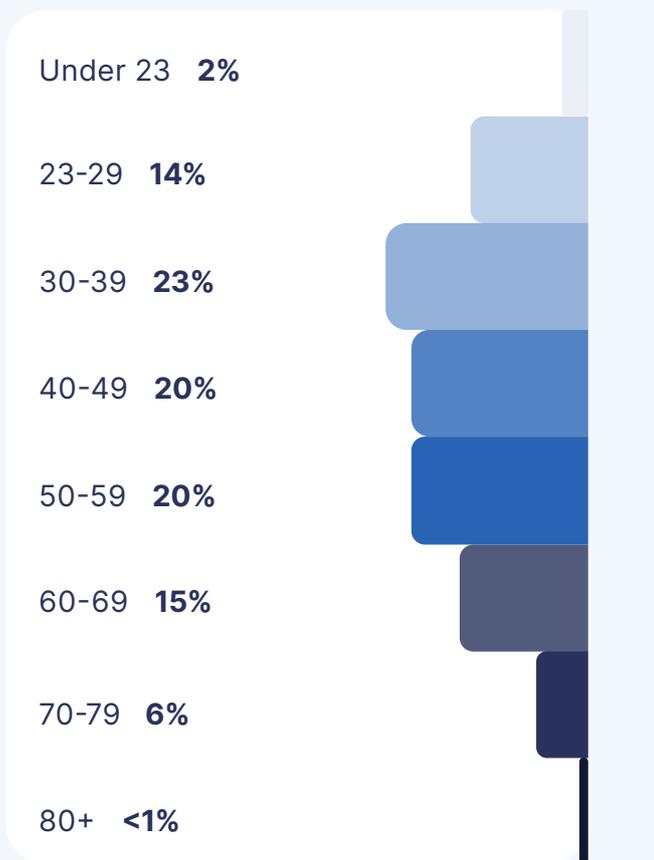


Figure 1 — Age of respondents (years)

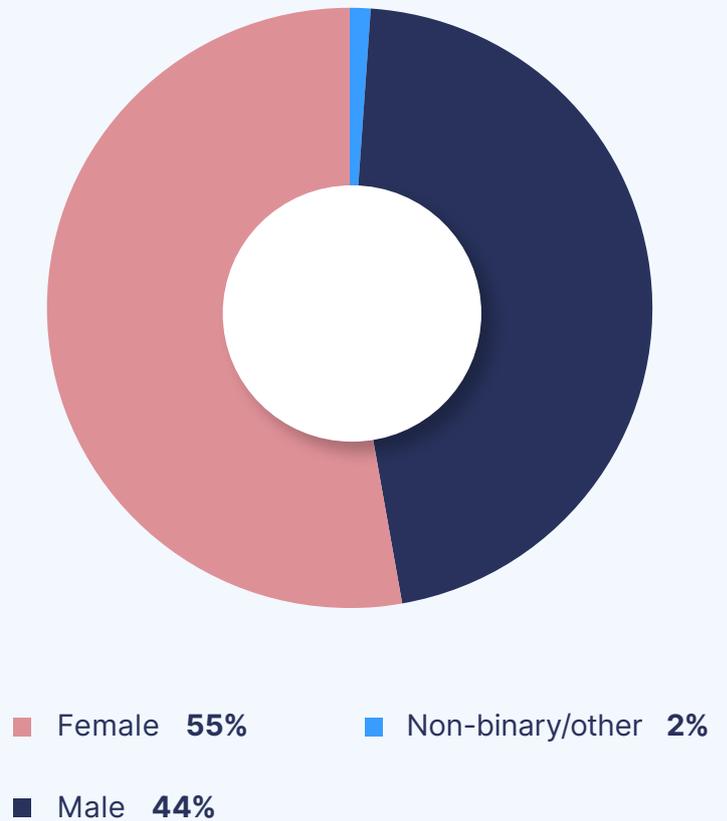


Figure 2 — Gender of respondents (of those who disclosed)

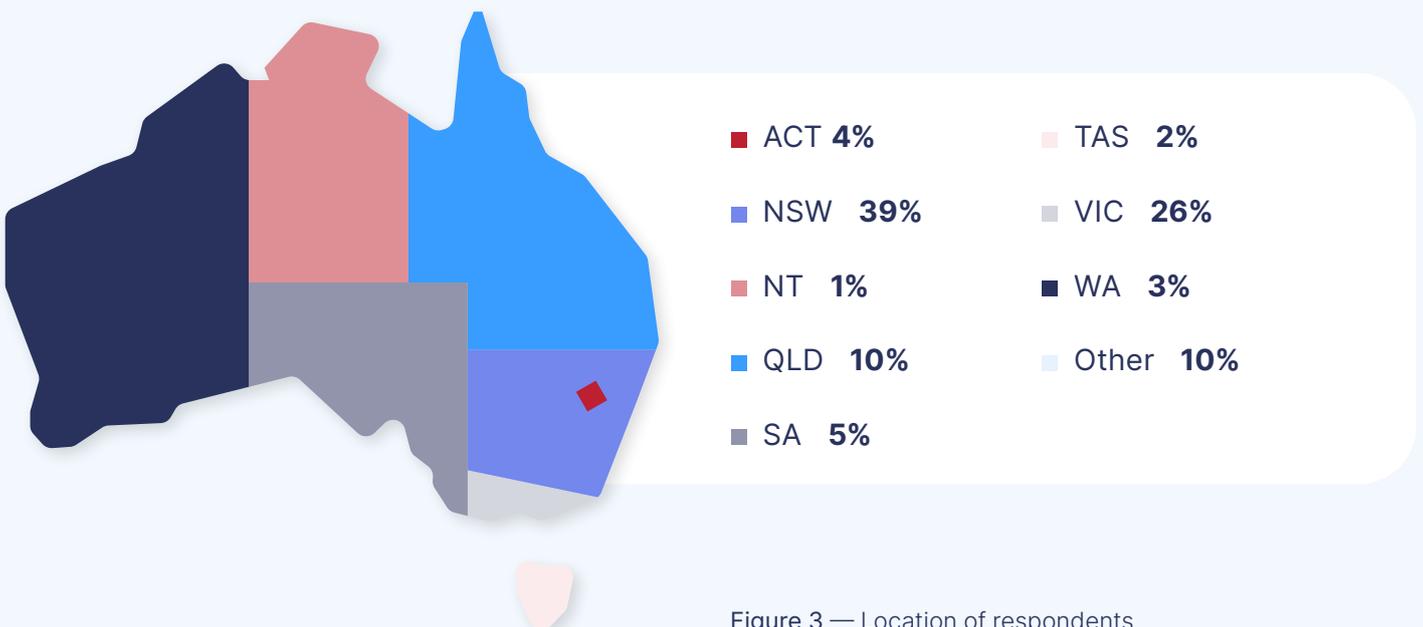


Figure 3 — Location of respondents

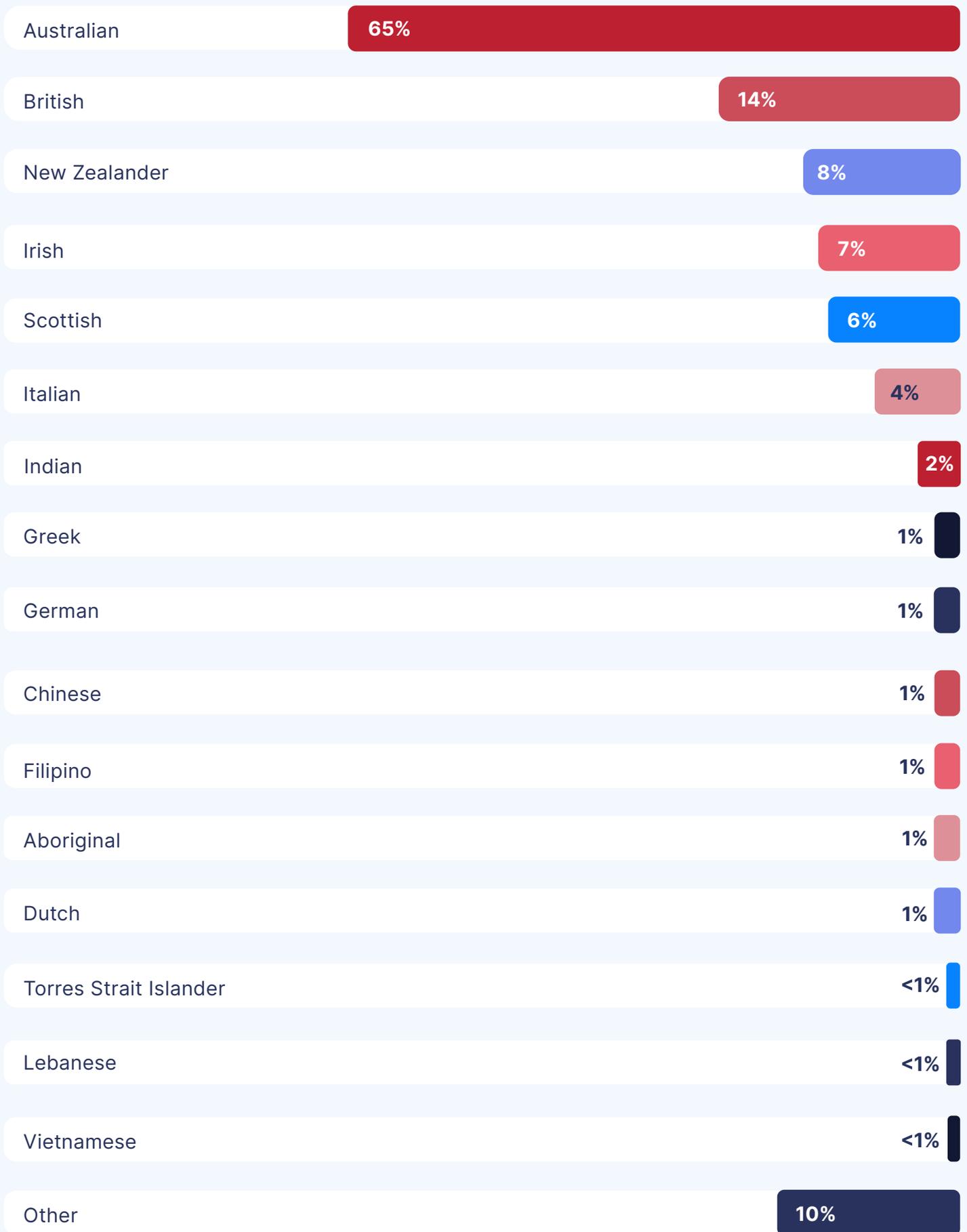


Figure 4 — Ethnic background of respondents

Snapshot of key findings

Employment and work



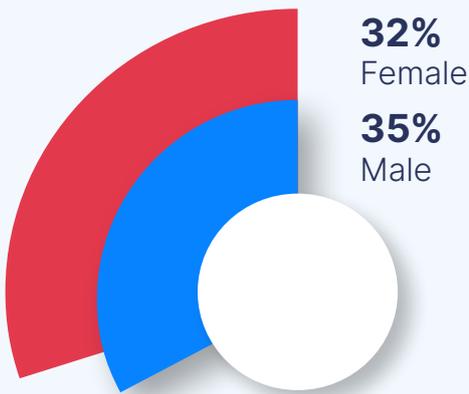
The most common pay bracket for journalists in 2025 was between **\$60,000 to \$79,999 per year**, followed by **\$80,000 to \$99,999 per year**.



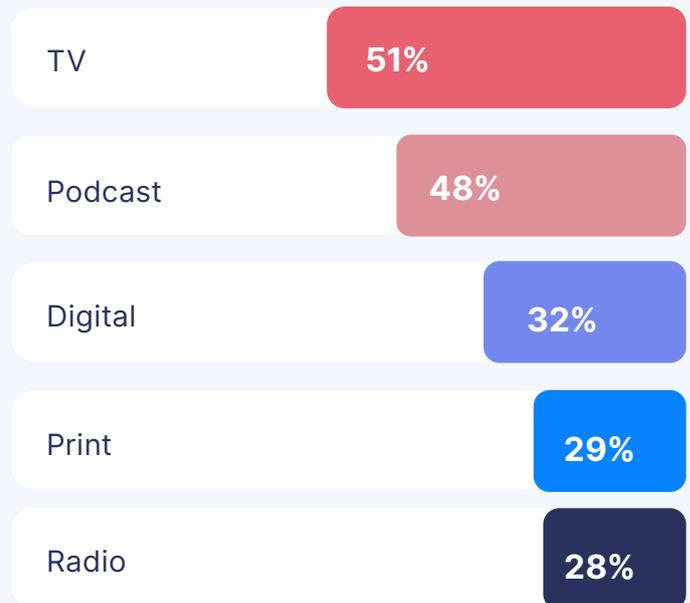
52%

changed or looking to change roles in some way.

Salary of more than **\$100,000+ p.a.**



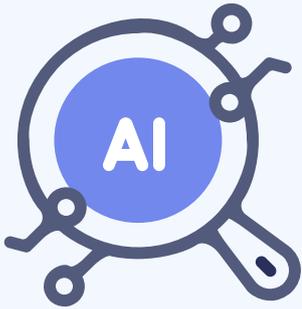
35% of male journalists who disclosed their pay received a salary of more than \$100,000 in 2025, compared to 32% of female journalists.



TV remained the highest paid sector, with over half (51%) of all journalists working in TV receiving over \$100,000 per year. This was followed closely by podcasting (48% paid \$100,000 per year or more), digital (32%), print (29%) and radio (28%).

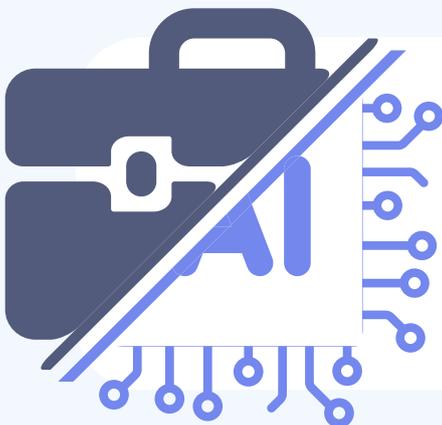
Money was the most common 'greatest challenge' experienced by journalists in 2025.

The media and AI

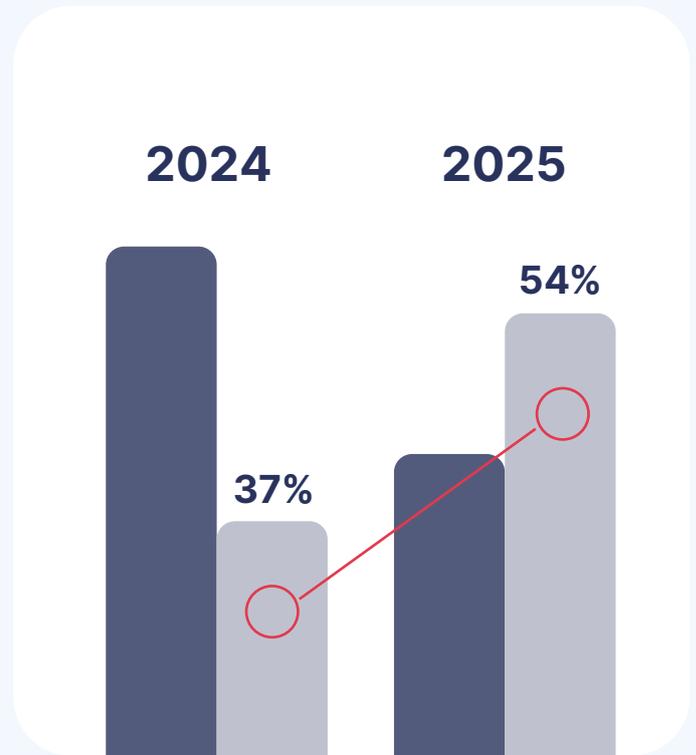


Changes in how people **consume information** (due to AI search and AI summaries) was the **biggest threat** to public interest journalism identified by journalists.

93% of respondents said they were concerned about the impacts that generative AI/LLMs could have on the overall integrity or quality of journalism.



22% lost work or knew someone who did due to the adoption of generative AI/LLMs. Respondents employed as **freelancers, casual employees** and those working in **podcasting** and **radio** were more highly affected.

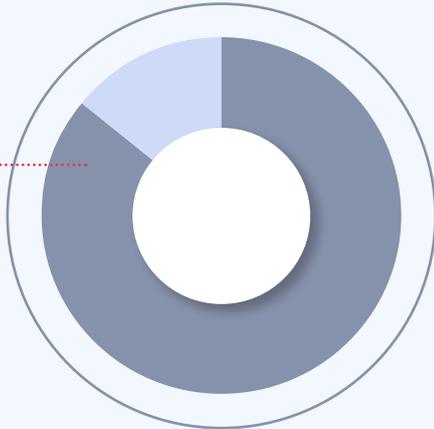


■ Has used generative AI
■ Has not used generative AI

The majority of journalists (54%) personally used generative AI or large language models (LLMs) in their work in 2025, a flip of last year's result which showed that only 37% of journalists had used AI.

Key findings for PR

86%
of journalists
use press
releases as
a source



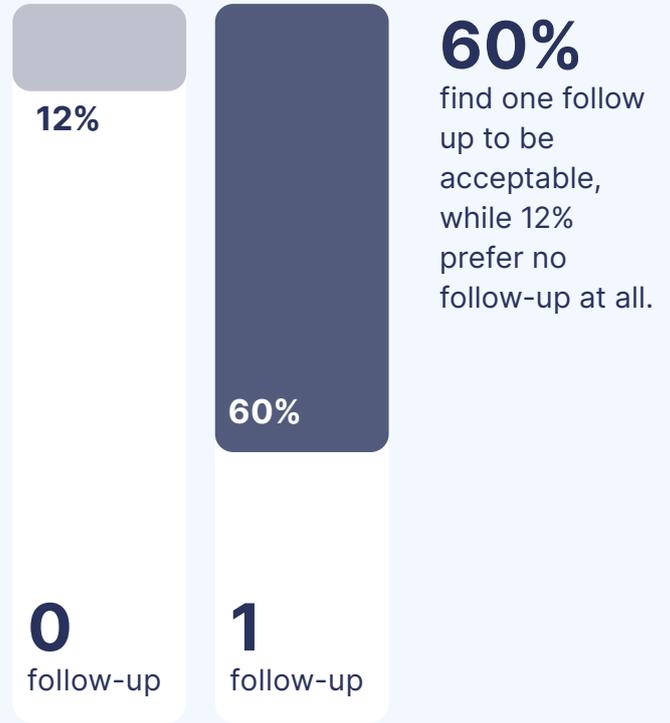
Press releases have replaced **industry and professional contacts** as the top story source for journalists, with press releases being used by 86% of respondents in 2025.



Industry and professional contacts were the second most commonly used story source, used by 83% of journalists.



Facebook remained the **most used social media platform** by journalists professionally in 2025.



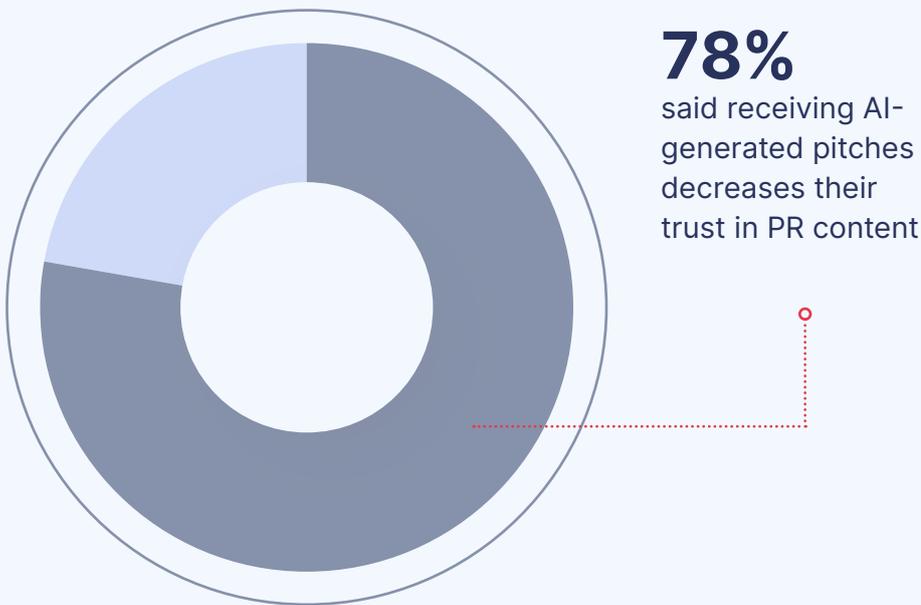
80% said their PR contacts email them directly with press releases.



60% of respondents said that showing evidence that a PR contact understands their interest is the best way to build initial trust with them.

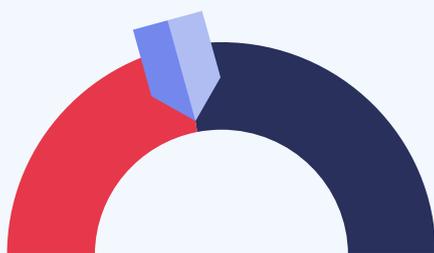


There was a significant drop in professional Twitter/X usage in 2025, with 36% of respondents saying they used the platform, down from 49% in 2024. WhatsApp however saw an increase from 31% to 35%.

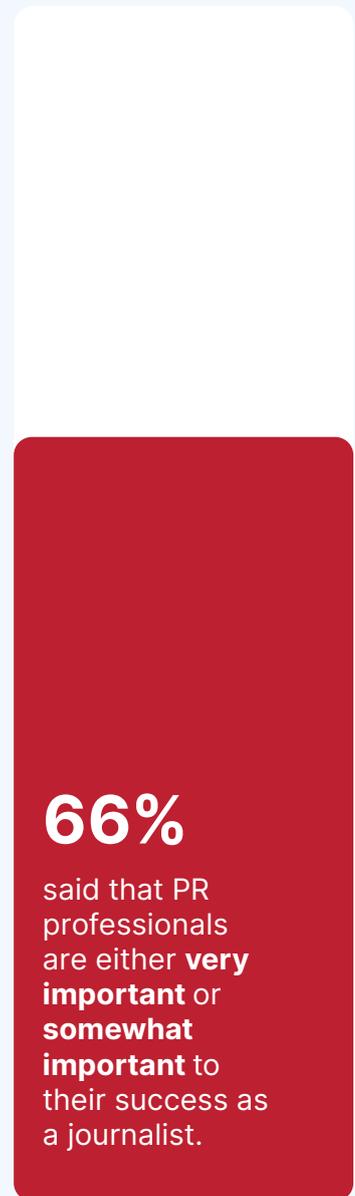


For 78% of respondents, receiving AI-generated pitches decreases their trust in PR content.

The future of media



53% have an optimistic outlook on the state of the media in Australia while 47% are not optimistic at all.



Section

01

Work and
employment of
journalists

Current work and employment

Of all survey respondents, 69% worked in digital, 53% in print, 18% in radio, 12% in TV and 13% in podcasting.

The majority of respondents (64%) were employed full-time in 2025. The next most common employment types were freelance (17%) and part-time (9%).

Almost half (43%) worked at commercial media organisations, with 23% at

independent outlets, and 10% each at public/government funded media and at community media.

Fifty-nine percent of the surveyed journalists worked in the city, 30% worked regionally and 7% worked in the suburbs.

Politics, business and entertainment were the three most covered topics or subject areas.

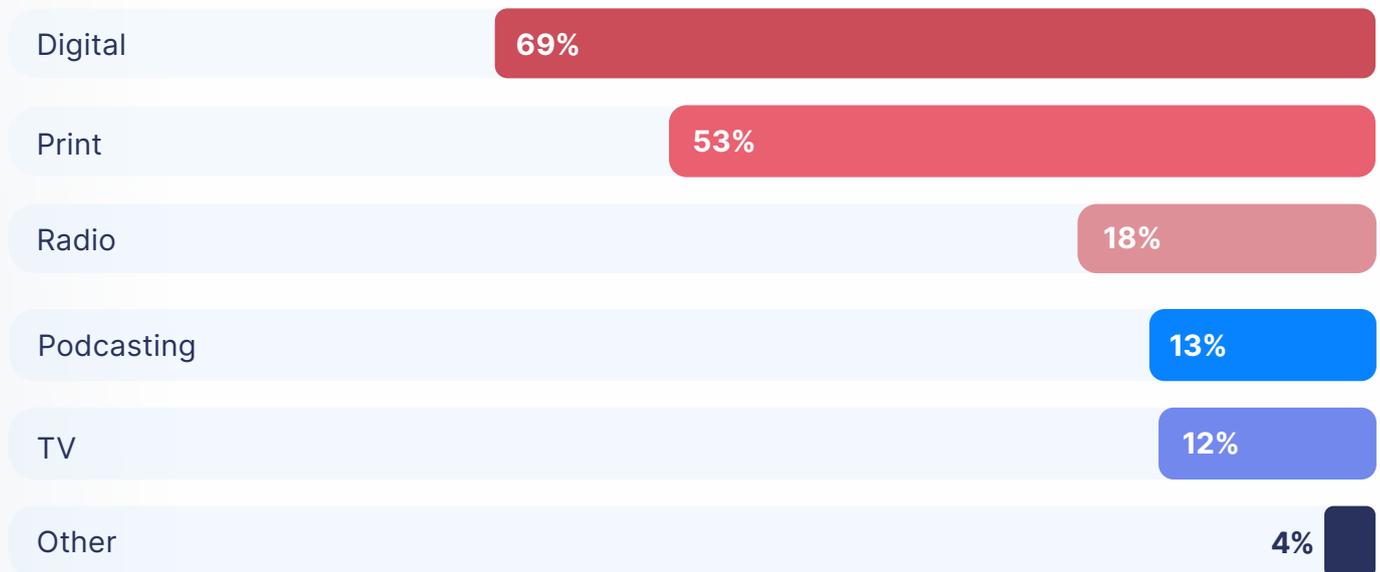


Figure 5 — Sector of the media industry

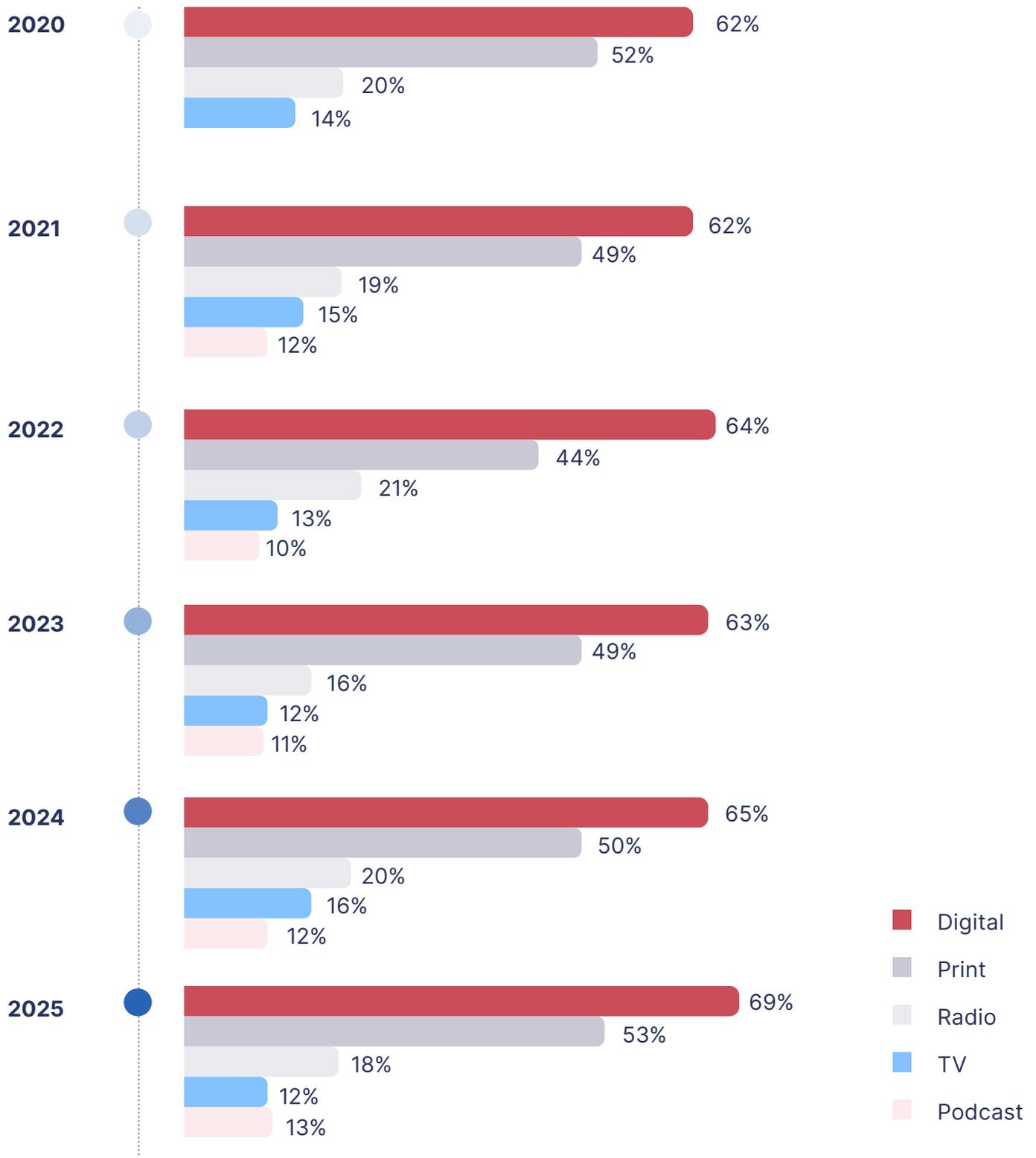


Figure 6— Sector of the media industry over time (respondents were able to select multiple answers)

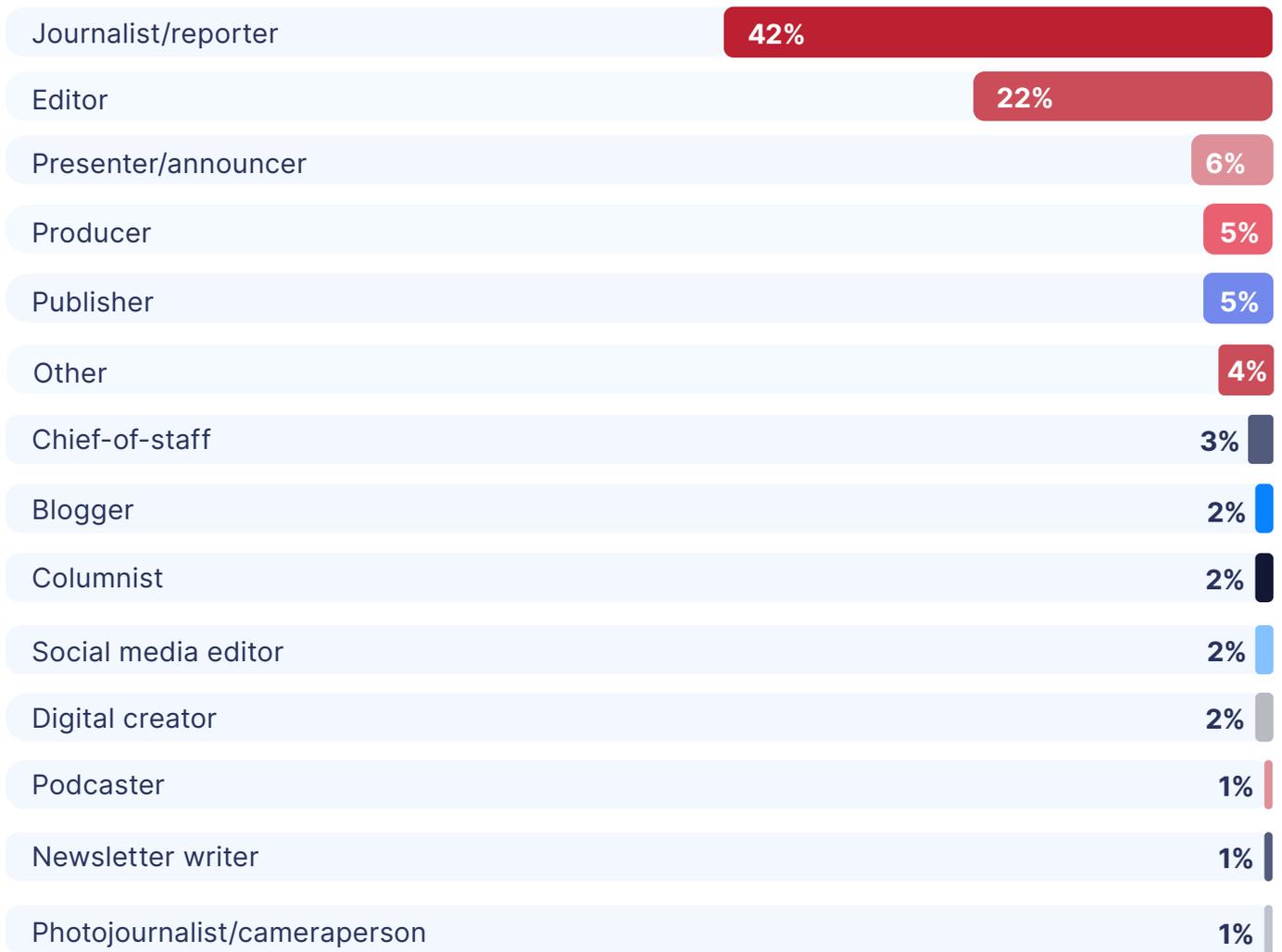


Figure 7 — Role in the media

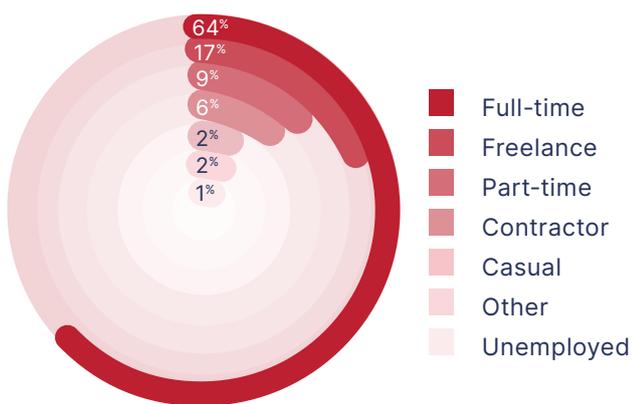


Figure 8 — Employment status

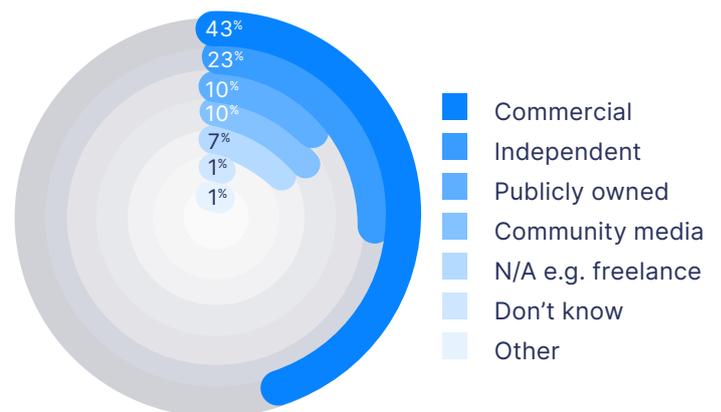


Figure 9 — Type of media organisation

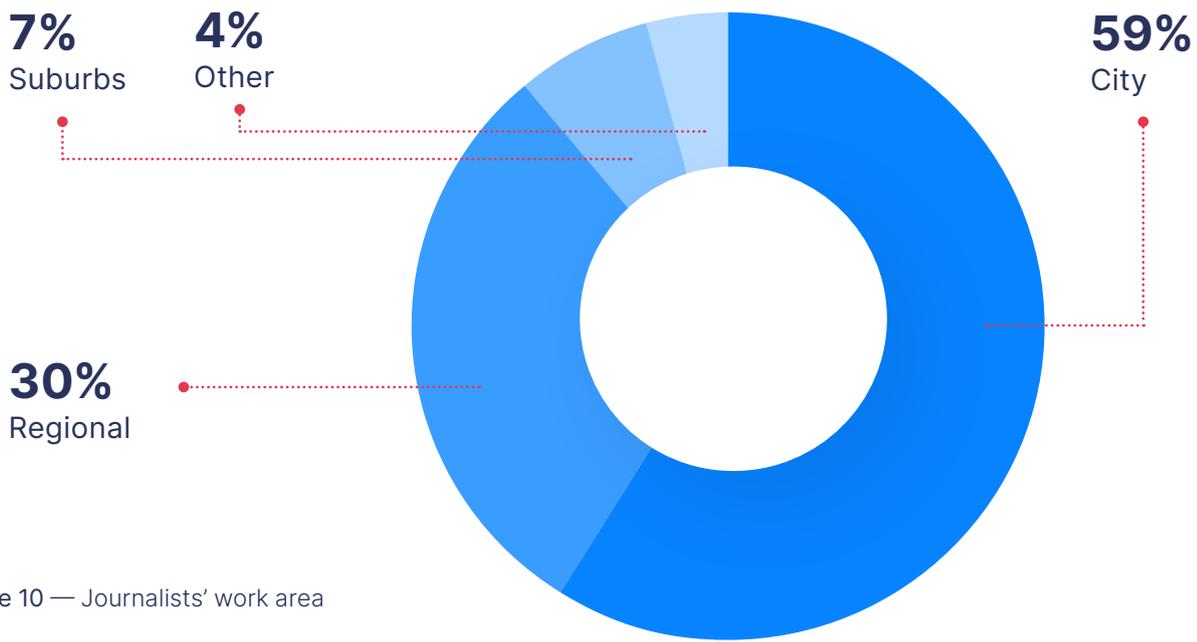


Figure 10 — Journalists' work area

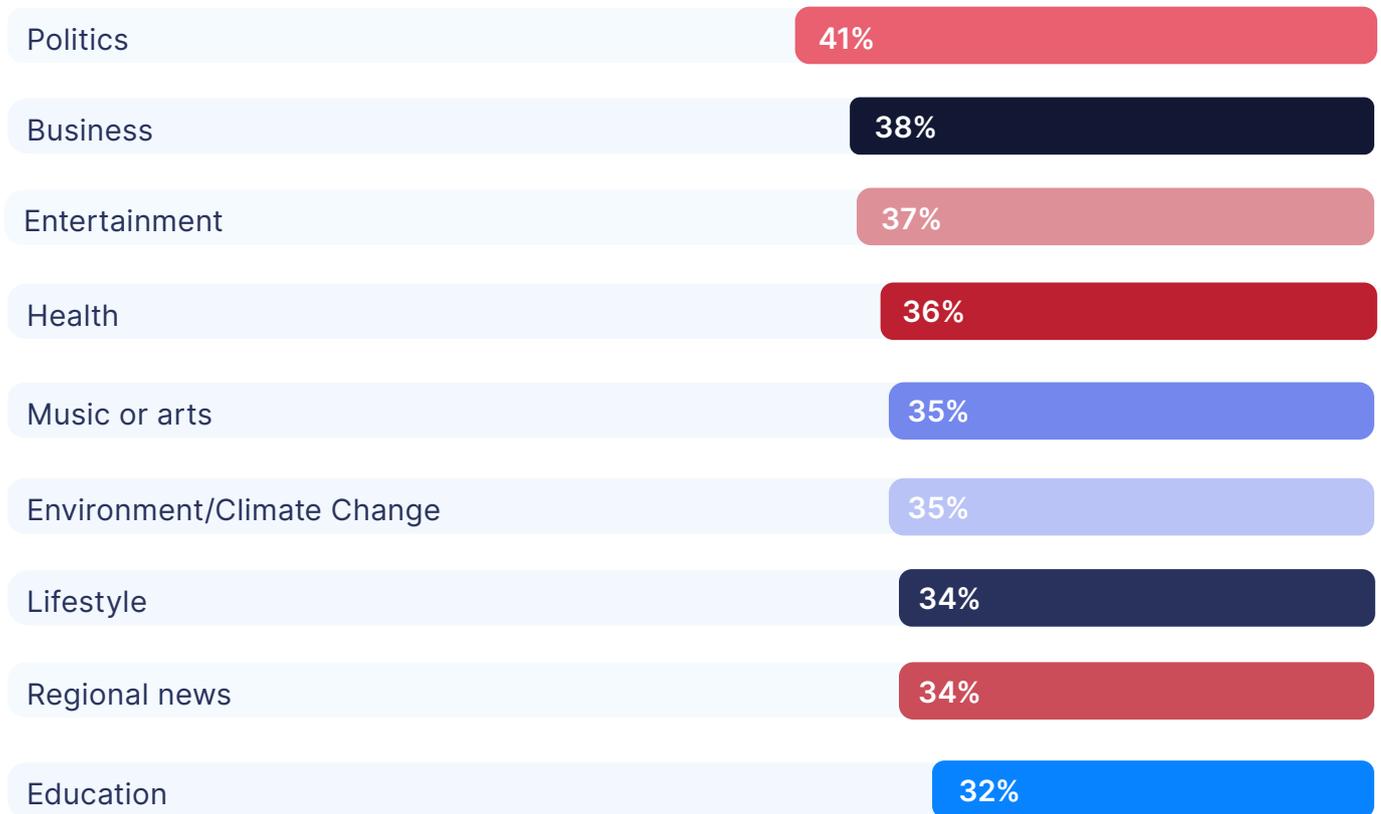


Figure 11 — Journalists' topic/subject area



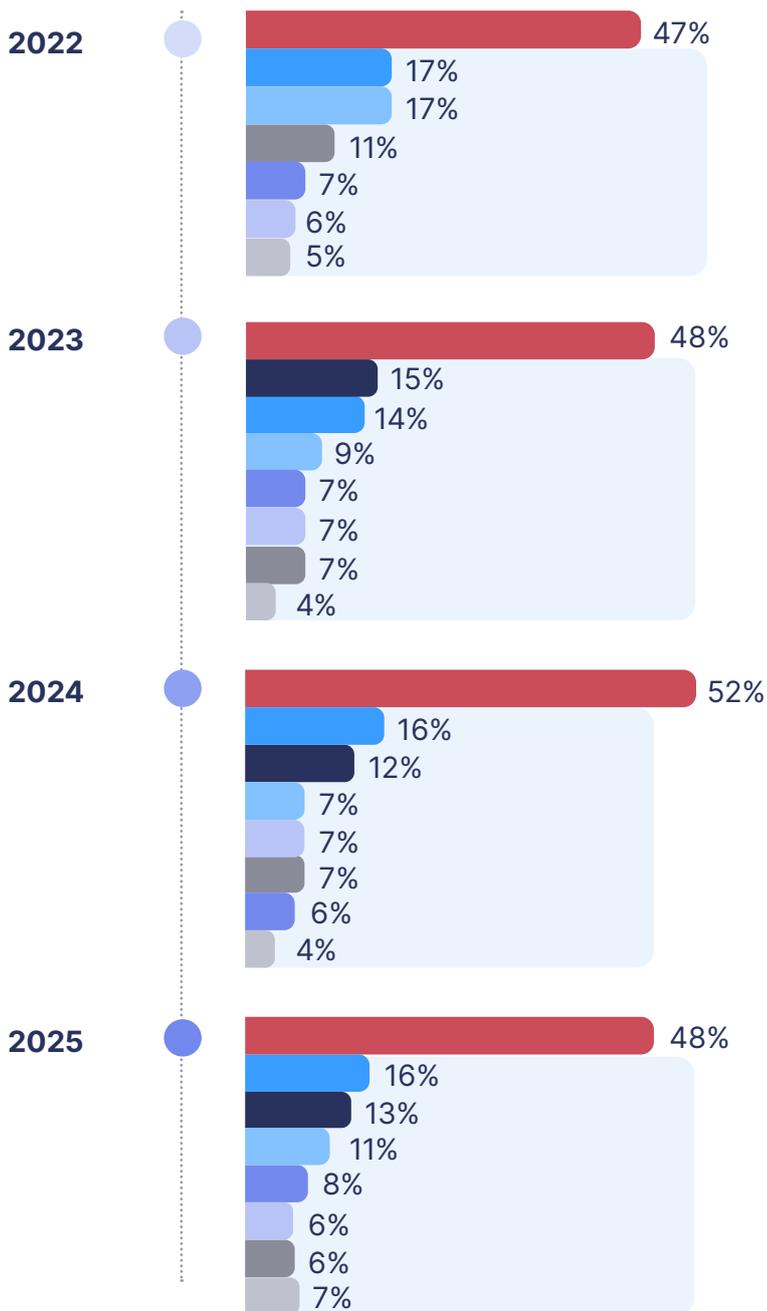
Figure 11 — Journalists' topic/subject area (Continued)

Industry movement

Of all survey respondents, 52% said their job or role had changed in some way in 2025, including changing jobs in the industry, changing roles at the same organisation, taking on additional work, or starting a side hustle. Eight percent said they had started looking for a job outside of journalism.

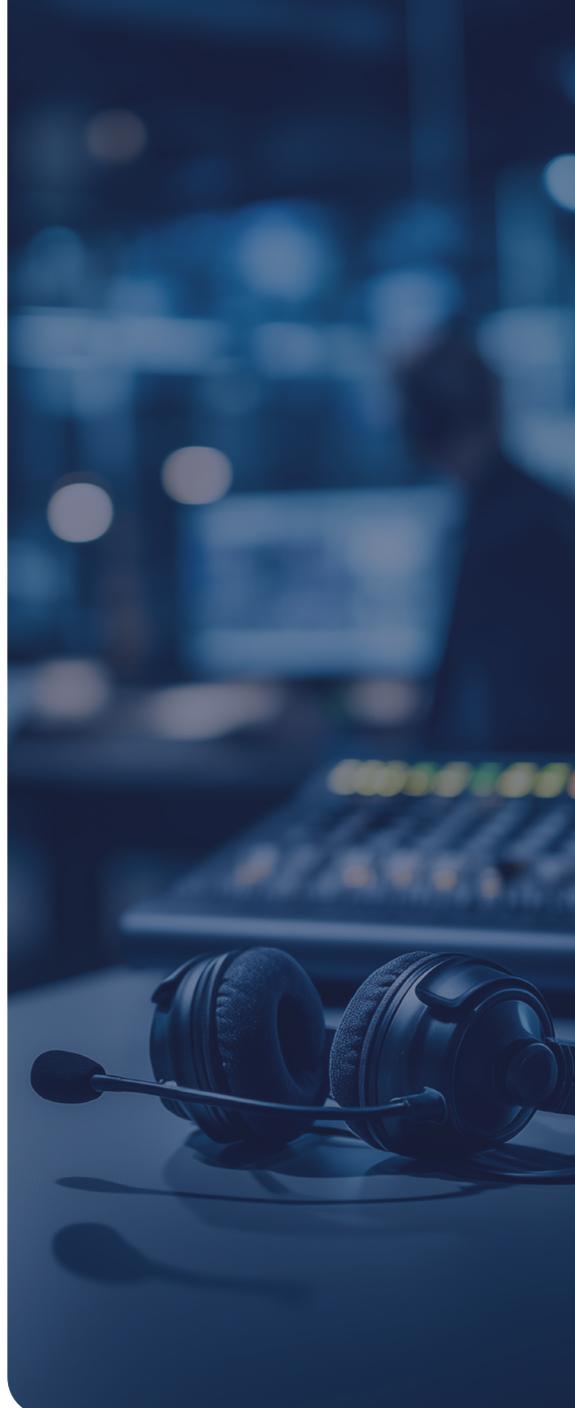


Figure 12 — Overall job changes in 2025 (respondents were able to select multiple answers)



- No change
- Changed roles at same organisation
- New job in the industry
- Started looking for a job outside of journalism
- Started looking for a new journalism job
- Got additional work
- Started a side hustle
- Other

Figure 13 — Job changes in 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025



Pay

The most common pay bracket for journalists in 2025 was between \$60,000 to \$79,999 per year, followed by \$80,000 to \$99,999 per year. The percentage of respondents who were paid over \$100,000 per year increased from 31% in 2024 to 33% in 2025. These results are not adjusted for inflation, and do not account for respondents' employment types, for example part-time compared to full-time.

The 2025 survey showed a significant improvement in bridging the gender pay gap. Thirty-five percent of male journalists who disclosed their pay received a salary of \$100,000 per annum or more compared with 32% of their female counterparts. Eight percent of journalists who identify as non-binary reported that they make \$100,000 per annum or more as well.

Compared to the 2025 report, where 38% of male journalists disclosed earning \$100,000 per annum or more to only 23% of female journalists earning the same, we see the media industry moving to correct this gendered inequality.

There was also a significant difference in pay depending on the areas journalists worked. Journalists working in the city received far higher salaries overall compared to regional or suburban journalists who were far more represented in the less than \$60,000 pay bracket.

TV was the highest paid sector, with over half (51%) of all journalists working in TV receiving \$100,000 or more per year. This was followed by podcasting (48% paid \$100,000 per year or more), digital (32%), print (29%) and radio (28%).

TV was the highest paid sector, with over half (51%) of all journalists working in TV receiving \$100,000 or more per year.



Figure 14 — Journalists' pay (those who disclosed)

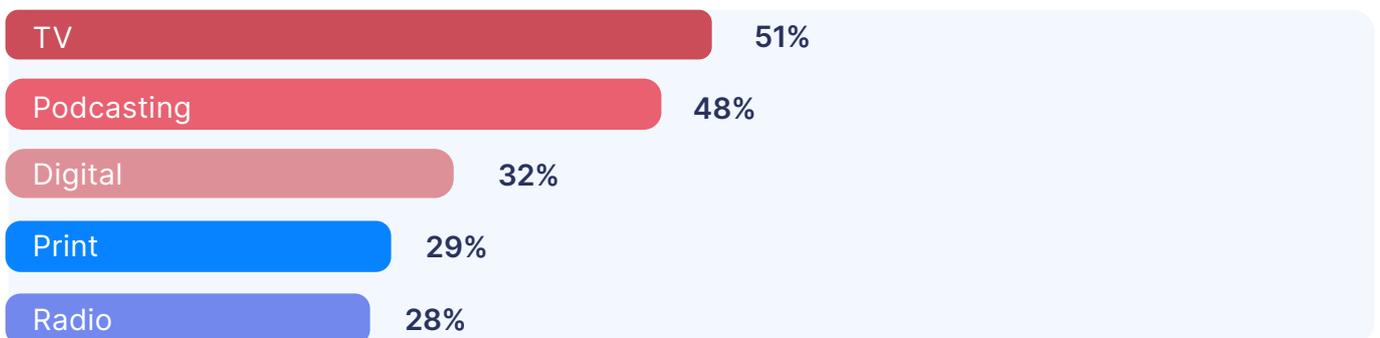


Figure 15 — Pay by media type earning over \$100,000 p.a. (those who disclosed)

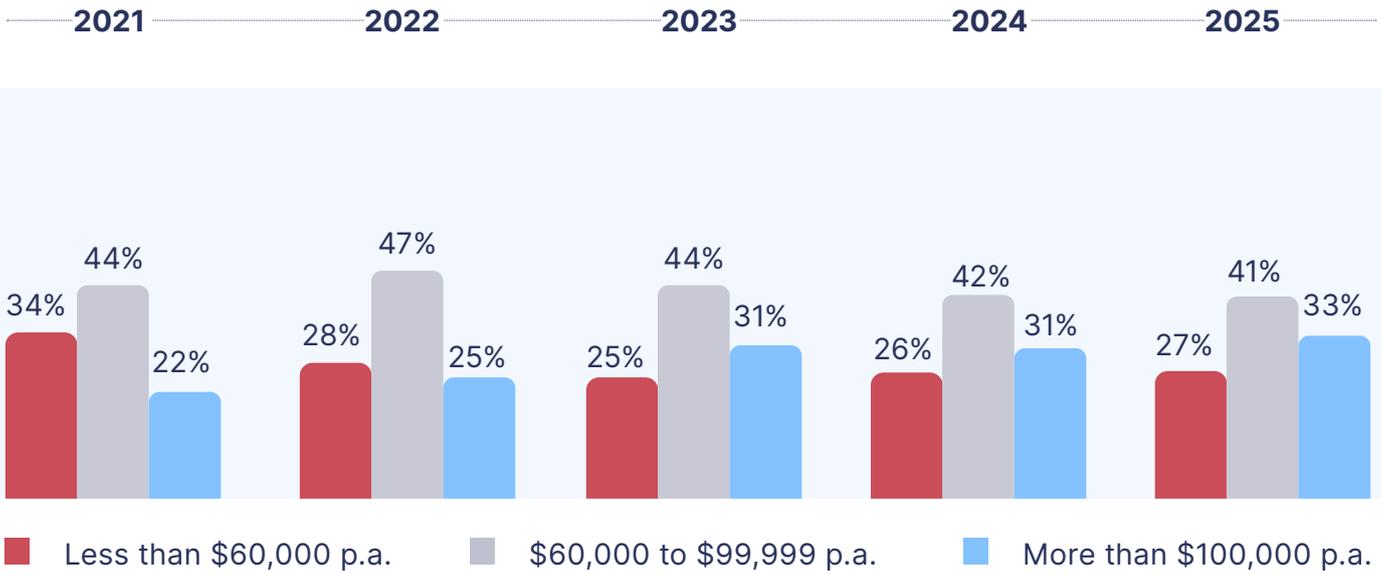
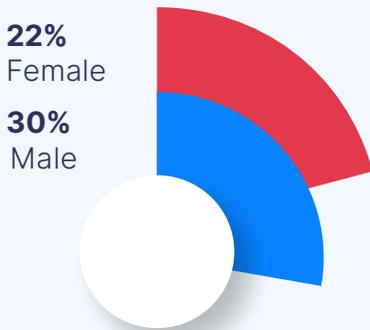
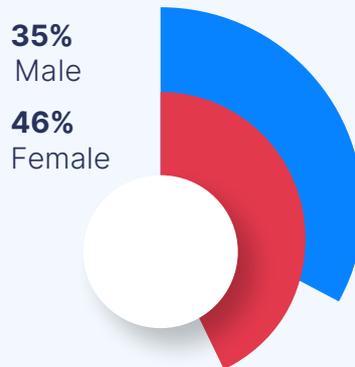


Figure 16 — Pay based on year (those who disclosed)

Less than \$60,000 p.a.



\$60,000 to \$99,999 p.a.



More than \$100,000 p.a.

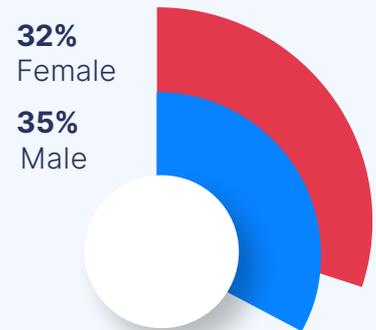


Figure 17 — Pay based on gender (those who disclosed)

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary has been excluded due to the small sample size.

Pay and type of organisation

From those respondents that have disclosed their pay, the report finds that those working in publicly or government funded media outlets are better compensated, with 51% working in these types of media outlets earning \$100,000 per annum or more.

Those working in community media are the least paid according to this year's survey respondents, with only 10% in these outlets earning \$100,000 per annum and over half (52%) of community media employees reportedly earning \$60,000 or less per year.

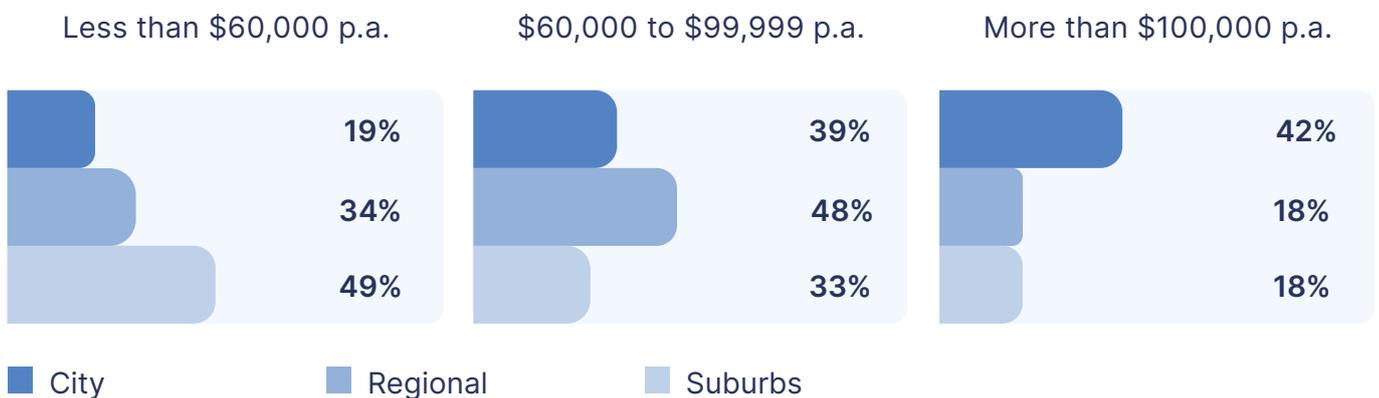


Figure 18 — Pay based on journalists' location (those who disclosed)

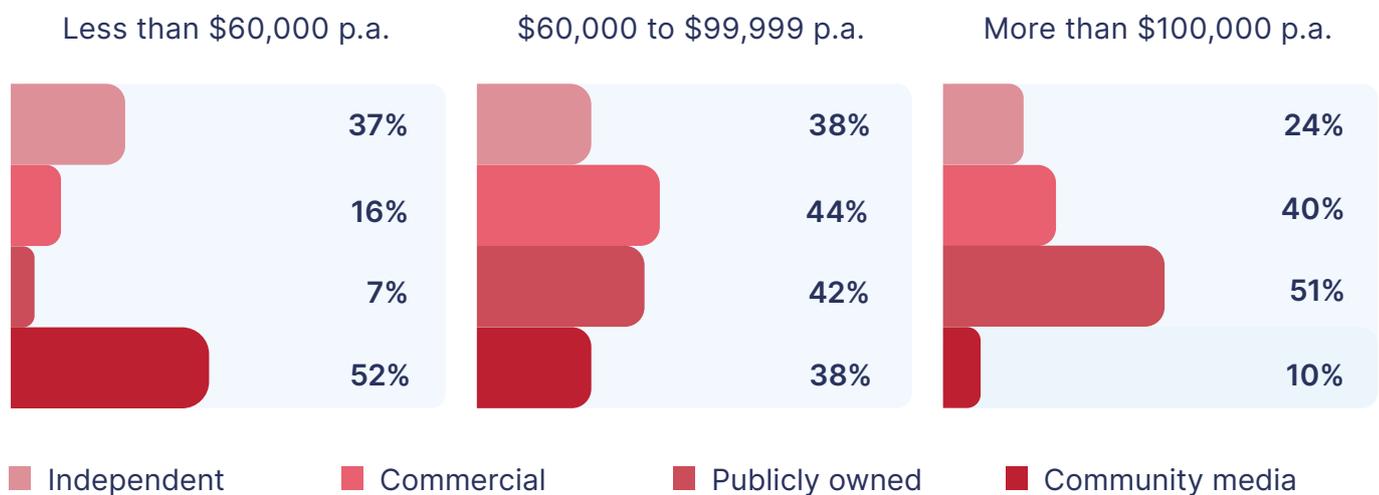


Figure 19 — Pay based on journalists' media organisation type (those who disclosed)



Journalism and reporting is my side hustle. I get paid per article published and it's very little. I do it because I like it and it gives me business exposure. If it paid more I'd be happy to do it full time. AI has helped speed up the writing processing and editing my own work before I submit it.



Section

02

Challenges for
journalists and threats
to journalism

Personal challenges

Money, uncertainty about the future and changes to workload were the three most common greatest challenges experienced by journalists in 2025.

Over the past three years, financial concerns have remained the most pressing issue for journalists, reflecting the continuing economic strain on the media industry.

Up from 41% in 2024, most respondents (45%) said 'money' was their greatest challenge in 2025. This challenge may be a

significant factor in the respondents' uncertainty about the future, another top challenge faced by over a third (34%) of them.

The decrease in average pay bracket (now \$60,000 to \$79,999 per annum) reported may be one of many factors contributing to the persistence of 'money' being identified as a challenge by journalists.

Only 9% of respondents reported experiencing no challenges in 2025.

For the fourth year in a row, money was the greatest personal challenge identified by journalists.

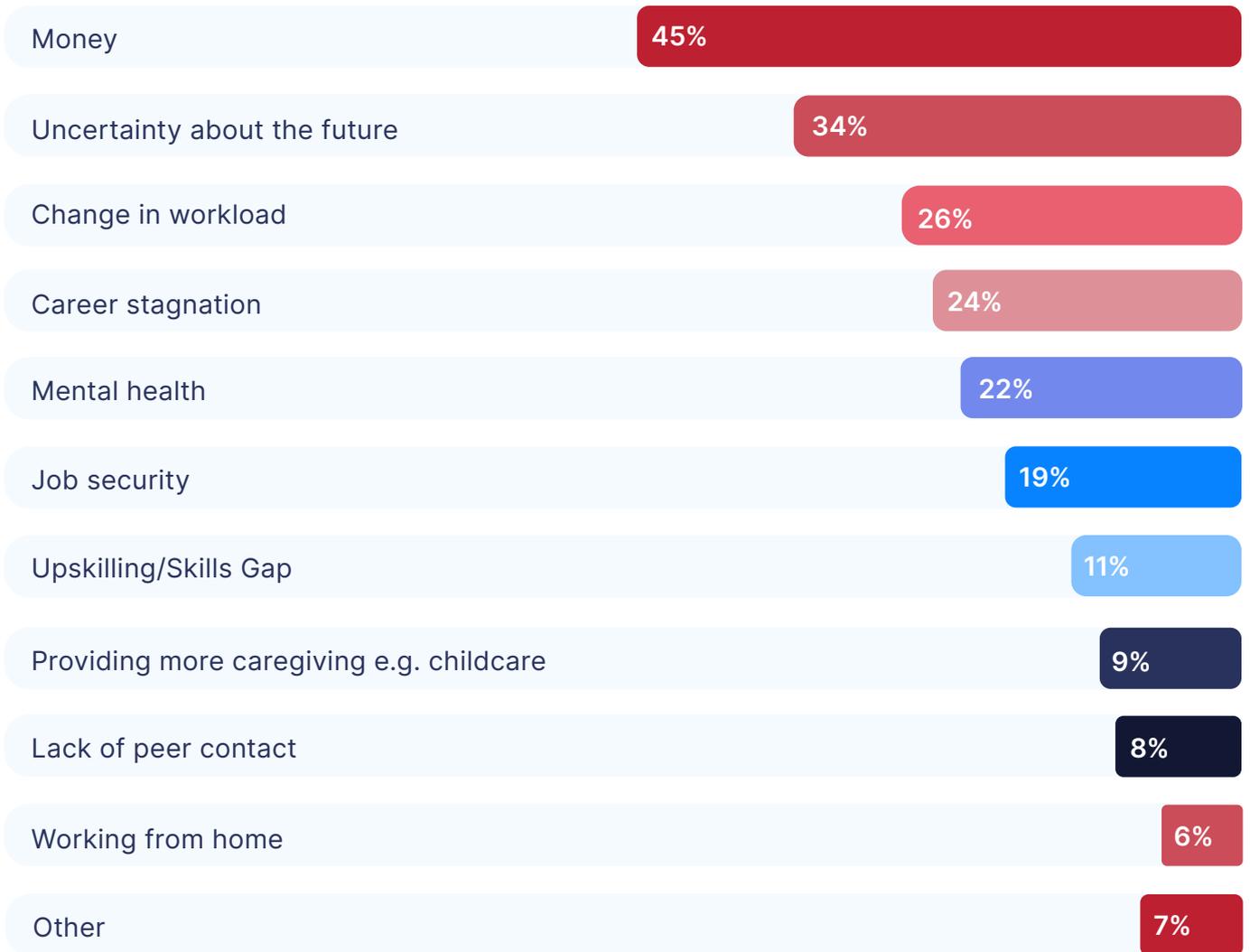


Figure 20 — Greatest challenges experienced by journalists in 2025

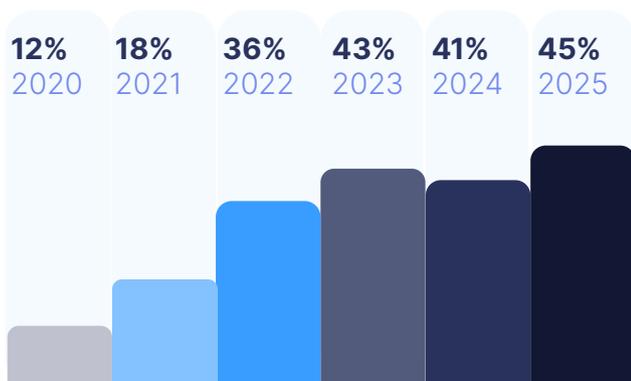


Figure 21 — Money as a greatest challenge (year)



Figure 22 — Top challenge identified by journalists (year)

Threats to public interest journalism

Survey respondents were asked to identify factors that they think threatened public interest journalism.

For five years, 'Increase in disinformation/fake news' was the top threat to public interest journalism as identified by respondents. This has now been replaced by a new threat: 'Changes in how people consume information due to AI'.

New ways of finding information such as AI summaries and AI search was the top threat for 68% of respondents. This was closely followed by 'Declining trust in the media' (66%). 'Increase in disinformation/'fake news'' was still a threat for a large portion of respondents (64%). Other identified threats were lack of resources and staff

(60%) and the closure of media organisations/newsrooms (53%). Over half of respondents (52%) also identified generative AI and Large Language Models as a threat.

Commentary pointed to the increasing difficulty of audiences discerning whether content is AI or human generated as contributing to the growing distrust of the public towards the media. AI summaries have also been blamed for driving traffic away from news sites.

The saturation of AI generated material has also been linked to the growing rise of short-form content. Journalists feel they are competing with both AI technologies and influencers for an audience ➔

Almost seventy percent of journalists said 'changes in how people consume information due to AI' threatened public interest journalism in 2025.

with a shorter attention span, forcing them away from long-form journalism to meet the demands of the public and the pressure from their own media companies to attract more clicks.

The sentiment of journalists having to do more with less, the closing of community and local newsrooms as well as the volatility of the media industry, made more precarious by AI, compounds the concern regarding the future of the Australian media and some of the respondents' perception of the Australian public's media illiteracy.

Compared to results from the 2025 report, concern about Generative AI/ Large Language Models such as ChatGPT as a threat to public interest journalism increased by 18%.



For my field of work, Google's ability to take away clicks with AI summaries and its constant fiddling with its algorithm has been incredibly destabilising.



A combination of lack of resources and increase of demand for content mean audiences are looking away from established media. Social media has also pushed audiences away from regional newsrooms despite the fact that they are doing so much work to keep authorities accountable at local levels. News organisations are also continuing to strip newsrooms of resources and continue to ask more of journalists while expecting the same quality of work.



AI is a great tool for freelancers but I worry media organisations will see it as a cost-cutting measure.



It is increasingly hard to drive traffic to your website due to the changing social media and search algorithms. Web traffic has fallen off a cliff for most publishers.



Publications/media companies are valuing 'clickbait' and paid editorial features over actual journalism.



I think social media, influencers and short form media is flooding people with information that is often unverified or false, people forget the role of journalists and their importance and increasingly are becoming more against anything related to mainstream media.



AI works hand in hand with the fake news problem, as it will base all of its information from sources available online, including fake news. So, people are taking to AI, be it ChatGPT or Gemini, to ask it for information on current events, rather than trusting existing news rooms and organisations.

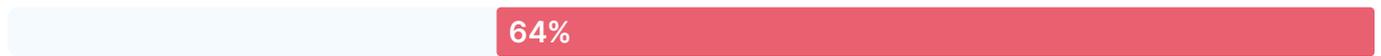
Changes in how people consume information (AI search/AI summaries)



Declining trust in media organisations



Increase in disinformation/fake news



Lack of resources and staff



Closure of media companies/newsrooms



Generative AI/LLMs



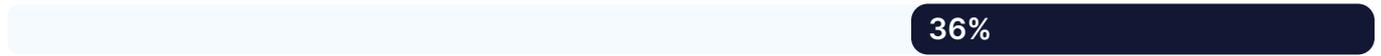
Concentration of media ownership



Polarisation of media



Influencer economy



Media fragmentation



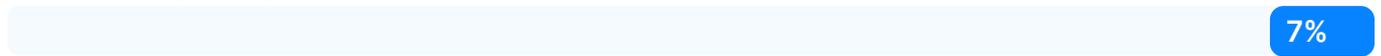
Loss of media bargaining power



Right to access information



Intrusion of privacy



Public interest journalism has not been threatened



Other



Figure 23 — Biggest threats to public interest journalism in 2025

2020: Increase in disinformation/'fake news'

2021: Increase in disinformation/'fake news'

2022: Increase in disinformation/'fake news'

2023: Increase in disinformation/'fake news'

2024: Increase in disinformation/'fake news'

2025: Changes in how people consume information (AI search/AI summaries)

Figure 24 — Top challenge identified by journalists (year)

“

Staff in my office used to turn to me for creative and informative content, even if it was just to write a punchy social media post. They now use Chat GPT. I have worked my way into several different roles in my organisation as a backup for when journalists become redundant to AI. It's a very scary thought.

“

While many people are turning to AI for entertainment it is becoming increasingly more difficult to know what is real content or AI generated content. Sadly many people see AI content and believe it to be real.

“

The ease of access for AI driven content is fracturing an already disembodied readership.



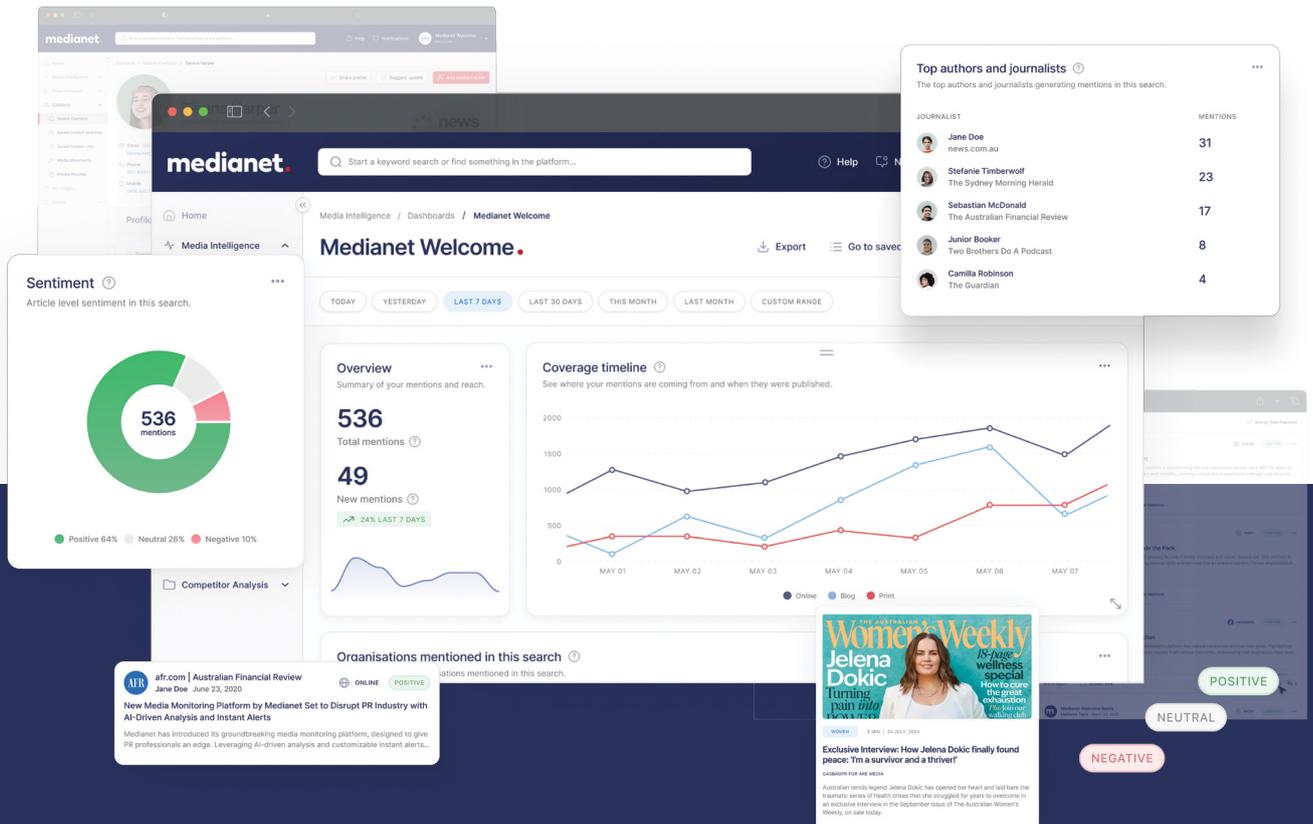
AI is a frightening threat to journalism and the media industry that has me wondering whether I should retrain in a completely different industry.

medianet.

Australian Owned. Media Owned.

Media Intelligence. Made Smarter.

Your one intuitive and beautiful
media intelligence experience.



Media release
distribution



Media contacts
database



Media
monitoring



Media
analysis

medianet.com.au

Section

03

AI and the media

Journalists' use of generative AI/ Large Language Models

Since the last Australian Media Landscape Report, there have been continued breakthroughs in the development and uptake of generative AI and Large Language Models such as ChatGPT.

The majority of journalists (54%) said that they have used generative AI/LLMs in their work in 2025. This is in high contrast with last year's data which showed that 63% of journalists had not used generative AI/LLMs.

Respondents were asked which AI tools/LLMs they preferred. Out of those who claimed they had used AI tools (437), the majority (66%) said their 'go-to' was ChatGPT. Just over a third (35%) preferred Gemini. Copilot was the first choice for 15% of respondents and Claude for 14% of respondents.

The 11% who indicated 'other' reported using NotebookLM or an in-house AI/LLM tool. ➔

The majority of journalists (54%) said that they have used generative AI/LLMs in their work in 2025. This is in high contrast with last year's data which showed that 63% of journalists had not used generative AI/LLMs.

When it comes to what AI is being used for by journalists, tools seem to be utilised primarily during the information gathering/research stage of the respondents' reporting process. Half of respondents indicated that they use AI for summarising documents, 46% for transcribing audio or video material and 45% for background research.

Use of AI tools for content generation is still in the

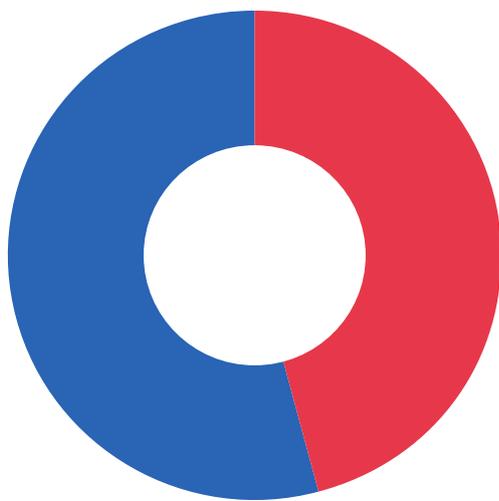
minority. Twenty-two percent use it to generate story ideas and 9% to generate multimedia material such as images, videos and audio.

The majority of those who chose the option 'other' report using AI/LLMs for generating or drafting headlines.

The changing attitude towards AI is also reflected in how the majority of respondents (54%) reported that their usage of AI tools

has increased. For 42%, their AI usage has remained the same as the previous year.

Only a small minority (3%) reported a decrease in their usage of AI tools.



54% Has used generative AI
46% Has not used generative AI

Figure 25 — Journalists' use of generative AI/LLMs

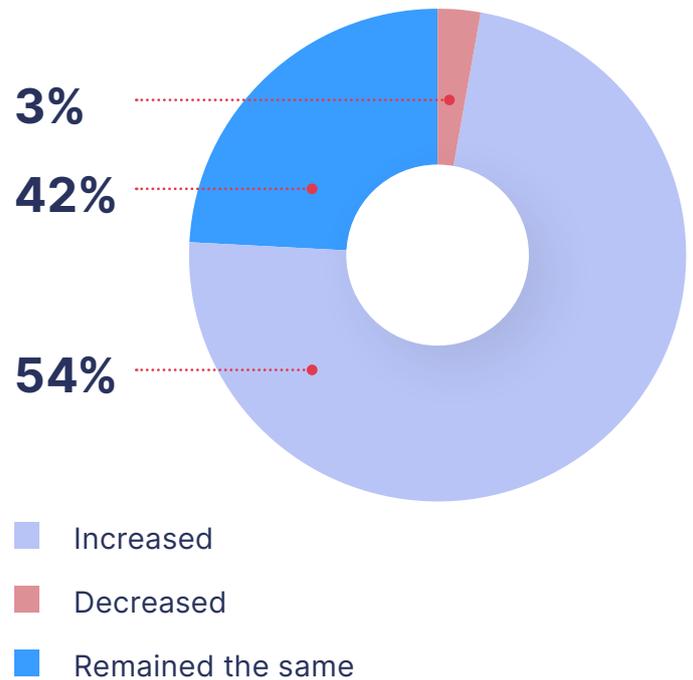


Figure 26 — Has your usage of AI tools increased, decreased or remained the same in the last 12 months?

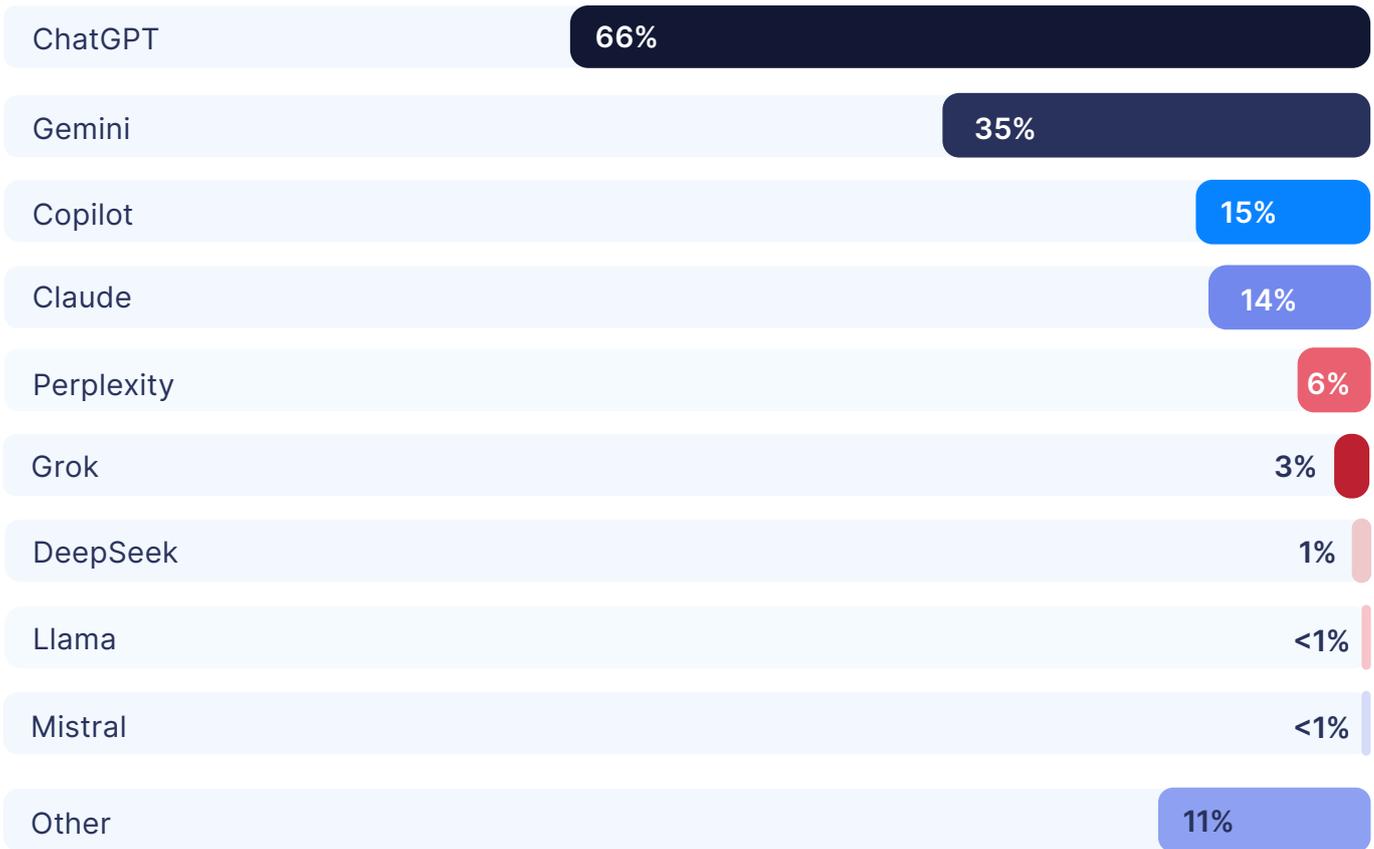


Figure 27 — What is your go-to LLM?

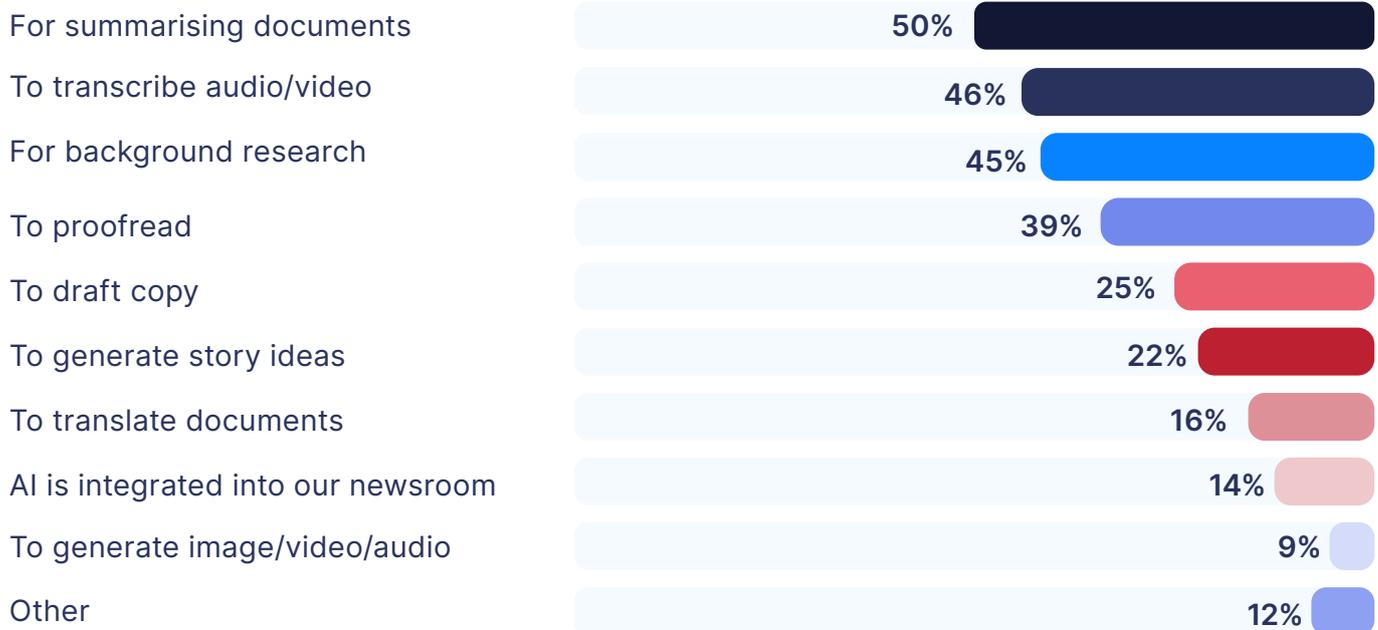


Figure 28 — Which of the following best describes how you use AI in your work?



AI authoring is a terrifyingly attractive option for speeding up content production - at the cost of accuracy and integrity.



Journalists cannot use AI as fact checking assistants until it is better regulated and categorically proven to be 100% correct otherwise it's just another unreliable source to be checked. Using AI to write entire or even parts of copy is also a concern as it will further lead to a disconnect between the viewer and the journalist.



AI is starting to replace google as the "first pass" attempt at learning about a topic for a lot of people (including myself). I worry that people will rely too heavily on this and not go to the original sources. AI is a powerful tool but shouldn't be trusted implicitly. Should be treated more like Wikipedia -- a knowledgeable first stop but needs verification always.



Conflicts of interest at ownership/ shareholder level in big tech/AI companies lead to AI LLMs being trained in a certain way to present information that fits a certain narrative and avoids certain issues. There is bias in AI-generated results, and this is mirrored in major search engine results (e.g. comparing Google to Yandex results when searching for some controversial subjects).



I think "AI" will help with the boring churn of journalism and ease the workload in areas which could allow for more focus on indepth / meaningful journalism.



"AI" makes journalists lazy despite it being fast.



AI is a cancer on this industry and any other industry run by humans for the service of humans. We're outsourcing our experience as humans because we've become lazy and riddled with apathy.



My writers are getting fewer commissions from other outlets. Plus, we've already had content plagiarised extensively by 'journalists' from other outlets.



I think AI is only part of a bigger problem with declining trust and constant productivity squeeze.



I personally was made redundant last year due to the introduction of an AI technology to be used for newsgathering and copy drafting.



I think the people who will be most impacted are up & coming journalists - there will be no jobs for those at the bottom of the newsroom scrap heap because it's those low-level roles that my team is getting AI to do, largely because AI is more efficient and its final product is often the same quality as an entry-level writer's.



Gemini seems good at providing quick and accurate answers to sometimes quite complicated questions. Fortunately, that does not yet threaten long form journalism, though there is no reason why it might not do so in the future. At least there is a core of readers - including me - who like to know who is writing the story, but I suspect for many members of the public they couldn't care less - especially as Gemini is free.



We are already struggling to fund journalism, if people stop coming to our websites this will make it even harder.



There is a difference between using "AI" to proofread copy or explore alternative headlines, and generating story ideas and angles.



Journalism is a craft
not an algorithm.

1:03 PM Mon 6 Oct

ChatGPT

The official app by OpenAI



Open

AGES
13+
Years

735K RATINGS
4.8
★★★★★

What's New >

Bug fixes and small improvements.

Concerns about impacts of generative AI/ Large Language Models on the media

Ninety-three percent of respondents said they were concerned about the impacts that generative AI/LLMs could have on the overall integrity or quality of journalism. This represents an increase compared to the 88% of concerned journalists in 2024 and 79% in 2023.

The level of concern has also increased in 2025, with 39% of respondents being 'extremely concerned' compared to 37% in 2024.

Thirty-one percent of respondents said they were 'somewhat concerned', 22% were 'fairly concerned', and 5% of respondents were not concerned about the possible impacts.

Over half (52%) of respondents also view AI/LLMs as a threat to public interest journalism (see page 33). This represents a significant increase from the 45% of respondents with this belief in 2024.

Despite the common use of AI among survey respondents, almost three-quarters of those using AI (72%) indicated some degree of concern over AI's impact on their work. A similar percentage of responses (72%) have also expressed concern regarding AI's impact on their outlet's online traffic.

93% of respondents said they were concerned about the impacts that generative AI/LLMs could have on the overall integrity or quality of journalism.

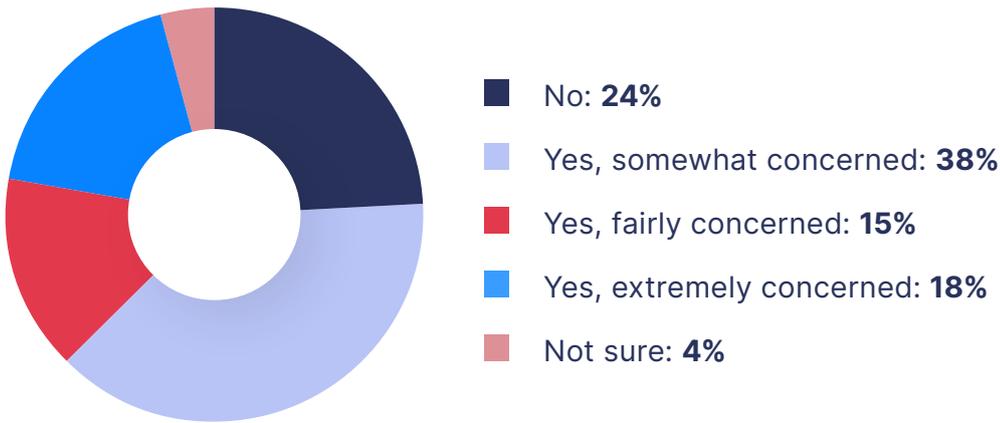


Figure 29 — Are you concerned about AI impacts on your work personally?

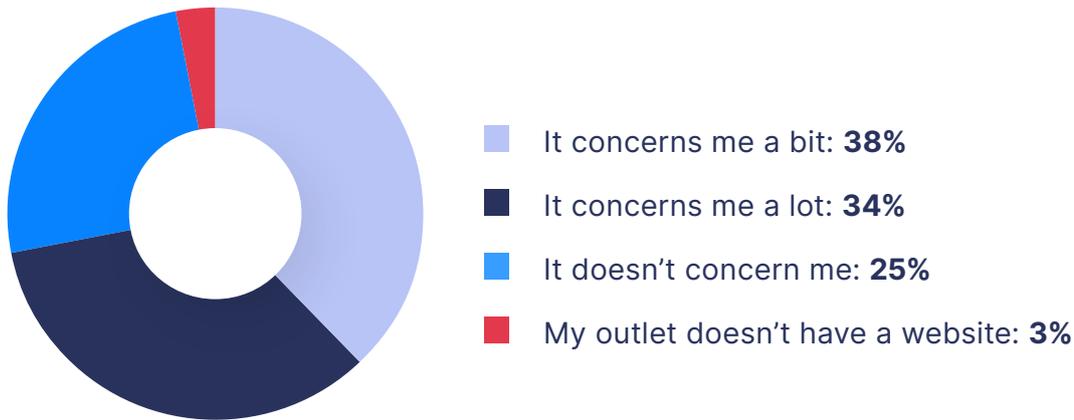


Figure 30 — To what extent do you worry that AI-powered search (eg Google AI Overviews) will reduce traffic to your outlet's website?

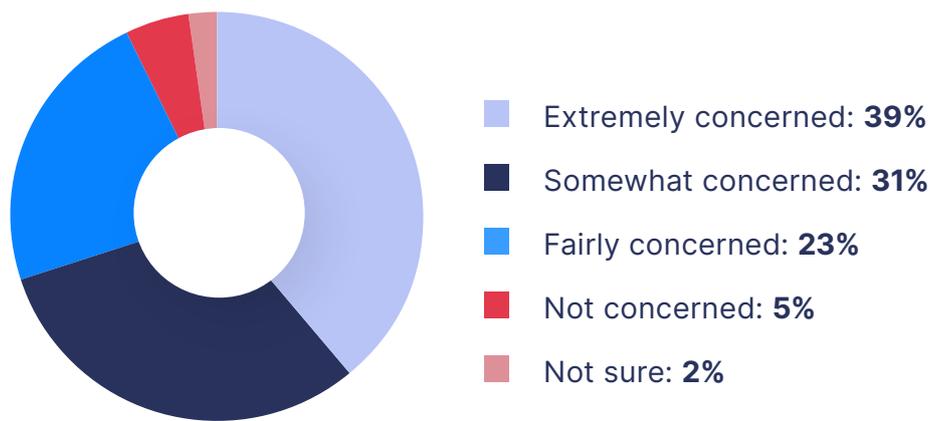


Figure 31 — Concern about impacts of generative AI/LLMs on the overall integrity or quality of journalism



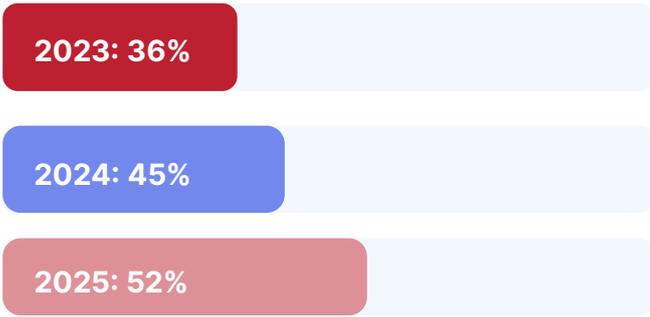


Figure 32 — AI/LLMs as a threat to public interest journalism (year)

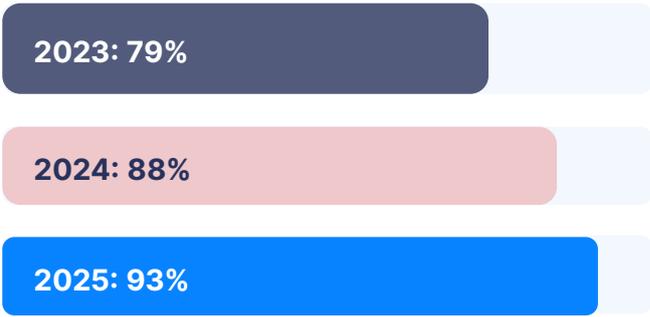


Figure 33 — Concern (somewhat, fairly or extremely concerned) about impacts of generative AI/LLMs on the overall integrity or quality of journalism (year)



I do worry about how people use AI. If you use AI to do your research for you and you don't fact check that research, you could be spreading disinformation. AI is useful as a word processing tool but should never replace research and chats with sources.



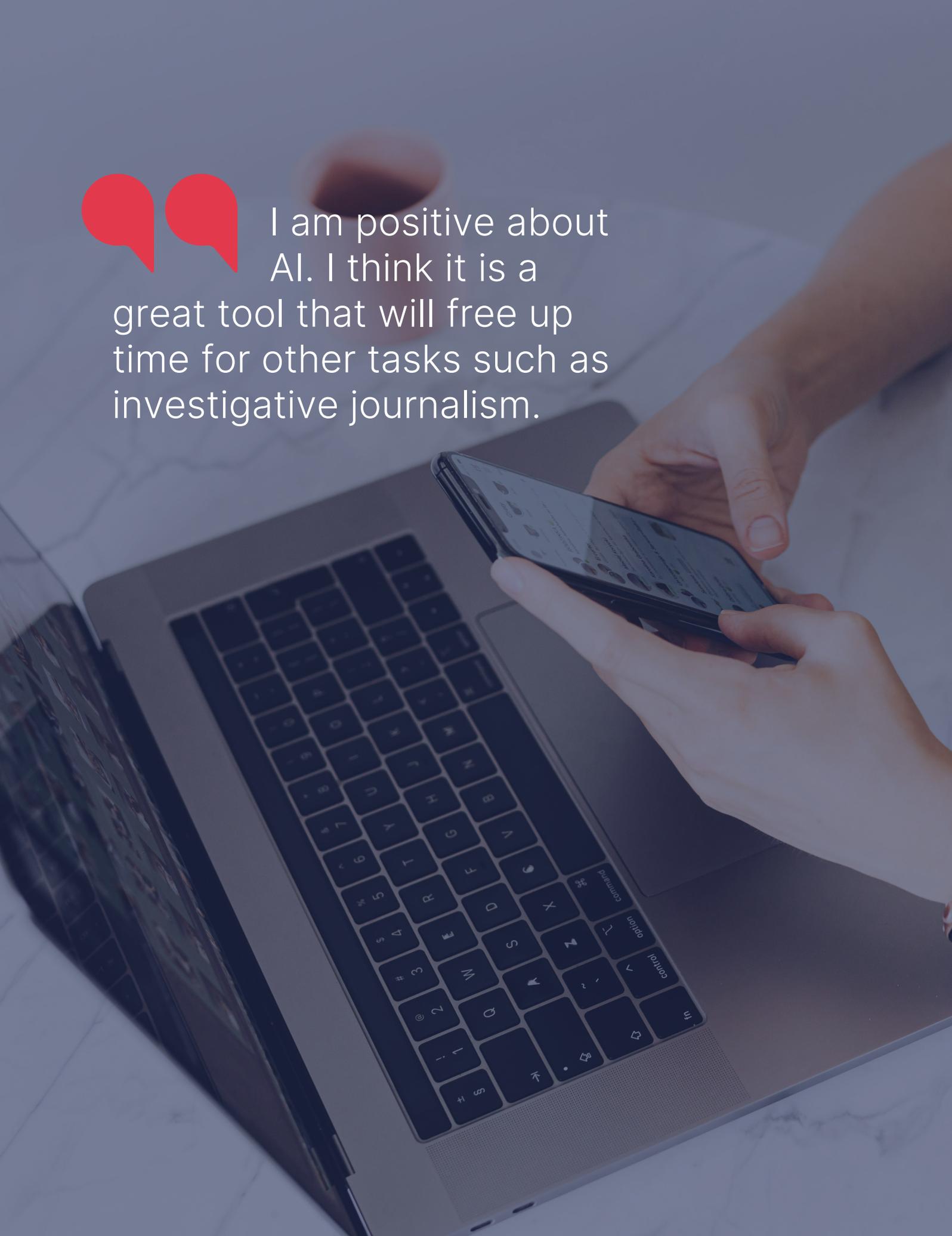
I feel like the general public misunderstands our use of AI, believing we use it to do our jobs for us but in reality it is used as one of many tools for research and processing ideas.



The public's trust in AI-delivered information far outweighs the reliability of the actual content delivered, and this erodes the ability to think critically.



I am positive about AI. I think it is a great tool that will free up time for other tasks such as investigative journalism.



Impact of generative AI/ Large Language Models on journalists' employment

Twenty-two percent of journalists said they had lost work or knew someone who had lost work due to the adoption of generative AI/LLMs in 2025. This represents an increase in comparison to 2024, when only sixteen percent of respondents said they or someone they knew had lost work due to AI/LLM.

Thirteen percent said they knew someone who had lost work due to the uptake of generative AI/LLMs, 8% personally had lost work, and 1% had both lost work and knew someone who had.

Respondents employed as freelancers and casual workers, as well as those working in podcasting and radio, were more highly affected.

22% of journalists said they had lost work or knew someone who had lost work due to the adoption of generative AI/LLMs in 2025.

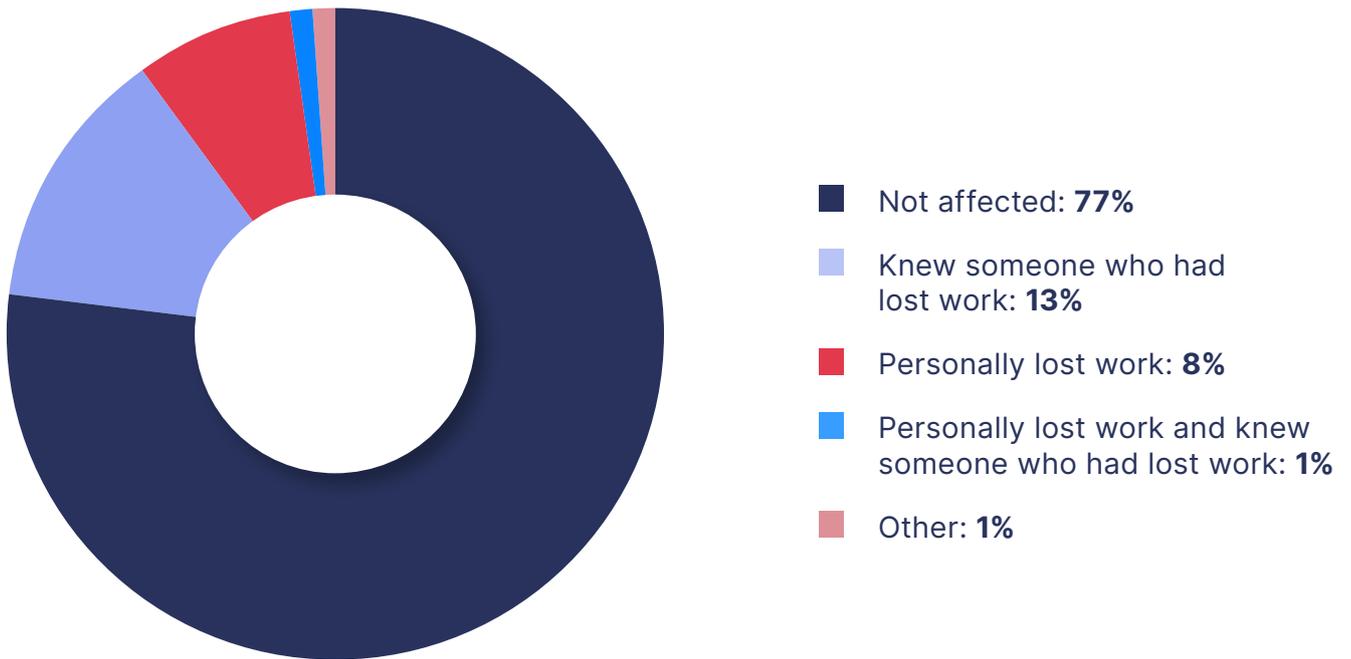


Figure 34 — Effect of generative AI/LLMs on journalists' employment

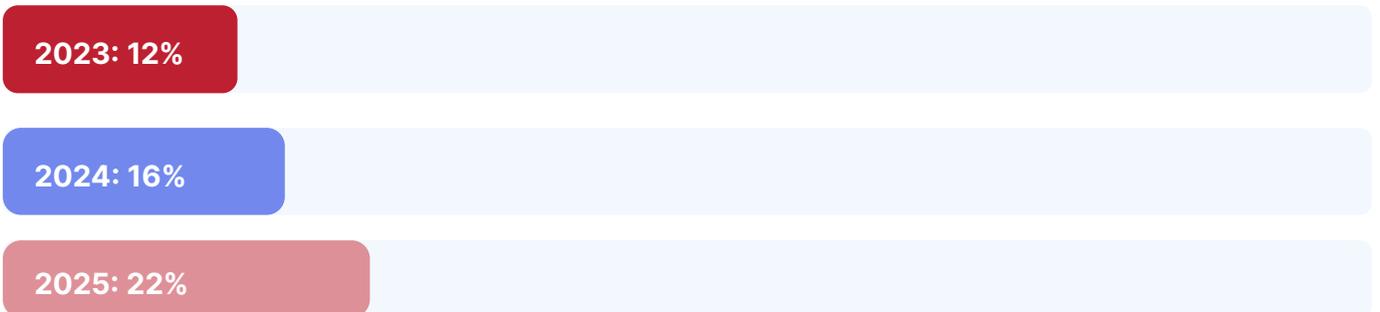


Figure 35 — Journalists whose employment has been affected by AI/LLMs

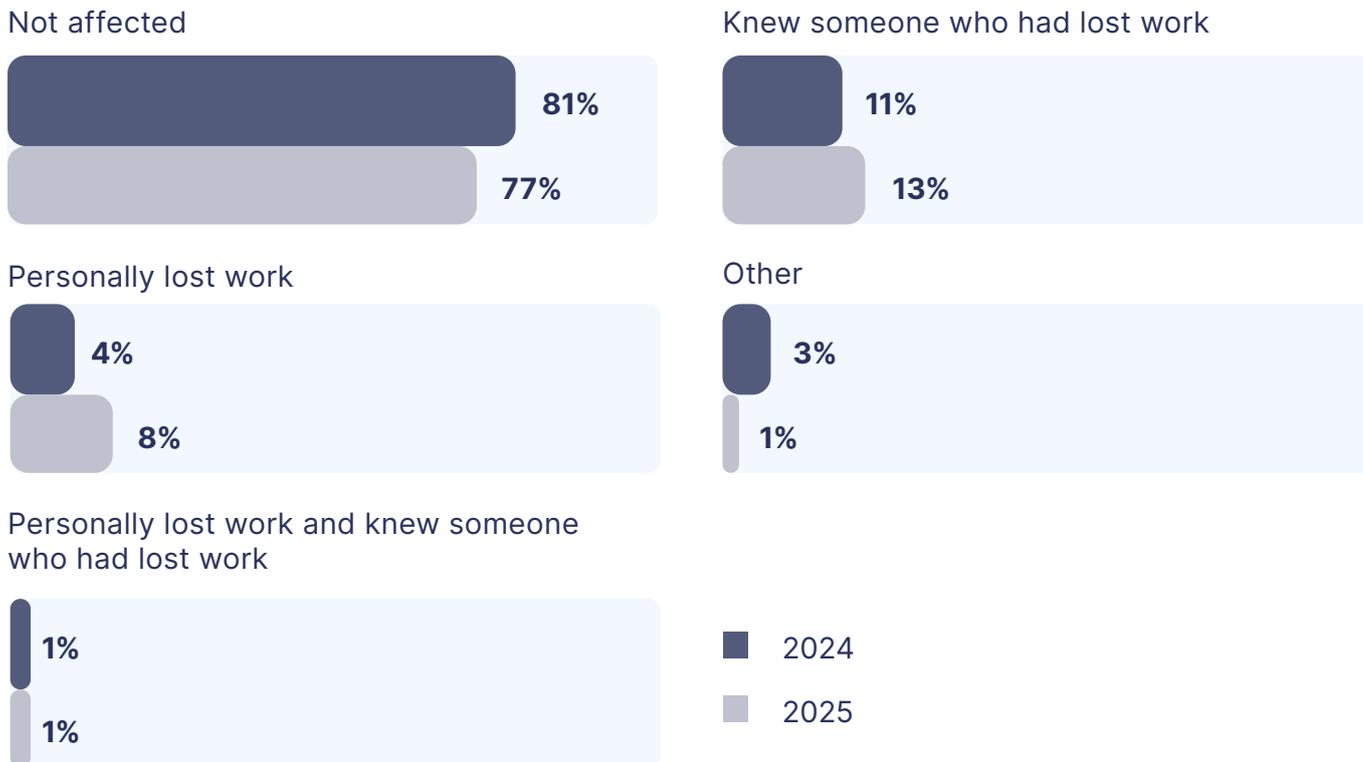


Figure 36 — Effect of generative AI/LLMs on journalists' employment (year)



At my previous occupation, they decided not to replace subediting staff that had left because they were going to use AI to do the first round of subediting and the humans to complete the final check.



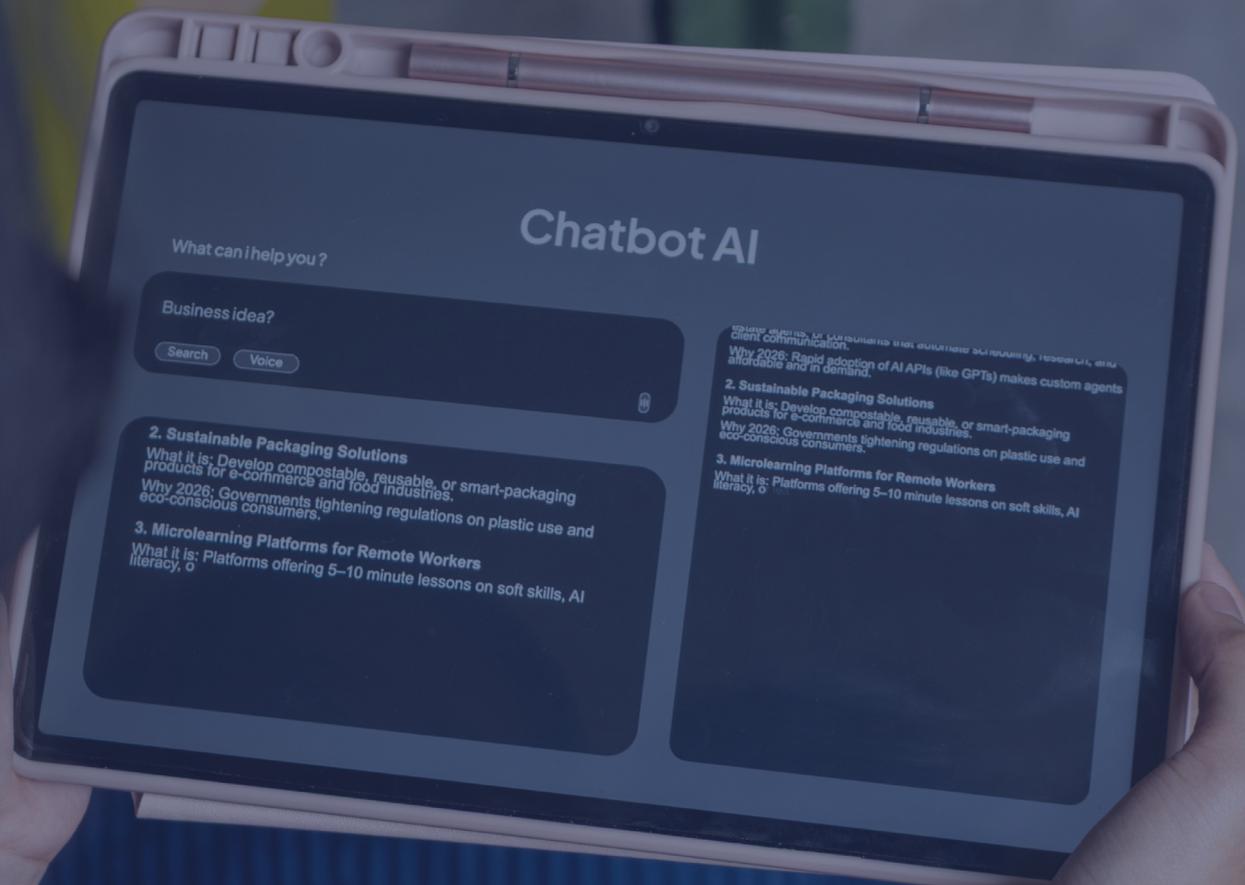
Not yet worried. There are far bigger issues that are already doing this; closure of newsrooms, decline in public interest journalism, influencer news making, search engines being used to provide news.



I feel diminished when my efforts seem sometimes interchangeable with AI.



People can't tell what the truth is. People are now calling themselves journalists.



Too many people do not seem to have the critical thinking skills needed to navigate modern media.

Section

04

Journalists'
sources and
social media

Journalists' story sources

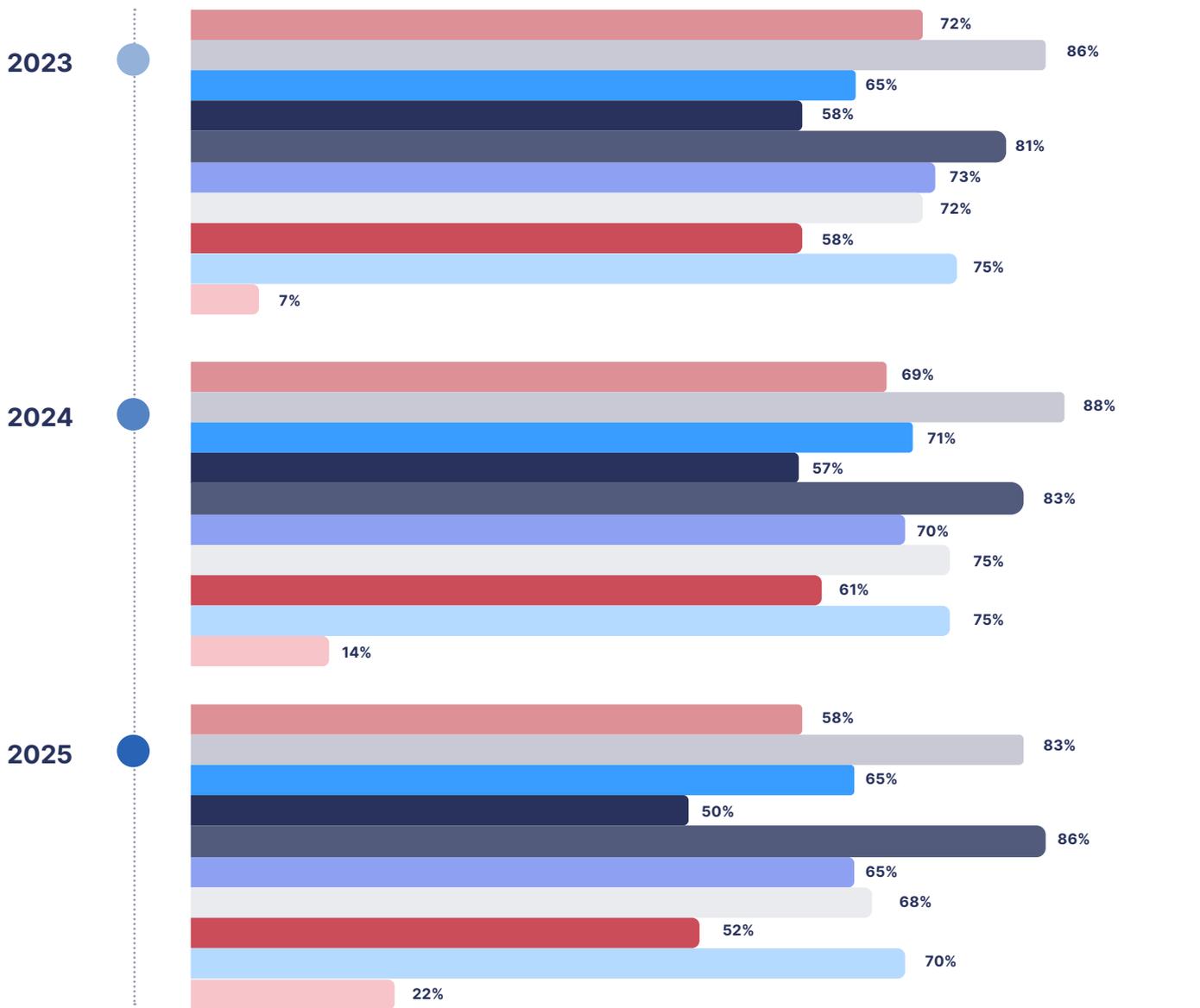
This year, the top story source for journalists is press releases (used by 86% of respondents in 2025). Press releases as top story source surpassed last year's top choice of industry and professional contacts.

Despite 73% of respondents suspecting that they often or occasionally receive pitches that were purely generated by AI, 73% claim that the quality of PR material they

currently receive compared to two years ago has remained the same. This consistency in the quality of PR material might account for the relatively small fluctuation in the percentage of respondents who chose press releases as one of their story sources.

Industry and professional contacts were the second most used story source, used by 83% of journalists.

Press releases as top story source surpassed last year's top choice of industry and professional contacts.



- General public
- Social media
- Industry and professional contacts
- Official documents e.g. government docs
- Other news media
- Journals/peer-reviewed articles
- PR agencies/publicists
- Search engines e.g. Google
- Press releases
- Generative AI/LLMS

Figure 37 — Story sources used by journalists (year)

Press releases

Eighty-six percent of journalists used press releases as a story source in 2025.

Of the survey respondents who used press releases to source stories in 2025, the majority (79%) said their PR contacts email them directly with press releases.

Over three-quarters (76%) said they receive emails or pitches from a press release distribution service, while almost half (49%) of respondents source press releases from government and agency websites.

79% of journalists said PR contacts email them directly with press releases.

Emailed directly from PR contacts



Emails from a press release distribution service



Sent from an editor/chief-of-staff



Find them online



Government & agency websites



Company newsrooms



Other



Figure 38— Where journalists found press releases in 2025



Figure 39 — Journalists' use of press releases to source stories (year)

AI, PR and trust

For 60% of respondents, the top reason that would increase their trust in PR sources they have not previously worked with is evidence of the source understanding their area of interest. This is a common refrain of journalists when it comes to what makes for a high value pitch: a basic understanding on what the journalists' or publications' 'beats' or relevant subject matters are.

Though polling at only 15%, respondents have also indicated the importance of open and efficient lines of communication as a factor which can increase their trust in a PR source. This is likely to do with journalists wanting to be better connected to important members within the organisations and institutions they are reporting on.

Of note is the overwhelming response to how journalists prefer to be contacted by PR professionals. Ninety-seven percent indicate that story ideas, exclusives and pitches should be sent to them via email. Contact via phone call was a distant second place, preferred by just 10% of respondents.

About two thirds of respondents (66%) have indicated that PR professionals contribute to their success. The most common qualm raised by journalists is the need for PR professionals to better understand both the work of the journalists and publications they are pitching to. There remains a belief that PR professionals are most useful for advertorial work as opposed to hard and investigative news reporting.

Despite this, where journalists have identified a value in PR professionals, it is their ability to connect the news media to important spokespeople within organisations, experts and other interview subjects as well as important and relevant case studies.

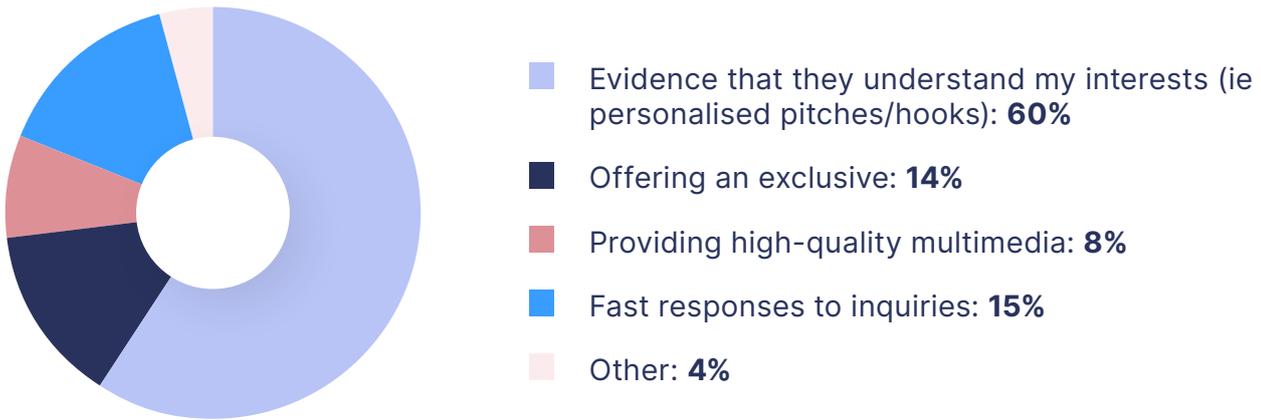


Figure 40— Factor that most increases your trust in a PR source you haven't worked with before

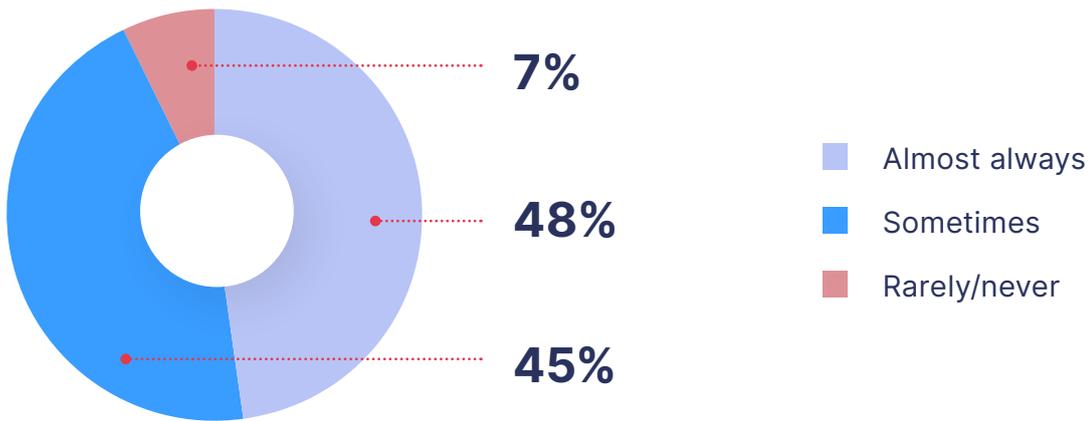


Figure 41—Can you typically tell if a pitch was written by AI rather than a human?

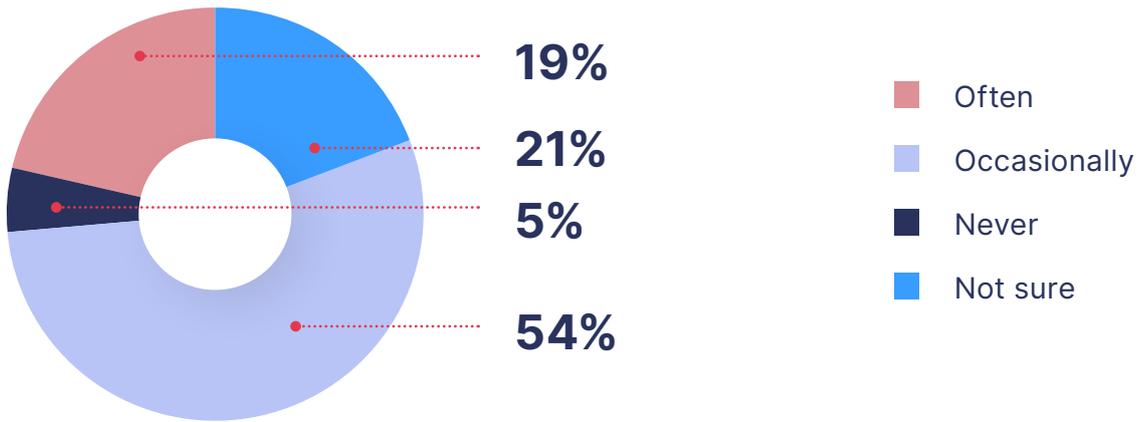


Figure 42—How often do you receive pitches that you suspect were purely generated by AI?

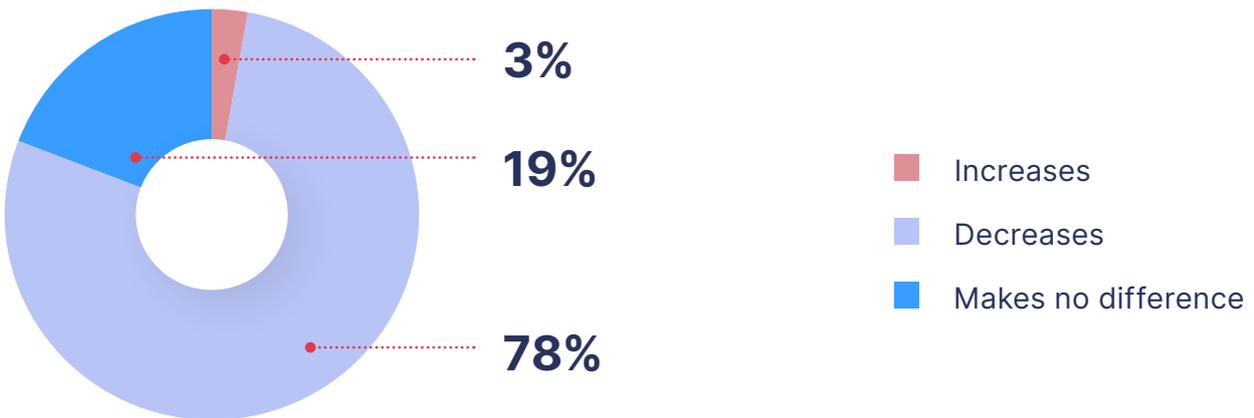


Figure 43— How does receiving AI-generated pitches affect your trust in PR content?

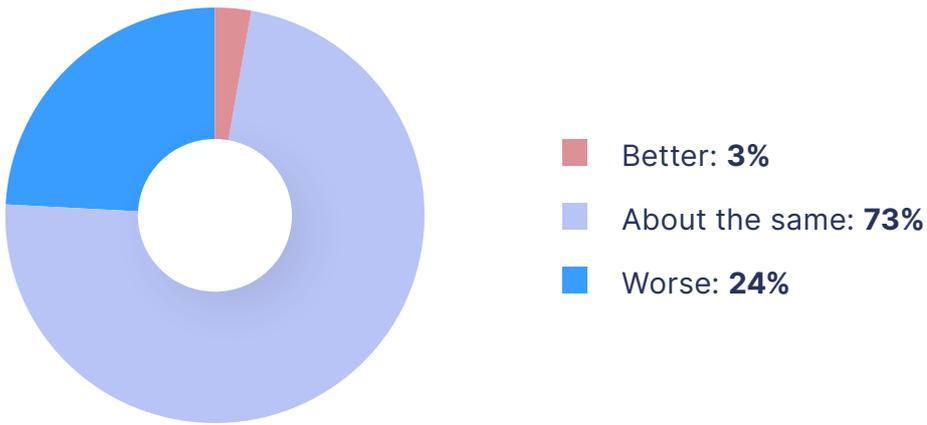


Figure 44— Compared with two years ago, the quality of PR material you receive is...

Email



Call



Text



Social media



Other



Figure 45— How do you prefer to be contacted by PR with story ideas/pitches/exclusives?

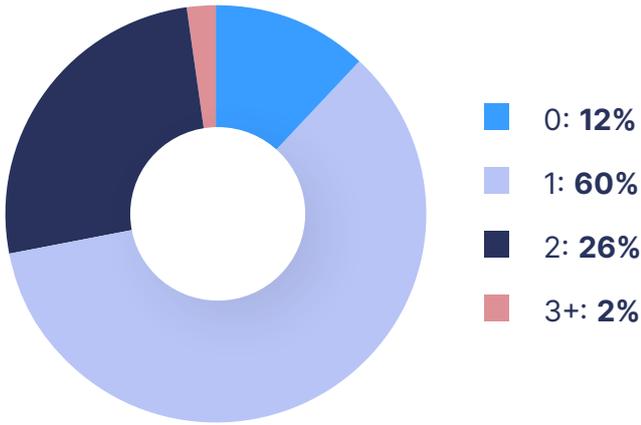


Figure 46—What is the maximum number of follow-ups you find acceptable for a single pitch?

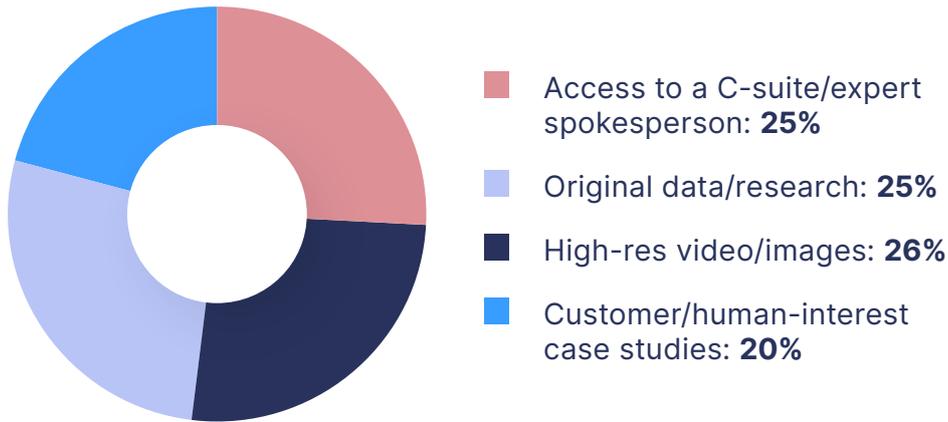


Figure 47— Beyond a press release, what is the most valuable asset a PR professional can provide to help you finish a story?

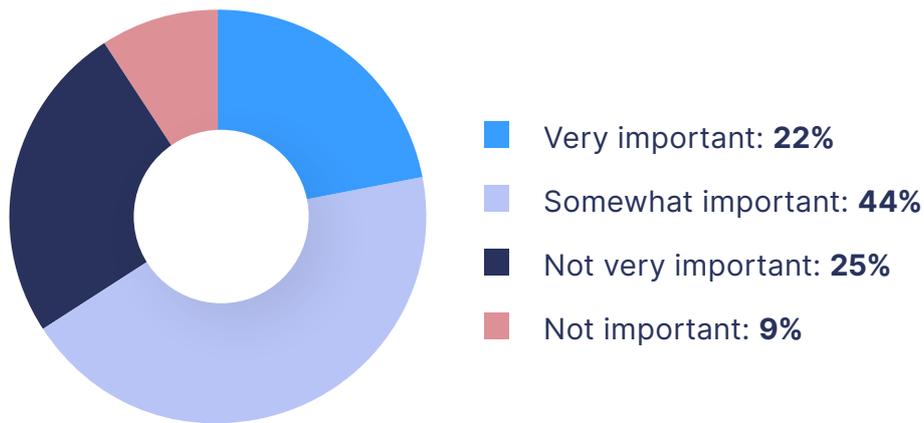


Figure 48—How important are PR professionals to your success as a journalist?





AI generated pitches means a high chance of false information, poor grammar, wrong contact information and data.

Social media

Almost two-thirds (65%) of journalists used social media as a story source. Since 2022, there has been a consistent decline among respondents using social media as a source. The growing mistrust of social media sources is most likely due to both the perceived proliferation of AI material on these platforms as well as social media being the domain of news influencers, whose content is still largely regarded by journalists with disdain.

Facebook continued to be the most commonly used platform by journalists professionally in 2025. However, usage of Facebook has declined from 79% in 2024 to 75%.

Instagram usage remained relatively steady compared

to previous years and LinkedIn continued to hold the third spot ahead of Twitter/X for the third year in a row. YouTube has now surpassed Twitter/X, with 44% of respondents using the former compared to 36% of respondents who continue to use the latter. Usage of Twitter/X has also dropped significantly again (from 49% in 2024) among journalists. WhatsApp ties with Twitter/X usage, with 36% of respondents also reporting they use the platform.

Bluesky, which once promised an alternative to Twitter/X, saw a significant decline in usage from 19% in 2024 to 10% in 2025. Threads has also seen a decline in usage, albeit less dramatic, from 9% in 2024 to 8% in 2025.

Facebook continued to be the most commonly used platform by journalists professionally. However, usage of Facebook has declined from 79% to 75%.

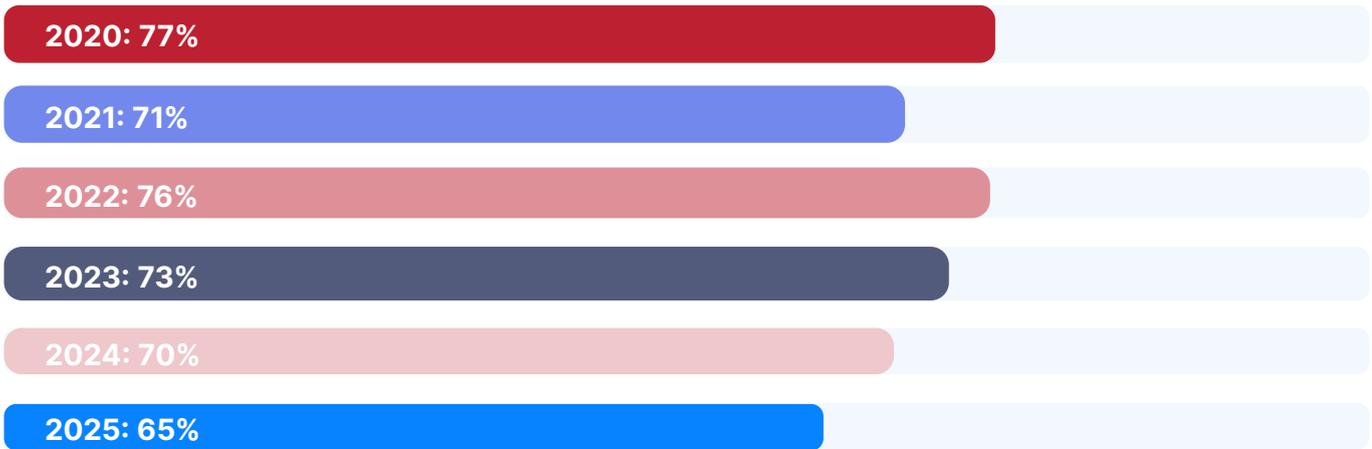


Figure 49— Journalists using social media as a story source

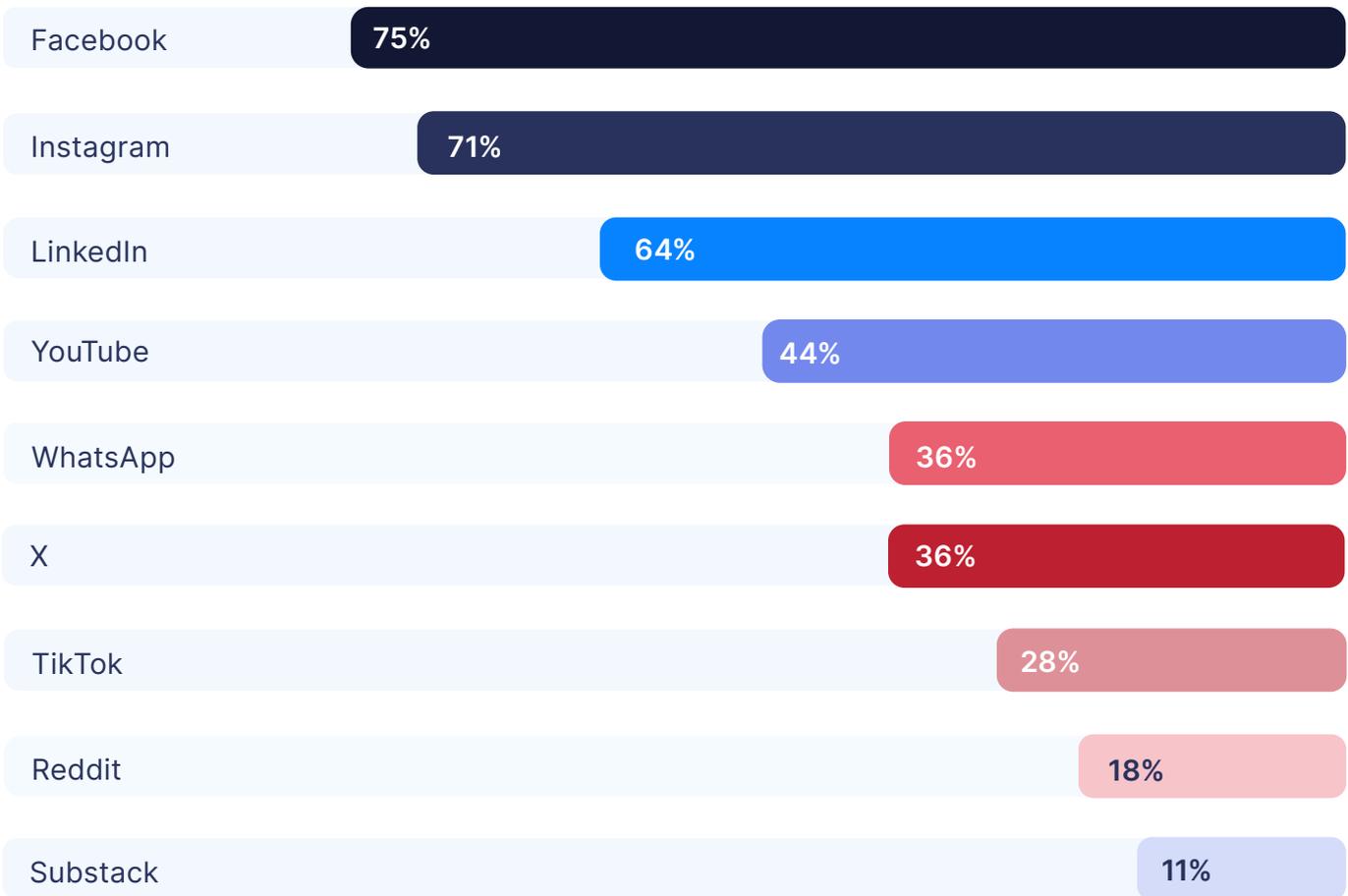
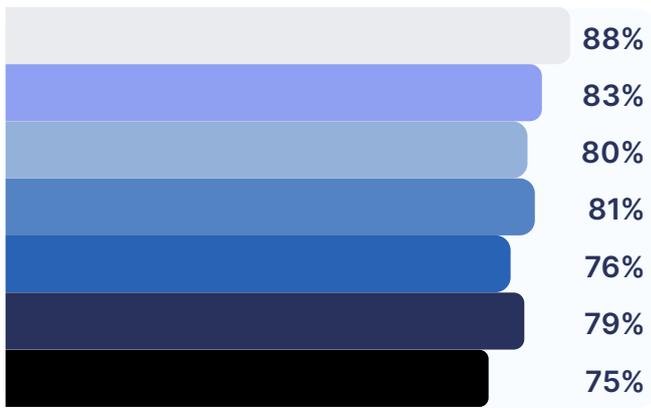


Figure 50 — Professional social media usage by journalists in 2025



Figure 50 — Professional social media usage by journalists in 2025 (Continued)

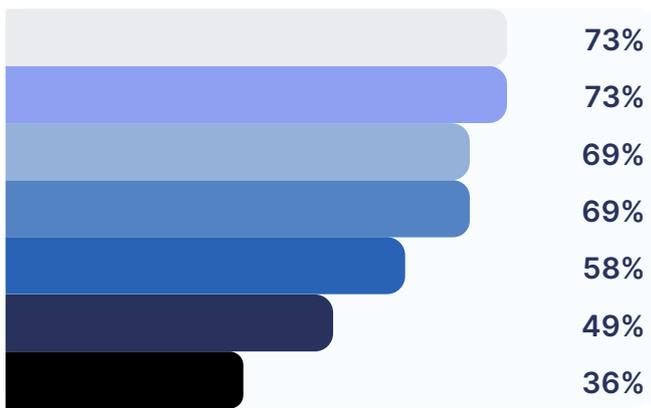
Facebook



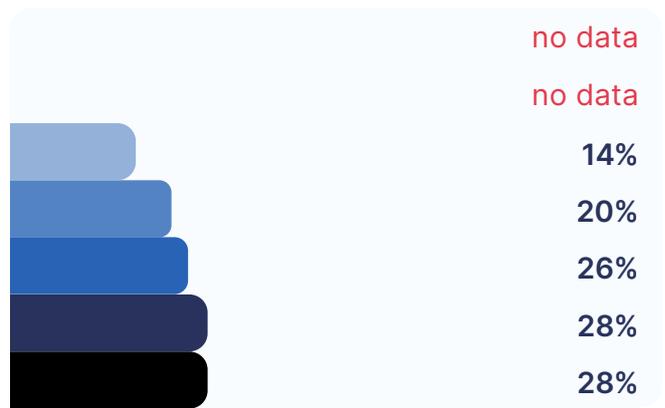
LinkedIn



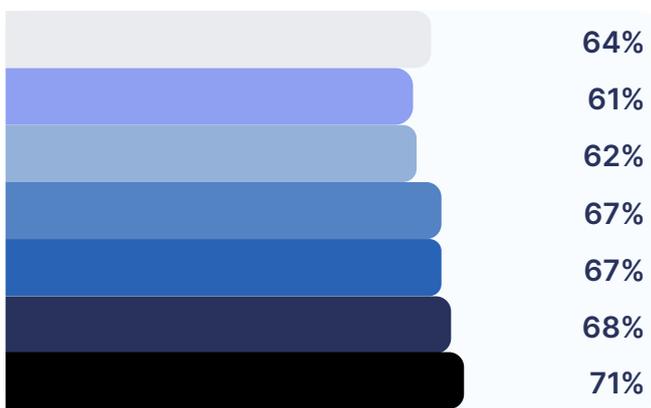
Twitter/X



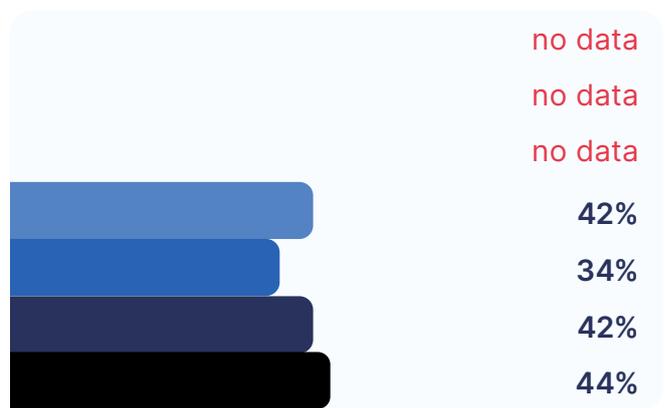
TikTok



Instagram



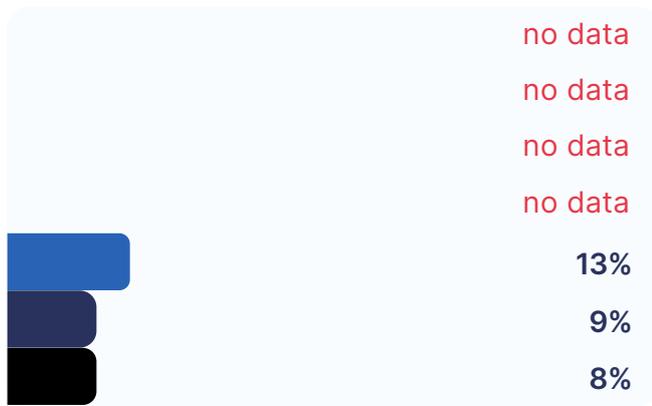
YouTube



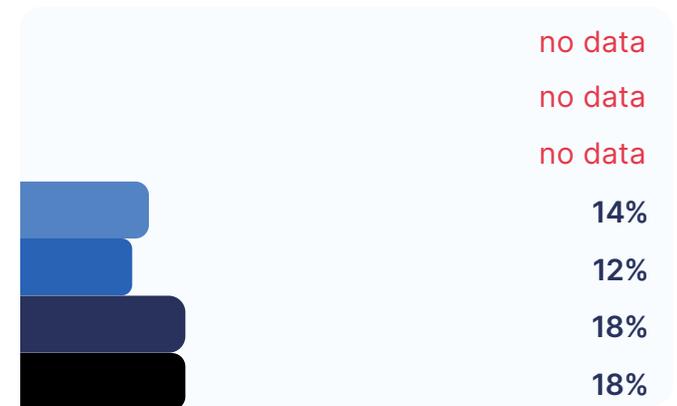
2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025

Figure 51 — Professional social media usage by journalists (year)

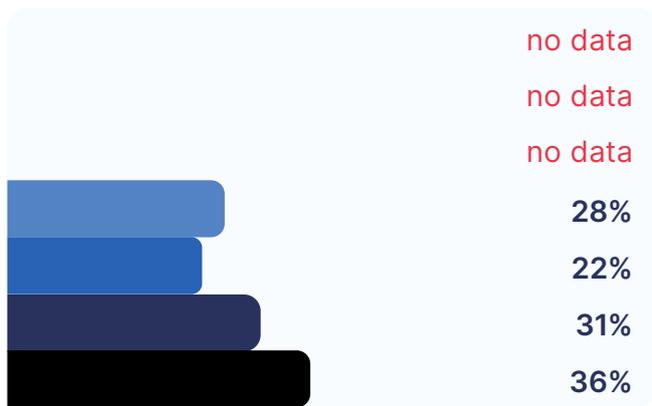
Threads



Reddit



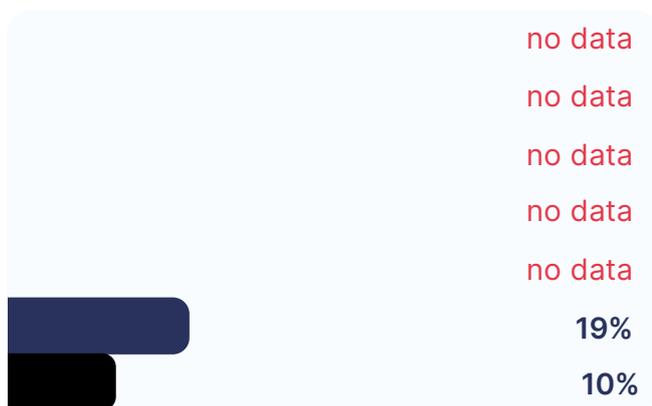
Whatsapp



Pinterest



Bluesky



Signal



2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025

Figure 51— Professional social media usage by journalists (year) (Continued)



Both journalists and readers are not as interested as they should be in sources of information.

An AI engine does not care how biased or unbiased the information it generates might be. Social media content also can come from anywhere but I don't think enough people realise that.

Changes to journalists' preferred platforms in 2025

There was a significant drop in professional Twitter/X usage in 2025, with 36% of respondents saying they used the platform, down from 49% in 2024.

Despite continuing to be the most used social media platform in 2025, Facebook has seen a decline in usage from 2024. Instagram, also owned by Meta, has seen a steady increase in usage amongst journalists, from 61% in 2020 to 71% in 2025. Another Meta-owned platform on the rise is WhatsApp, with a more dramatic increase from 22% in 2023 to 36% in 2025. WhatsApp's usage among this year's respondents also equals that of Twitter/X usage.

Respondents' scepticism towards short-form content might account for platforms like Twitter/X's, and its alternatives' decline. This is evidenced by the drop in use of Twitter/X, Bluesky and Threads from 2024 to 2025. Mastodon has seen no increase in usage. Only Truth Social among the Twitter/X alternatives has seen more usage among respondents, from less than one percent in 2024 to 2% in 2025.

There was a significant drop in professional Twitter/X usage in 2025, with 36% of respondents saying they used the platform, down from 49% in 2024.

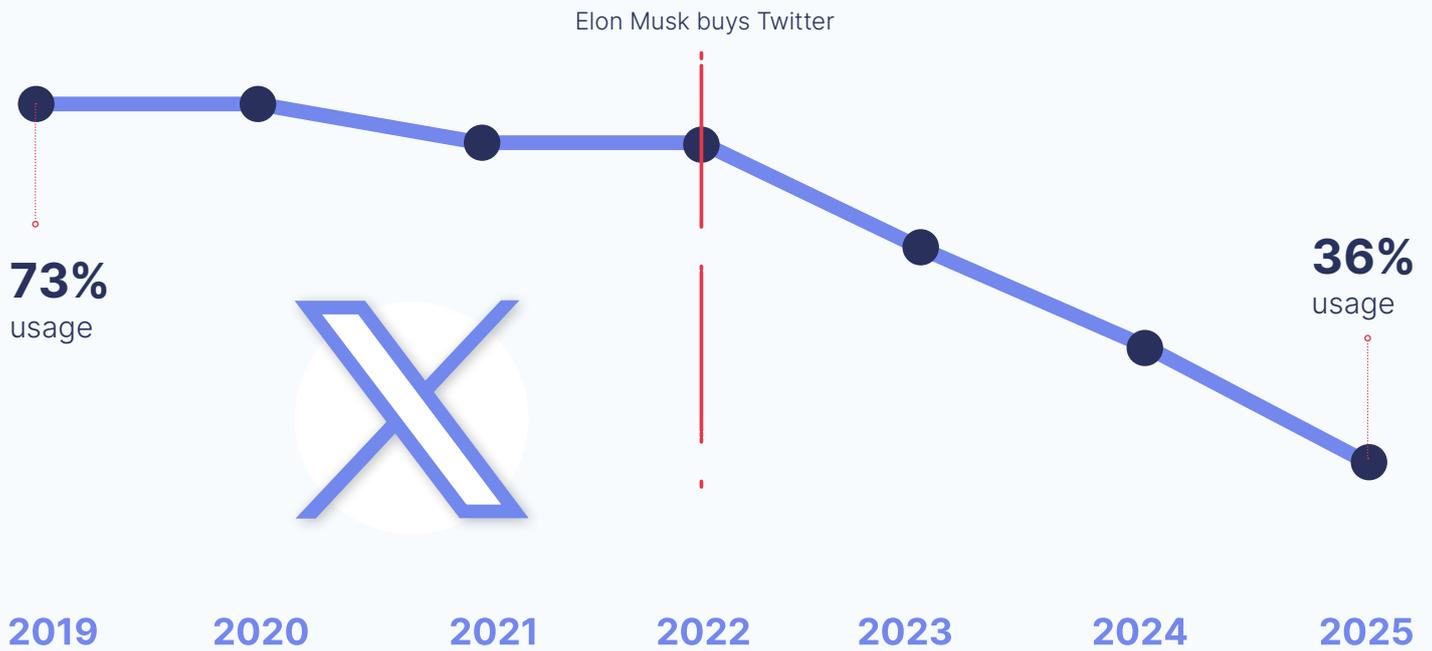


Figure 52— Journalists’ using X (year)



I think its easy to look at them as a threat, when we should be looking at what they’re doing and seeing what works and how we can also be in that space and making a difference.



News influencers who have journalistic chops and are experts can be a major boon to the industry. Those who are opportunistic, don’t understand journalistic ethics and are willing to make sponsored posts from vested interests are a large threat.



Those with journalism experience can also become influencers with greater credibility.



The reports of its demise were greatly exaggerated. I moved to freelance work before the difficult era of the 2010s and have seen a lot of people take redundancies since, but things seem to have turned a corner and are improving.

Section

05

**The future of
journalism**

Alternative publishing platforms

Alternative publishing platforms such as Substack, and the continued proliferation of podcasts, have been on the rise for a few years. Respondents were asked about their intention to follow these media trends and how they feel about 'news influencers' gaining traction on the sidelines of traditional media outlets. Respondents were also asked to express their views on the current and future state of the media industry and their level of optimism in respect to the changes and challenges they have raised.

Almost half (49%) of respondents say they are currently reporting, have considered reporting or are launching in 2026 an additional alternative platform or channel other than the one they work for. This represents an increase from last year's 40%. Of these respondents considering alternative

platforms, 46% say the biggest appeal of an independent platform is the ability for creative freedom. Twenty-nine percent said their motivation was the more direct audience relationship of an independent platform. Only 12% say that the potential for higher income was the biggest appeal.

When it comes to news 'influencers', the enthusiasm is not the same. While 26% sees this as an opportunity for the journalism profession, 41% see it as a threat. Commentary around this topic shows a mix of optimism and concern. While some see news influencers as a chance to "adapt and thrive" by reaching younger audiences through proven storytelling models, many worry about the lack of editorial expertise, accountability and a formal code of ethics among some of these 'influencers'.

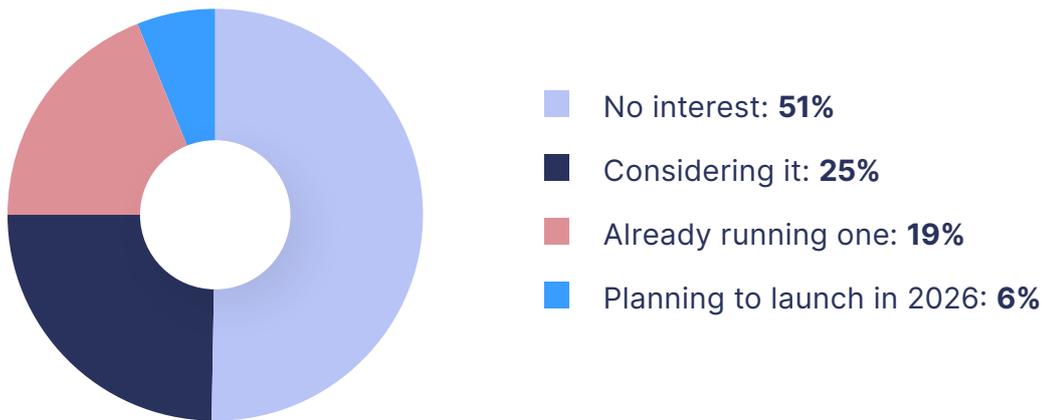


Figure 53— Do you currently run, or are you planning to launch, an independent newsletter or podcast?

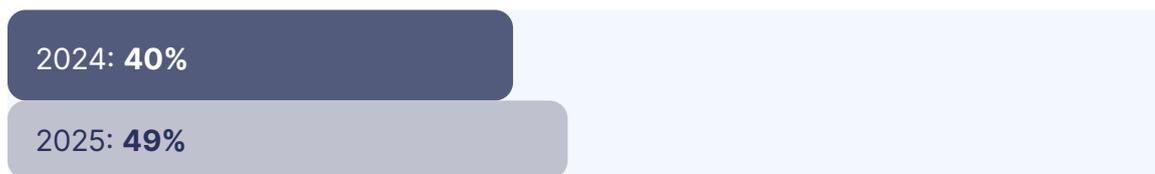


Figure 54— Already running or considering reporting on an alternative platform (year)



People are consuming news differently. If publishers can take lessons from influencers, and even work with them, they may be able to adapt and thrive in the new world.



There's a changing of the guard and unfortunately the younger generation are influenced by the influencers.



Relying on algorithms for news feels dangerous and increases polarisation and extremism.



It's not a coincidence that mis- and disinformation has increased along with the rise of 'news' influencers.

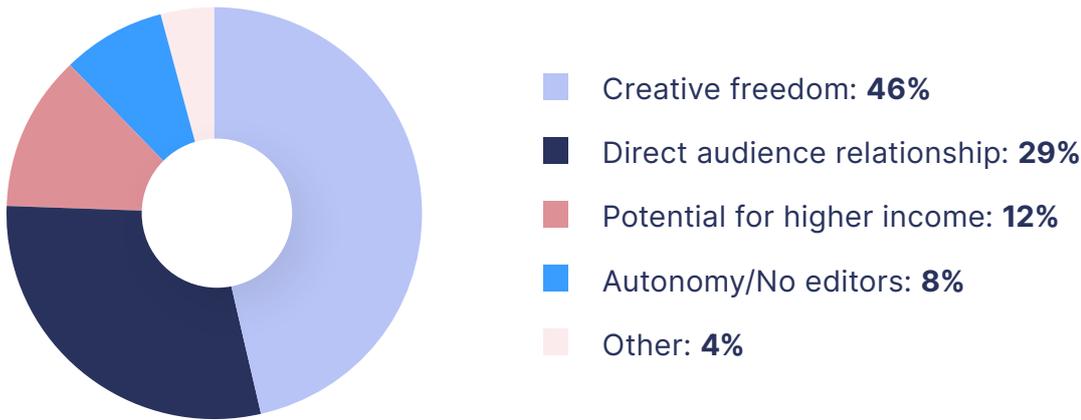


Figure 55— Factors that led to journalists choosing to publish their work on other platforms

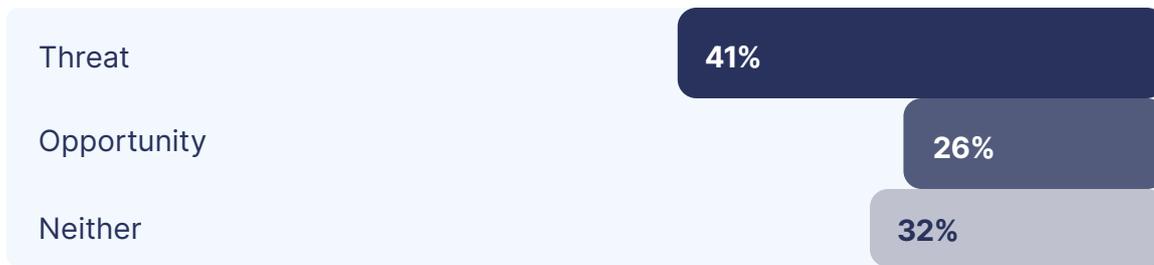


Figure 56— Do you believe the rise of news influencers is a threat to, or an opportunity for the journalism profession?



I love the rise of news influencers. I think, as with any media, we have to critically think about any news we consume, and fact check, but many are doing very good, well researched work!



It gives us somewhere to go when there's no games journalism jobs. We can become influencers and at least earn something.



News influencers pose a threat to newsrooms in the sense that they divert revenue away from newsrooms/publications. But they also exist due to the lack of independent media (from the perception of the public, and from journos who go independent and take an influencer route). I have concerns that, without the scrutiny of a newsroom or editors, an influencer journalist may not be able to be as neutral.



Journalists should get in the mix more than ever! They're the ones with credible backgrounds and degrees. They can use it as an opportunity if they're willing to be seen and create a profile.



Younger people - and some older ones - seem impressed by some good looking idiot expressing views on topics that they actually know nothing about.



It enables extreme views.



Influencers do not have a code of ethics, editors, or external means of accountability like a press council. When they make errors (as we all do) - there's no requirement for a public correction or any accountability, eroding trust in journalists who are actually held accountable by readers.



Its easy to write influencers off as competition for journalists or spreaders of misinformation, but their model of content and storytelling is proven to be successful in the attention economy — I believe media could learn from that.



Natural industry evolution. Threatens legacy media, but paves the way to new or younger audiences. Main concern is the quality of reporting.



Popularity does not equal expertise yet influencers are able to sway the opinion of huge numbers of followers. If a journalist publishes incorrect information they are held accountable - influencers spout rubbish daily and continue to grow their audiences.



If done in a thoughtful way it could change the way people see and trust the news. But 'influencers' are usually annoying sycophantic opportunists who actually don't break new ground and just restructure week old news as their own with a smug expression like they've unearthed a great mystery.



We are in trouble and the solution is not yet apparent but I believe in keeping journalism alive while we figure out what the media industry might look like in future.

An optimistic outlook

When asked about the general outlook towards the Australian media, there were mixed responses. While the data indicates that a narrow majority (53%) still feel some level of optimism, the written comments were far more critical.

Most journalists describe an industry in crisis, pointing to the high concentration of media ownership, job insecurity, and the rise of AI-generated content. However, this pessimism is balanced by a belief in the “green shoots” of the industry, such as

independent digital platforms and a shift towards more authentic, social-media-focused reporting.

Ultimately, while the transition away from traditional “ivory tower” newsrooms is painful and seen by many as a “dumpster fire,” others view it as a necessary evolution to reach modern audiences and restore genuine connection.

The more optimistic comments identified a pivot away from traditional, top-down media toward a more 

The least optimistic views often cite the increasing consolidation of the Australian media industry and the prioritisation of content that will garner the most attention over content that contains more important news values.

fragmented but connected landscape. This optimism is largely rooted in the rise of independent and hyperlocal media, which many feel is filling the void left by metropolitan newsrooms by rebuilding trust through direct community engagement and a focus on stories that reflect the actual lives of their audience.

Others see a major opportunity in the professionalisation of the 'influencer model' based on transparency, personality, and platform-native formats

and blending journalistic integrity with high-engagement digital strategies.

The least optimistic views often cite the increasing consolidation of the Australian media industry and the prioritisation of content that will garner the most attention over that which contains more important news values. This pessimism deepens when respondents consider the threat they believe AI poses to journalistic rigour, accuracy and job security within the Australian media sector.

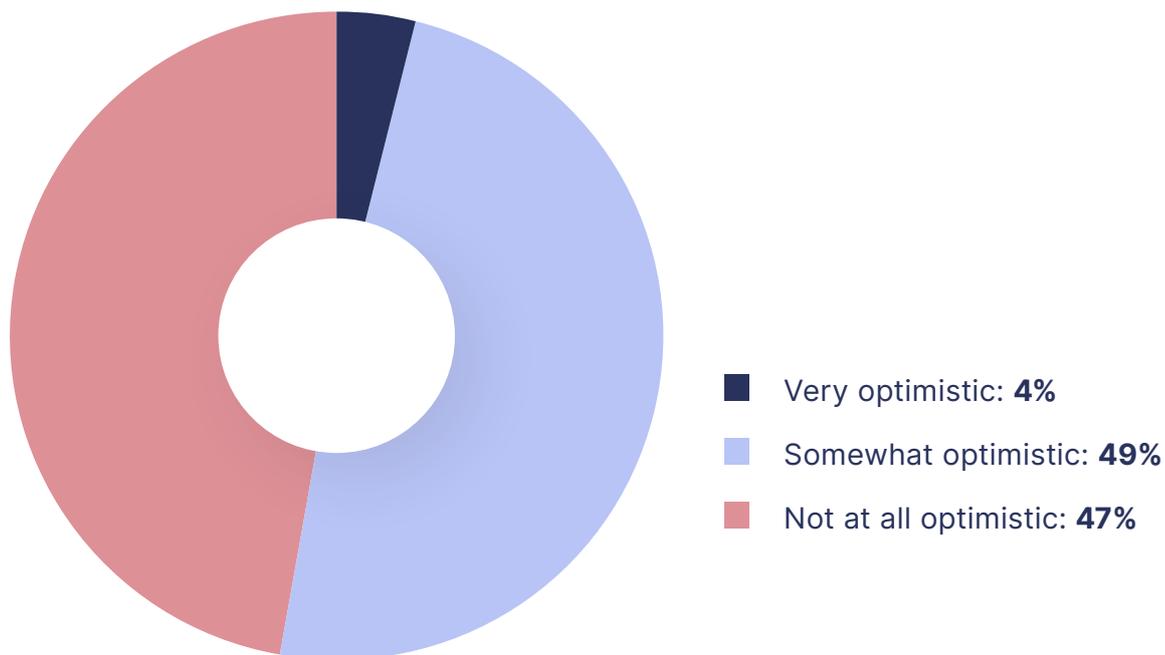


Figure 57 — How optimistic are you about the state of the media in Australia?



Too many publishers are focused on reducing staffing to save money, focused on pageviews over quality journalism, and are moving too slowly to catch up with Millennial and Gen Z trends of sourcing information on social media.



We are in a place of flux. Methods of delivery are changing but information has never been more important. Trust takes a long time to earn and traditional media has that and should work towards it.



Rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic.



In Australia? It's cooked.



The monopoly ownership of the major media outlets in Australasia is a big worry. Paywalls are necessary for news organisations to make money yet they greatly decrease the readership of columnists like me. Newspapers are less the parish pumps they used to be.



So much of what makes society function hinges on the narratives we tell about the world we live in and what matters, so outlets owned by people with vested interests necessarily threaten the country's ability to know what matters and why.



We are owned by a few old white male billionaires and it shows.



Dumpster fire.

Negative

outlook on
Australian media

Legacy media needs to adapt and recognise that a changing of the guard among audiences will unfold over the next decade. New orgs targeting young people (Daily Aus, etc) are doing really well, which highlights an appetite.



What people don't understand, is the only reason why anyone would still work in newspaper journalism is because they believe in the craft, and in its purpose.



The modern media industry needs to get with the times - independent journalism has always been vital to a well-rounded conversation, and influencer media has become a valid and important piece of the news-cycle puzzle, broadening the scope of what the regular consumer can find to educate themselves on certain topics or stories. Consumers are becoming wise to the echo chambers of 'big media' and seeking real connection with their sources of news.



It is a time of change. If you are seeking stability and tradition, not a good time to be a journalist. But for risk takers and change makers, now is the time to challenge systems and create a fairer media world.



Local and hyper local media is thriving and there is a growing trust for community-led, independent news media. Larger titles are seen as biased and as a journalist they seem to churn staff in and out without the care we show our team.



Positive

outlook on
Australian media

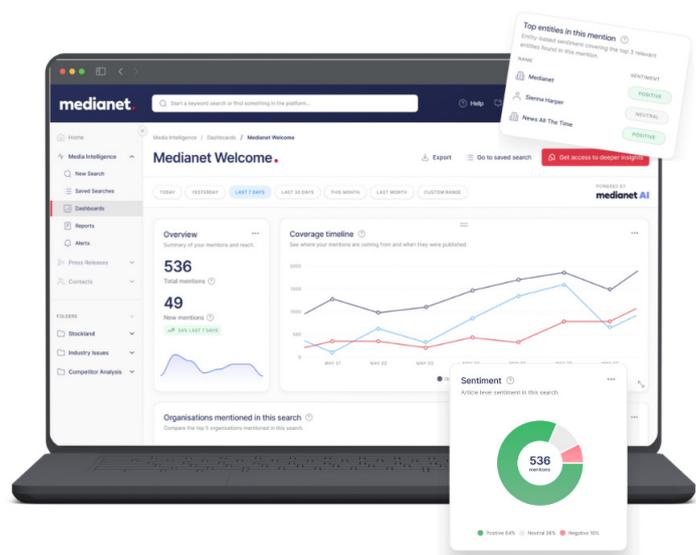
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Medianet is the #1 Media Intelligence platform in Australia and New Zealand with a suite of PR and communications solutions that help organisations connect with their target audience, monitor their media coverage and achieve earned media success.

Medianet's suite of PR services include a comprehensive database of

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Our mission is to empower our customers with the incredible benefits of earned media, while assisting journalists to tell the stories that matter.



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