



# **The Future of Jobs in Journalism, Media, and Communications**

By

Mark McGee



Whether you are a student or a working professional, the opportunities in journalism, media, and communications are vast. However, those opportunities are changing more rapidly than in past years because of advances in technology, and the needs of companies and consumers. It's important that we understand both, so time to **explore, learn, and grow!**

## Journalism Jobs

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs in Journalism will see a **decline** of 9% during the next several years. As for financial compensation — “The median annual wage for news analysts, reporters, and journalists was \$48,370 in May 2021.” (Information updated as of September 8, 2022)

Pew Research shows that “Newsroom employment in the United States has dropped by 26% since 2008.” Pew went on to explain that the primary plummet was at U.S. newspapers. During that same time period, jobs in the digital publishing sector increased. Pew explained that mid-career workers have been hit hardest.

CareerExplorer has an interesting take on why the expected decline in Journalism jobs —

Job growth for journalists is projected to be negligible through 2024. Consolidation and mergers in the publishing and broadcasting sectors, and subsequent decreases in advertising revenue, are expected to result in more efficient allocation of correspondents and news analysts to cover stories. Improving technology will continue to allow working journalists to be more efficient and to take on more assignments. Both of these factors will limit the number of new hires. Competition for journalism jobs is generally intense and this trend will persist, particularly in traditional media like large newspapers; national and international magazines; and television networks. Aspiring journalists with new media skills and specialized knowledge in science, technology, economics, or politics are likely to more easily find employment. Such opportunities will be more plentiful for freelancers, in smaller markets, and in the production of digital content for the Web. Graduates in

the field may also be hired by advertising and public relations firms, which often have a need for the communications skills and media savvy they offer. Economic upswings and downturns will always impact this occupation because its demand and growth are so closely tied to advertising revenues.

I checked some job listings for journalists and found the national average income to be about \$45.93 per hour — \$25.37 on the low end and \$83.14 on the high end. The job market seems to be tightening, but you can still find good jobs in journalism.

## Media Jobs

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs in Media will see an **increase** of almost 6% during the next several years. As for financial compensation — “The median annual wage for this group was \$62,340 in May 2021, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations of \$45,760.” (Information updated as of September 8, 2022)

If you're interested in Media jobs, explore a bit more. For example —

- Radio announcers and disc jockeys (which is how I started in the 1960s) earn about \$18 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to decline by about 4% through 2031.
- Broadcast, sound, and video technicians earn about \$23.50 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase by about 10% through 2031.
- Film and video editors and camera operators earn about \$29 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase by about 12% through 2031.

- Photographers (still photography) earn about \$19 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase by about 9% through 2031.



## Communications Jobs

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs in Communications will also see an **increase** of almost 6% during the next several years. As for financial compensation — “The median annual wage for this group was \$62,340 in May 2021, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations of \$45,760.” (Information updated as of September 8, 2022)

If you’re interested in Communications jobs, explore a bit more. For example —

- Publication editors earn about \$30.50 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to decrease by about 5% through 2031.
- Public relations specialists earn about \$30.20 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase by about 8% through 2031.
- Content writers earn about \$33.40 per hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase by about 4% through 2031.

- Technical writers earn about \$37.50 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase about 6% through 2031.
- Interpreters and translators earn about \$23.60 an hour (median income). Job opportunities are expected to increase about 20% through 2031.

## Job Boards



Keep in mind that the figures listed are median incomes according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. I checked some job boards and job search engines for current openings in all three areas: Journalism, Media, and Communications. Some of the open positions pay less than the median income listed above.

Here are some examples of what I found in a brief online job search —

- One example I found was for *Content Writer*. The government lists the median income at \$37.50 an hour, but the job board lists the national average salary at \$18.98 per hour. The low end is \$9.52 and the high end is \$37.84.
- The national average salary for a *News Producer* was listed on the job board for \$18.04 per hour. The low end is \$9.69 and the high end is \$33.58.
- The average national salary for a *Public Relations Specialist* is listed on the job board for \$25.18 an hour. The low end is \$13.59 and the high end is \$46.66.
- The average national salary for a *Social Media Specialist* is listed on the job board for \$18.25 per hour. The low end is \$10.66 and the high end is \$31.25.
- Another example I found is for a *Senior Communications Specialist*. The national average income is \$33.90 per hour. The low end is \$22.82 and the high end is \$50.37.

Online job boards are a good place to look for job openings. There are also industry-specific magazines and websites that will give you a good idea of what jobs are available, qualifications for employment, how much the jobs pay, contact information for hiring managers, etc.

## Competition



Competition can be fierce for some job openings, so stay on top of what's happening in your vocational field. Also keep your eyes out for opportunities in related fields. The skills you develop every day on the job may open new doors for you in the future. Take the opportunities your current job makes available for you, even if it takes you out of your comfort zone. What you learn could prepare you for future employment in other areas of your chosen field.

Jobs open up somewhere in the country every day. The openings come about through company expansion, workers moving to other places of employment, and retirements. You can stay on top of some of that by reading business news and industry-specific reports.

Even if you're happy where you are and have no plans to change jobs, keep your eyes and ears open. As I mentioned earlier, things are happening fast. I've seen many people impacted by unexpected layoffs. Getting a new job can take months of searching. If you can stay ahead of what's happening in your chosen or a similar field, you will be in a better position to deal with sudden changes.

Take advantage of opportunities to learn more about your job and grow in areas that will be beneficial to your current and future employers. Attend conferences and summits, and join team and leadership groups when possible. Demonstrate your willingness to go the extra mile to improve your knowledge and skills for the sake of your employer and team, and for your career.

## Who You Know

There is a lot of truth to the old saying that who you know can open doors for your career. If you work hard, do a good job, and strengthen your team, people will either recommend you to friends in the business or remember you when it's time for them to hire at a new job location. You are building your future every day of the week.



## Money in Management

As you look at job boards, you will notice that managers often make higher incomes than their employees. There can be money in management. Many mid-level managers are pulling down six figures a year. However, there's also more responsibility and risk. Managers may receive credit when things go well in their department, but they are often blamed when things go wrong.

If you are interested in managing, that can be a good track financially. However, it's good to weigh all possibilities as you move through your career. Sometimes it's good to take risks, especially when you're younger. It's also good to find stability, especially as you age and get closer to retirement.



1960s Radio News, © Mark McGee