

Foreword from the Editors

THOMAS HANITZSCH, FOLKER HANUSCH, CORINNA LAUERER & VERA SLAVTCHEVA-PETKOVA

This report comes at a time when journalism faces existential challenges on multiple fronts. Journalists are confronting disruptions and transformations in the political environment (e.g., rising authoritarianism), the news economy (e.g., growing influence of platforms), technological affordances (e.g., generative AI), and news consumption (e.g., increasing news avoidance and skepticism).

In other words, journalism around the world is under significant strain.

Since 2006, the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) has examined journalism's response to a changing environment. That year, researchers from seven countries met to discuss a draft questionnaire. Following further expansion and the addition of dozens of countries, WJS was officially founded in 2011 as a semi-institutional network of journalism researchers. To date, the network remains open to participation by colleagues from across the globe.

The study's mission has coalesced around assessing the state of journalism throughout the world. Its primary objective is to help researchers, media practitioners, and policymakers better understand journalists' professional views, the conditions under which they work, and the social roles of journalism in a transforming world.

WJS offers three key advantages over similar projects. First, it relies on a joint conceptual and methodological framework, continuously reviewed by global experts. This framework ensures that all researchers use a standardized questionnaire and adhere to the same research protocols.

Second, the study's conceptual and methodological tools were developed collaboratively through multiple iterations, with all network members having equal opportunities to contribute.

Third, WJS is guided by democratically elected researchers from all regions, allowing the project to leverage the cultural knowledge of its participants and present a truly global perspective. At the same time, the study functions as a democratic scholarly community rather than an academic empire.

This report presents findings from the third wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS3), conducted between 2021 and 2025. In this iteration, we focused on journalists' perceptions of risk and uncertainty in their profession and sought to identify key factors that shape how journalists navigate journalism's

changing environment. These risks and uncertainties arise from four partially overlapping domains: politics, economy, technology, and news consumption. Accordingly, the WJS3 questionnaire addressed journalists' safety, editorial freedom, professional roles, news influences, and labor conditions.

Our survey confirms that journalism is under pressure. Journalists worldwide are often undercompensated, and more than one-third engage in secondary employment. Economic pressures on news organizations have intensified in most countries. Nearly half of journalists have been targeted with hate speech, while psychological, physical, and digital threats are more prevalent in the Global South than in the Global North.

More than 300 researchers from 75 countries participated in WJS3. This report provides a concise overview of key global findings. Subsequent publications will analyze specific topics in greater depth; please visit worldsofjournalism.org for more information.

This report would not have been possible without the dedication of our international network of researchers. We extend our deepest gratitude to all colleagues who contributed to the report and to those involved in WJS3 data collection. We thank the members of the WJS Executive Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee, and Statistical Advisory Committee (see worldsofjournalism.org/about/ for a full list), as well as Mia Grünewald at the WJS Center for her tireless work in data management and report production. We are also grateful to the German Research Foundation (DFG) and our partners, including UNESCO, Reporters Without Borders, and the International Federation of Journalists, for their generous support.

Finally, we sincerely thank the more than 32,000 journalists who generously contributed their time to complete our survey.