

Abstract

The subject of this study are young journalists who were part of group interviews. They were asked about their understanding of journalistic roles, their own work experiences during the pandemic and their assessments of the current situation and future developments in journalism.

The analysis of the interviews shows that the newcomers consider the values of truthfulness and impartiality to be particularly important, which shows a mainly normative understanding of their role.

Journalistic practices were mostly negatively affected by the pandemic. As an effect of the restructure, the interviewees had fewer interactions with colleagues and found it difficult to network. They also reported fewer opportunities for further education, stronger hierarchies and an increasing financial precarisation of the profession. The interviews show the increased requirements for young journalists, from whom more flexibility, independence and (technical) skills are expected. Central trends and changes that the interviewed journalists perceive in their professional field are in particular social media; new, digital formats and platforms; number-driven journalism; personalisation/self-promotion as well as editorial and content diversity.

They also describe a complex technical change in which social networks, online platforms and data have a growing influence on journalistic practice.

The interviews also highlight the increased demands on young journalists, who are expected to be more flexible, independent and (technically) skilled, and in some cases even to have their own high-profile branding.