

# Professionalism of U.S. Journalists: Have Things Changed in the Turbulent Times of the 21st Century?

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## Abstract

A panel study of 402 U.S. journalists assessed changes in professionalism between 2002 and 2007 – a period of significant economic and technological turmoil for news organizations. The study's findings show that membership in professional organizations declined among these journalists, though readership of professional publications and Web sites rose. Staff cutbacks and higher workloads at news organizations were posing threats to the autonomy of some of the news workers. Beliefs about journalists' professional roles shifted slightly, with more news workers emphasizing the importance of analyzing problems and of being adversaries of public officials. Finally, these journalists became more ethically cautious during the five-year span of the study – a period in which ethical lapses were disclosed by several high-profile news organizations.

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At the start of 2002, Knight Ridder was the second-largest newspaper company in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Time Inc., the nation's largest magazine publisher, had more than 140 publications reaching about 300 million readers.<sup>2</sup> John S. Carroll was editing a resurgent *Los Angeles Times*, which eventually won 13 Pulitzer Prizes under his leadership.<sup>3</sup> The McClatchy Company's flagship newspaper was the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis, a publication for which it paid \$1.2 billion in 1998.<sup>4</sup> And the nightly news programs of the major broadcast networks were, after four years of decline, poised to resume growth in ad revenues.<sup>5</sup>

At the start of 2007, none of those things was true. McClatchy had acquired Knight Ridder after disgruntled stockholders forced KR to put itself up for sale.<sup>6</sup> Hundreds of journalists lost their jobs as McClatchy sold the KR papers in slower-growing markets and new owners laid off staff. A private-equity firm with little experience in the news business bought the *Star Tribune* for about half what McClatchy had paid for it. McClatchy explained that the *Star Tribune* had become a drag on earnings.<sup>7</sup> Carroll retired, and his three immediate successors either were fired or resigned in disputes over staff-reduction goals imposed by the paper's owner, the Tribune Co.<sup>8</sup> Tribune was subsequently taken private in what's proved to be a risky venture. It is now facing dire financial prospects.<sup>9</sup> Time Inc. had shed at least 15 publications and more 1,500 jobs.<sup>10</sup> And CBS, NBC and ABC all had recently cut their news staffs at the network and, sometimes, local levels in the face of declining revenues and rising costs.<sup>11</sup>

The times have, perhaps, never been more uncertain for American journalists. The chief executive of one of the nation's largest newspaper groups recently suggested that 19 of the 50 largest papers in the United States were losing money, and he predicted that that number would grow.<sup>12</sup> Reports of layoffs, buyouts or general staff reductions have become an everyday occurrence on Web sites that report the news about news workers.<sup>13</sup>

This paper focuses on changes in media role perceptions, ethical attitudes, perceived autonomy, professional-organization memberships, and readership of professional publications in the unsettled years of this first decade of the 21st Century. It is based on the first-ever panel design of the American Journalist studies. The five-year period covered by this study – 2002 to 2007 – is opportune precisely because it has been so turbulent for U.S. journalists. Many are being forced to adjust to downsizing at their news organizations and to learn how to create content for the Internet, which can add to their workload.<sup>14</sup> The indicators of professionalism that we examined are important because they appear to be linked to the choices that journalists make when deciding what should be reported and how it should be framed.

In general, the findings follow two broad – and conflicting – storylines:

- **Stability.** Many of the indicators of professionalism seemed to be holding up well in the face of substantial economic and technological change. For example, the measures of professional autonomy were, in the aggregate, in about the same place in 2007 as they were in 2002. The most popular professional publications and Web sites five

years ago are the same ones journalists were most likely to mention today.

- Change. At newsrooms under stress – those experiencing buyouts or layoffs, those with shrinking staffs – reporters say they now have less professional discretion than in the past. And, in the aftermath of scandals like Jayson Blair’s fabrications or deceptions in dozens of stories at *The New York Times*, journalists appear to be more cautious about ethically controversial reporting practices.<sup>15</sup>

#### *How the study was conducted*

The data for this paper are from a national survey of 402 U.S. journalists. These news workers had previously been interviewed as part of the 2002 American Journalist survey. The American Journalist surveys began in 1971 and have been conducted every 10 years since. These surveys track changes in the social characteristics, working conditions, attitudes and values of newsmen and newswomen who work full time for daily or weekly newspapers, for television and radio news organizations, for news-oriented magazines that publish more than once a month and for news services such as the Associated Press and Reuters.

The respondents for the 2007 panel survey were selected this way: A professional survey research organization created a sample frame consisting of all 1,149 journalists who comprised the main probability sample from the 2002 American Journalist study.<sup>16</sup> A target sample size of about 400 to 425 journalists was set. The survey organization then randomly selected journalists from the

sample frame and tried to contact them to be interviewed. Ultimately, the survey organization sought to reach all 1,149 journalists in the sample frame in order to meet the target sample size. The survey organization located 656 of the 2002 respondents. Of those, 598 met the criteria for inclusion in the 2007 survey, and 402 of them agreed to take part in the survey.<sup>17</sup> That produced a response rate of about 67 percent for those who could be located and were known to be eligible.<sup>18</sup> Appendix 1 compares the 2002 and 2007 samples on selected characteristics.

Trained interviewers from the survey research organization conducted telephone interviews with respondents from early October through mid-December in 2007. The questionnaire for the 2007 survey consisted of 63 fixed response and open-ended items, some with multiple parts. Because the 2007 survey was intended primarily as the second wave in a panel study, approximately 80 percent of the items were identical to those from the 2002 study. Those items included many of the indicators of professionalism from previous American Journalist studies, including the following:

- Items assessing journalists' engagement with their professional culture, such as belonging to organizations for journalists or reading publications and Web sites about journalism in the United States.
- Items related to journalists' professional autonomy, which is a key attribute of a professionalized occupation.
- Items about the social roles and functions that journalists embrace (or don't embrace), including four functions identified in previous American

Journalist studies – the adversarial, interpretive, disseminator and populist mobilizer functions.

- Items assessing attitudes toward 10 ethically controversial reporting practices.

About 20 percent of the items in the 2007 panel survey were new. These focused on such factors as organizational change (e.g., shifts in newsroom employment levels or the occurrence of layoffs or buyouts); new job duties or functions (e.g., tasks related to the Web or changes in workloads); and perceptions about organizational practices or conditions (e.g., staff morale or the influence of market research on content).

### *Professional culture*

American journalists traditionally have had a tenuous connection to their institutions of professional culture – to the organizations that represent their occupational interests and to the publications or Web sites that deal with issues related to their work. At no point in the 35-year history of the American Journalist studies has a majority of respondents reported either belonging to at least one professional organization or regularly reading one or more professional publications or Web sites. Even the larger professional organizations attract only a small minority of U.S. journalists. The Society of Professional Journalists, for example, had fewer than 10,000 members in 2006, and its numbers have declined in recent years.<sup>19</sup> Those 10,000 members represent less than 10 percent of the journalistic workforce in the United States. By comparison,

roughly a third of U.S. doctors and lawyers belong to their flagship national professional organizations.<sup>20</sup>

In the first American Journalist study, in 1971, about 45 percent of the respondents belonged to one or more organizations primarily for people in journalism or communication. That declined to a low of 36 percent in 1992 before recovering slightly in the 2002 study.<sup>21</sup> In that 2002 study, about 41 percent of journalists reported belonging to at least one professional organization. The 402-member panel had slightly higher organization membership than the broader 2002 sample. About 47 percent of the journalists in the panel belonged to one or more professional organizations in 2002 (Table 1). By 2007, as the number of journalists in the United States declined, that figure had dropped about 8 percentage points.<sup>22</sup>

About 32 percent of the panel respondents reported reading at least one professional publication regularly in 2002. That figure, moving in the opposite direction of membership in professional organizations, climbed about 6 percentage points by 2007. And, just as the journalists' readers, listeners and viewers were relying more on the Web for their news and information, the journalists themselves were increasingly turning to the Web for occupational news and information. Regular readership of one or more Web sites for journalists rose to 35 percent among panel respondents, an increase of 13 points over five years. About as many now regularly use the Web to get occupational information as use professional publications, with the sites associated with the U.S.-based Poynter Institute the most widely used (Table 2). In fact, the panel

respondents report regularly reading the Poynter sites slightly more than the country's two largest journalism reviews combined.

The growth in readership of professional publications and Web sites and the decline in organization membership are not uniform across all journalists in the panel, of course. And for some, these changes in membership and reading habits appear to signal disengagement with their professional culture.

*Membership in professional organizations:* Between 2002 and 2007, about 15 percent of the panel members – 59 journalists – went from belonging to at least one organization to belonging to none. The aggregate figures (Table 3) show steeper declines in membership for women, for minority journalists, for younger journalists and for journalists working at larger news organizations. The change in “belonging,” however, is probably better explained by journalists’ perceptions about the quality of their work life than by demographic or workplace characteristics. For many of these 59 journalists who dropped their memberships, the decision may be a prelude to leaving journalism altogether.

Table 4 compares these journalists who gave up membership in professional organizations between 2002 and 2007 with the other respondents in the panel – those who never belonged, who always belonged or who joined professional organizations during that five-year period. Though the numbers are small, the pattern is consistent: Those who dropped memberships were more likely than the other journalists to perceive problems at work. They reported lower levels of job satisfaction; they were less inclined to agree that staff morale was high; and they were less likely to think journalistic quality at their news

organization had been rising. They also were more likely to express doubts about remaining as journalists. About 34 percent of the “organization quitters” anticipate working outside the media within five years compared with only 19 percent of the journalists in the rest of the panel.

*Regular readership of journalism publications or Web sites:* In general, the percentage of respondents regularly reading professional publications and Web sites increased among the panel journalists from 2002 to 2007. This continues a trend that was becoming evident in the larger 2002 sample.<sup>23</sup> Roughly a third of the panel journalists report regularly reading at least one professional publication or a Web site for journalists (Table 1). For about seven in 10 panel members, their professional reading habits didn’t change from 2002 to 2007.<sup>24</sup> They reported reading regularly about the same number of publications or Web sites across the five years. Among the others, Web readership grew more quickly than readership of publications.

Again, the patterns were not uniform across the subgroups of respondents. Regular readership of at least one publication increased most among more experienced journalists and among those in medium-sized newsrooms. The readership figure for those working at weekly papers was the highest among panel members – and changed the least across time (Table 5). The percentages regularly reading at least one professional Web site rose the most among the more experienced (and older) journalists and among journalists at larger organizations (Table 6). The increase for minority journalists was slightly higher than for non-Hispanic whites.

As with membership in professional organizations, some of the changes in reading habits may be linked to growing uncertainty about work life. Consider the results for the roughly 22 percent of panel members who reported that their reading of Web sites for journalists had increased between 2002 and 2007 (Table 7). They were more likely than the others in the panel to work at organizations where the staff size is declining and where buyouts or layoffs have occurred; to say newsroom resources are shrinking; and to think that their organization values profits over good journalism. They tended to be less satisfied with their jobs, and they seemed to be slightly more likely to want additional training and to be hoping to work outside the media within five years. The change in reading of Web sites and, to a lesser extent, professional publications may be a reaction to the turmoil in the workplace. The reading may amount to professional surveillance or to preparation to move on.

#### *Professional autonomy and influence*

Journalists' professional autonomy has been under assault from many quarters in recent years. The growing commercialization of the news, the high profit expectations of news organizations, the shrinking wall between journalistic and business operations and the introduction of new media technologies all have been credited – or blamed – for reducing journalists' professional discretion.<sup>25</sup> Today, the eroding financial health of many news organizations might be added to that list. In the United States, virtually all types of media organizations have reduced their newsroom staffs because of the lethal combination of shrinking audiences and declining advertising revenues.<sup>26</sup> Prestige news organizations

such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, CBS, NBC, *Time* and *Newsweek* all have cut the number of journalists they employ. The cutbacks are too numerous to mention at smaller or lesser-known news organizations.

One struggling news organization has put its journalists on notice that their professional autonomy may become more circumscribed in the years to come. Sam Zell, the chief executive of The Tribune Co., one of the largest media companies in the United States, recently told his employees that the company would “retool itself to a customer-centric model.”<sup>27</sup> By that he meant, among other things, that journalists at Tribune properties would be expected to focus tightly on providing readers and viewers with the kinds of information that they wanted. The implication seems to be that Tribune journalists could see their professional discretion limited as a strategy to try to build audience. They would become more like short-order cooks, as media scholar John Merrill colorfully described market-driven journalism, “preparing only what the customer orders.”<sup>28</sup>

The American Journalist studies have documented the steady erosion of professional autonomy in newsrooms, focusing primarily on the autonomy of journalists who say that they report occasionally or regularly. All the surveys have included items intended to assess reporters’ control and influence over their work. The key items ask reporters to indicate how often they’re successful in getting subjects covered that they think are important; how much freedom they have to select the stories that they work on; and how much freedom they have to decide what to emphasize in the stories that they produce (Table 8). Across time, these indicators have declined substantially in the larger national surveys.

For example, the percentage of reporters saying that they had almost complete freedom to select the stories that they worked on dropped from 60 percent in 1982-83 to 40 percent in 2002.<sup>29</sup> The rate of decline was slightly smaller for the “get subjects covered” measure and somewhat larger for the “freedom to choose what to emphasize” item. But all the measures declined.

On these autonomy and influence measures, reporters in the panel were within a couple of points of the broader sample in 2002.<sup>30</sup> At the aggregate level, the three autonomy measures were relatively stable between 2002 and 2007, with the “get subjects covered” measure declining about 5 points and the other two increasing by a couple of points. The subgroup analyses tend to reflect this stability (Tables 9 through 11). The biggest changes in these aggregate figures occur among the small number of minority reporters in the panel.<sup>31</sup> Larger changes also were evident at different types of media organizations, though no clear pattern emerged.<sup>32</sup>

This is not to say, however, that all remained static between 2002 and 2007. About half of the reporters in the panel said that their news organizations had reduced staff during that five-year period. About a third said their organizations had implemented buyouts or layoffs. About two-thirds reported that their workloads had increased. All three factors are associated with differences in the professional autonomy indicators (Table 12). Generally, reporters who said that their workloads had grown were less inclined to think that they could almost always get important stories covered by their news organization. The same was true for reporters at organizations where layoffs or

buyouts had occurred. A similar, though slightly less distinct, pattern emerged on the two “freedom” indicators. Generally speaking, autonomy was somewhat lower at the organizations under stress. In short, when working conditions worsened, so did professional autonomy.

These aggregate measures on autonomy reported in Table 8 mask the amount of change occurring among individual reporters. On each of the three autonomy indicators, about 40 percent of the panel respondents reported a change between 2002 and 2007.<sup>33</sup> And on each of the indicators, that 40 percent was about evenly divided between those who showed an increase and those who showed a decline. Separate analyses were conducted of these two groups of roughly 60 reporters each on the most important autonomy item – ability to get a subject covered. In many respects, these groups of reporters are similar. Those who reported a change on this indicator – either an increase or decrease – have comparable amounts of journalistic experience, work in organizations of about the same size and type, and show no significant differences in terms of gender or race/ethnicity. The “less autonomy” and “more autonomy” groups do diverge on three important perceptions, however. In 2002 and again in 2007, the reporters were asked how much they agree with the following statements:

- Profits are a higher priority than good journalism at their organization.
- Newsroom resources at their organization have been shrinking.
- The quality of journalism at their organization is steadily rising.

Change measures were created by subtracting a respondent's 2002 answer from his or her 2007 answer. A positive value suggested that the degree of support for the statement had strengthened during the five-year period, and a negative value suggested that the degree of support for the statement had weakened during that period. The findings, reported in Table 13, suggest the following:

- *Profits a higher priority than good journalism:* Reporters whose autonomy had declined had a significantly higher change value than did those whose autonomy had increased. This suggests that a growing profit orientation – at least as perceived by the reporters – was associated with declining autonomy.
- *Newsroom resources shrinking:* Reporters whose autonomy had declined had a significantly higher change value than did those whose autonomy had increased. This implies that declining autonomy was associated with a stronger belief that the reporter was working at an organization that was losing newsroom resources.
- *Quality of journalism steadily rising:* Reporters whose autonomy had declined had a significantly lower change value than did those whose autonomy had increased. This suggests that declining autonomy was linked to a reporter's perception that journalistic quality at his or her organization was not getting better.

In general, then, the correlates of declining autonomy appear to be perceptions that the organization is under stress, journalistically speaking – that profitability matters more than journalism, that resources are shrinking and that

journalistic quality, if not declining, is certainly not increasing. Taken together, the panel findings on professional autonomy offer news that's almost equal parts encouraging and discouraging. The positive news is that the autonomy indicators do not show wholesale declines. At the aggregate level, the indicators remain fairly steady. At the individual level, 80 percent of reporters reported no decline in their ability to get important topics covered, in their freedom to choose the stories that they want to work on and in their freedom to decide what to emphasize in those stories. The bad news is that where declines in autonomy are evident, they tend to be linked to the declining prospects of news organizations. The panel findings, both at the aggregate and individual levels, offer little hope that the professional discretion of journalists will rebound, particularly given the economic challenges facing many U.S. news organizations.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Journalistic role conceptions, functions*

The American Journalist studies first looked at the roles that journalists play in society during the tumultuous early 1970s. The United States was bogged down in an unpopular war in Vietnam. A divisive president, Richard Nixon, was soon to be elected to a second term – a term that he would not finish because of the Watergate scandal. Something called the “new journalism,” which gave license to reporters to integrate more of their own perspective into stories, was gaining favor in some quarters. Within a few years, media entrepreneur Ted Turner would take advantage of emerging communication technologies to launch CNN, the first all-news-all-the-time television network.<sup>35</sup>

The broader environment in which news is made has always had the potential to shape journalists' conceptions about their professional roles, and that became evident in the first American Journalist study. Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman identified two distinct clusters of beliefs about these roles.<sup>36</sup> One cluster marked the journalist as a neutral, detached observer whose main task was to pass along factual information to readers, viewers and listeners. He or she kept a professional distance in reporting about an unpopular war or divisive president. A second cluster was linked to a more activist conception of the journalist. Under this model, the journalist was a professional who interpreted, explained and, perhaps, even advocated solutions to social or political problems. This tidy neutral-participant classification, so appealing at a conceptual level, never mirrored the complexity of journalists' actual role conceptions. Even in the Johnstone et al. study, only a minority of journalists adhered strictly to the tenets of one role or the other.<sup>37</sup> Mix and match was the rule.

Later studies by Weaver and Wilhoit and Weaver et al. pointed toward even more complexity.<sup>38</sup> In their 1982-83 survey, they asked journalists to assess the importance of 10 different social roles. These 10 roles formed three distinct clusters of role conceptions. One focused on journalists as *disseminators* of information, a second as *interpreters* of events and a third as *adversaries* of business and government. In the 1992 and 2002 surveys, additional questions about roles were added to the survey, and a fourth role cluster was identified – the journalist as a *mobilizer* of audience members. Most journalists embrace, to greater or lesser degrees, some aspects of each of these clusters of roles, or

journalistic functions.<sup>39</sup> Journalists' support for these functions has fluctuated some across time, likely in response to changes in the social, political, economic and technological environments in which they live and work. For example, one element of the disseminator function is captured by this item: "[How important is it to] concentrate on news of interest to the widest possible audience?" In 1971, 39 percent of the respondents in the original American Journalist study said that it was "extremely important" to do so. By 2002, that figure had dropped to 15 percent. On the other hand, support for some roles has remained almost constant. In 2002, about 20 percent of respondents embraced as "extremely important" the role of journalists as adversaries of public officials – the same percentage as in 1982-83.

This present panel study offers the chance to assess whether support for Weaver and Wilhoit's four journalistic functions – adversarial, interpretive, disseminator and populist mobilizer – shifted during five years of unusual political, economic and technological change. In 2002, journalists were covering a relatively popular President Bush who was starting to build a case for the invasion of Iraq. His strategy was to assert that he had evidence that Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, was an international threat because he had stockpiled "weapons of mass destruction." Five years later, there's no evidence that the WMDs ever existed. The nation finds itself mired in a war that many view as a mistake, and the news media's performance in the months leading up to the war has come under harsh critique. *When the Press Fails* is the title of a recent book

that captures the sentiment of critics who suggest that journalists were not as skeptical as they should have been of the administration's case for war.<sup>40</sup>

That's far from the only change in the journalists' environment.

Communication technologies like the Web are reshaping the way journalists do their work. Media scholar Jay Rosen says the Web's interactive capabilities have given unprecedented power to the "people formerly known as the audience" to help shape news content or even circumvent the news media on some issues.<sup>41</sup> Journalists are struggling to adjust to this new relationship with their audience. News organizations, which are using many new communication technologies to distribute their messages to audiences, are asking print journalists to shoot video and broadcast journalists to write "blogs."<sup>42</sup> Coincident with these technological challenges – or perhaps because of them – news organizations are facing one of the most hostile business environments in decades.<sup>43</sup> All these changes have the potential to influence journalists' views about their role conceptions.

Results from the present panel study show that in some cases, support for these role conceptions is changing. Table 14 reports the aggregate-level change among the 402 journalists who were interviewed in 2002 and again in 2007. Of the 15 items used to assess journalists' attitudes about their role conceptions, three showed a significant increase in the percentage saying that the role was "extremely important" – analyzing and interpreting complex problems, being an adversary of public officials, and concentrating news of interest to the widest audience. Others changed to a smaller degree. That is fairly typical for these measures, which have tended to shift slowly over time.

More evidence of change is found in individual-level comparisons, though, but it isn't consistently in one direction. Table 15 shows the results of paired-sample tests of mean differences for five items in which the degree of change from 2002 to 2007 was significant. Support for three items became stronger. These items assessed support for analyzing and interpreting complex problems, for being adversaries of public officials and for developing the intellectual and cultural interests of the public. These changes would be the kind that might be expected if journalists believed that they had not been aggressive enough in covering the Bush administration's Iraq war plans. However, two others declined significantly, and they seem to complicate that interpretation. Support decreased for items on providing analysis and interpretation of international events and for discussing national policy as it is being developed.

One explanation for these seemingly contradictory findings may relate to organization size. Organization size is positively correlated – modestly but significantly – with increased support for providing analysis of international events and discussing national policy but not the others. The focus of these items on national and international issues may make them seem less important roles for journalists at the vast majority of news organizations in the United States, which see their main mission as providing local news and information to local audiences. The three items for which support grew do not restrict their focus geographically. They may reflect a more generalized view by journalists that interpretive and adversarial roles are increasingly important today.

In an effort to better understand what's driving the changes that did occur in journalists' clusters of attitudes about their roles, scales were created to reflect increases or decreases in degree of support for the journalistic functions that Weaver and Wilhoit have identified.<sup>44</sup> The change scales correspond to those listed in Table 14 – interpretive, adversarial, disseminator and populist mobilizer. Because the items typically associated with the interpretive function were moving in opposite directions, two change scales were created for that function. The first was composed of the two more general items (analyze complex problems, investigate government claims) and the second of the two geographically specific items (international developments, national policies). In all, five change scales were regressed on 18 predictor variables, and the results are shown in Table 16.

Generally speaking, the regression models explained little of the change. Only one model accounted for a significant amount of variance in the dependent measure – the change scale focusing on international developments and national policy, which is labeled “geographic” in Table 16. Two of the standardized regression coefficients in that model stood out as potential predictors of changes in the level of support for that function. Journalists who tended to think that resources at their organization were shrinking were becoming more supportive of this interpretive function. The same was true as years of work experience increased.

Additional regression analyses were done to compare the variables driving support of the journalistic functions in 2002 and 2007. The most important predictors of these functions remained about the same across time. The

adversarial function continued to have the greatest support at large organizations and at daily newspapers; journalists at the dailies remained more likely to endorse the general interpretive function and those at weeklies were less likely to do so; a respondent's political views – specifically, his or her political conservatism – was associated with less backing for all but the disseminator function; and time spent reporting was positively associated with the adversarial and populist mobilizer functions in both years.

One final group of analyses is worth mentioning. The growth of the blog has presented challenges for some news organizations.<sup>45</sup> Should the same standards for sourcing and fact verification apply for blogs on a news organization's Web site as for that organization's print or broadcast reports? Should journalists be allowed to put more opinion in their blogs? If so, does that undermine claims that they can "objectively" handle stories in the news reports? These issues also seemed to raise questions about role conceptions. Indeed, some media scholars are now exploring whether journalists in the online world embrace the same roles as journalists in the "offline" world.<sup>46</sup>

The present panel study asked about journalists' blogging activities, and about 16 percent of the respondents said that they now wrote blogs for their news organizations. In most cases, those who wrote blogs and those who did not shared similar views on the 15 role-conception items. On four, however, they differed. Table 17 shows those four items and the mean values on those items for the two groups. Those who blogged were somewhat more likely to believe that journalists should provide analysis and interpretation of international

developments; investigate government claims; point people toward solutions to society's problems; and help set the political agenda. It's unclear, of course, whether immersion in the online task of blogging affected these journalists' role conceptions or whether journalists who had these attitudes simply were more inclined to blog. The present panel data do show evidence, however, that in some cases, blogging and role conceptions are linked.

### *Ethical perceptions*

Ethical standards are a cornerstone of professional practice. Some sociological definitions of professions distinguish them from other occupations partly on the basis of them having ethical standards that practitioners are encouraged to follow.<sup>47</sup> In the United States, large professional organizations such as the Society of Professional Journalists or the Radio and Television News Directors Association have promulgated formal ethics codes for their members.<sup>48</sup> Many individual news organizations, both large and small, have their own formal ethical standards. And the desirability of having a strong "moral compass" – a personal sense of ethics and responsibility – figures prominently in Kovach's and Rosenstiel's definition of the central elements of journalism.<sup>49</sup>

Since the 2002 American Journalist study, ethical lapses have led to embarrassing episodes at several high-profile U.S. news organizations.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the most prominent incident involved Jayson Blair, a young reporter at *The New York Times*. Blair fabricated or plagiarized information in at least 36 articles, leading to what the *Times* itself called a "profound betrayal of trust and a low point in the 152-year history of the paper."<sup>51</sup> Ethical lapses such as these are

sometimes linked to another phenomenon – the declining public trust in the U.S. news media.<sup>52</sup>

Previous American Journalist studies have documented shifts in journalists' attitudes toward 10 reporting practices that raise ethical issues. Table 18 shows the 10 items and the percentages of journalists who consider those reporting practices “justified on occasion” as opposed to “not appropriate under any circumstances.” The table includes percentages for the broader 2002 probability sample of 1,149 U.S. journalists as well as for the panel of 402 journalists in 2002 and 2007. The percentages for the broader sample and the panel match quite closely.

Generally speaking, journalists have become slightly more cautious about these reporting practices since 1992, which was the first year in which these items were included in the survey.<sup>53</sup> For the present panel, the trend between 2002 and 2007 also was toward a more cautious stance on these reporting practices. All 10 items showed declines; half declined significantly. To get a better sense of journalists' overall sentiments about these reporting practices, the panel members' responses on the 10 items were combined into “ethical aggressiveness” scales for 2002 and 2007. The scale's value for a journalist could range from zero, indicating that none of the ethical practices was justified, to 10, indicating that all were justified. The mean value on the ethical-aggressiveness scale was 3.26 in 2007, significantly lower than the 3.84 average in 2002.<sup>54</sup>

At the aggregate level, the growing cautiousness on these practices doesn't appear to be related to journalists' gender, work experience, race/ethnicity or to the type and size of organizations for which they work (Table 19). Almost all the subgroups showed significant declines in ethical aggressiveness between 2002 and 2007. At the individual level, only about 24 percent of the panel journalists endorsed more of these reporting practices as "justified on occasion" in 2007 than in 2002. That compares to about 47 percent who endorsed fewer practices. The remaining 29 percent were unchanged in the total number of the reporting practices that they said were sometimes justified.

Though attitudes toward these factors changed between 2002 and 2007 in the 402-person panel, the predictors of these changes remain elusive. Table 20 shows the results of analyses in which the ethical-aggressiveness scale was regressed on 19 potential organizational or individual predictors. The dependent variable for the 2002 column was the ethical-aggressiveness scale created from present panel's answers to the 10 ethics items that year. The dependent variable for the 2007 column was the ethical-aggressiveness scale created from panel's answers to the same 10 ethics items in the most recent survey. And the dependent variable for the "change" column was created by subtracting a respondents' scale value in 2002 from his or her scale value in 2007.

The models for 2002 and 2007 both explained a significant amount of variance in their dependent variables. Several key predictors of editorial aggressiveness were about the same in both years. Television journalists remained the most ethically aggressive. Journalists who tended to support the

interpretive role functions were more aggressive in both years, and those who supported the disseminator function were more cautious.

But two predictors that were significant in 2002 for this panel of journalists were not significant in 2007. Working at a radio station was not an important predictor of ethical aggressiveness nor was strong support for the adversarial function. Two other predictors gained importance between 2002 and 2007. Journalists who especially valued job security were less aggressive, as were those reporting more freedom to select the stories that they work on.

The factors that predict support for these reporting practices, however, don't do well predicting *change* in the panel journalists' endorsement of these practices. The model that regressed the "change" variable – the 2007 scale value minus the 2002 value – on these same predictors accounted for only about 8 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. That's far less than in the other two models. In this situation, it's hazardous to interpret any of the regression coefficients that predict change across time. Three showed a modest relationship with the change measure. Journalists at larger organizations and at weekly newspapers become more cautious between 2002 and 2007; journalists who support the interpretive function became somewhat less cautious. The kinds of organizational changes – loss of staff, layoffs or buyouts, growing workloads – that were associated with changes in some of the other measures of professional culture had little predictive power for ethical aggressiveness.

*Conclusions*

This fall 2007 panel study of 402 U.S. journalists who were part of the national sample of 1,149 interviewed in the summer and fall of 2002 suggests several important conclusions about the professionalism of U.S. journalists during the turbulent first years of the 21st Century.

Significant changes include an increase in readership of professional publications and especially Web sites for journalists but a decrease in professional organization membership, especially among women, minorities, younger journalists and for those working at larger news organizations. These changes were also related to perceptions of the work environment. Those who had dropped their organizational memberships or increased their reading of journalism Web sites tended to be less satisfied with their jobs and news organizations. Journalists whose Web reading had increased were more likely to be at organizations that had seen the size of their newsroom decline or had experienced buyouts or layoffs.

Another important and worrisome change is the decrease in the perceived ability to get important subjects covered in the news. This decrease was most pronounced among those working for daily newspapers. Among television journalists, there was also a decrease in the proportion who said they had almost complete freedom to select stories to work on and to decide which aspects of stories to emphasize, although these decreases were not statistically significant. There were some increases in these measures of perceived freedom, however, particularly among minority and radio journalists. But there was significantly less perceived autonomy for those whose workloads had increased and whose news

organizations had implemented layoffs or buyouts—those that we considered under stress. As we reported earlier, when working conditions worsened, so did professional autonomy.

Assuming that professional autonomy is fundamental for independent journalism, this finding is of great concern to us and should be as well to anyone concerned about the role of journalism in a democratic system of government. As we noted earlier, given that the conditions facing many U.S. news organizations are predicted to worsen in the near future, it seems likely that the professional autonomy of reporters will continue to erode, which cannot be good news for those who believe in the watchdog function of American journalism.

Turning to our measures of journalistic roles, we found increases in support for the importance of nearly all of them, especially analyzing complex problems, being an adversary of public officials, and concentrating on news of interest to the widest audience. On the face of it, these increases seemed encouraging. But given the economic realities of many news organizations, we have to wonder how many journalists can actually carry out these roles. We also found a decline in support for analyzing international developments, which seems more in line with the actual practice of U.S. journalism these days. As we noted earlier, the vast majority of news organizations in the United States, especially smaller ones, see their main function as providing local news and information to local audiences.

One positive finding regarding roles was that those journalists who wrote blogs were more likely to rate highly the importance of investigating government

claims, pointing out solutions to social problems, and helping to set the political agenda. But blogs still do not have the impact that traditional news media do on the public and on policymakers, at least in most cases, so this finding has to be interpreted in this light.

We found that the journalists in our panel study had become slightly more cautious about justifying the use of questionable reporting practices, especially paying for confidential information, using confidential business or government documents without permission, badgering unwilling informants to get a story, and getting a job to gain inside information. This was true for most journalists regardless of gender, years of experience, media type or newsroom size. We did find that journalists who supported the interpretive function were more willing to justify these methods and those who supported the disseminator function were less willing to do so, but we did not find that organizational stress (loss of staff, layoffs or buyouts or growing workloads) was a predictor of willingness to use questionable reporting methods.

These findings could be interpreted in at least two different ways. On the one hand, less willingness across the board to use these ethically problematic methods could be seen in a positive light—journalists are becoming more ethically sensitive and principled. On the other hand, less willingness to use aggressive methods of reporting could be seen as consistent with declines in the perceived importance of analyzing national policies and international developments—the traditional watchdog function of journalism—and with decreases in perceived autonomy to select subjects for news coverage.

Thus our findings regarding changes in the professionalism of U.S. journalists in the first decade of this new 21st Century can be interpreted as supporting both stability and change, as we noted in the introduction, and they can be interpreted both positively and negatively, depending on one's view of the most appropriate roles for journalists. To us, many of these changes do not seem very positive, and they raise important questions about the future quality of journalism in the United States and the ability of journalism as an occupation to attract some of the best and the brightest.

Table 1

Percentage involved with professional publications, Web sites and organizations, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
Regularly reads 1 or more professional publications <sup>c</sup>	31.6%	37.8%	+ 6.2
Regularly reads 1 or more Web sites for journalists <sup>d</sup>	22.1	35.1	+13.0*
Belongs to organization, association for journalists <sup>e</sup>	47.3	39.0	- 8.3*

<sup>a</sup> N=402 (varies slightly by variable)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> "Which professional publications, if any, do you read regularly – that is, almost every issue?"

<sup>d</sup> "Which Web sites for journalists, if any, do you read regularly – that is, almost every day?"

<sup>e</sup> "Do you belong to any organizations or associations that are primarily for people in journalism or communications?"

Table 2

Percentage reading most popular professional publications and Web sites, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
<i>Professional journalism publications</i>			
American Journalism Review	10.7%	12.2%	+1.5
Editor & Publisher	11.2	11.7	+0.5
Columbia Journalism Review	7.7	10.7	+3.0
<i>Web sites for journalists</i>			
Poynter.com	7.5	18.7	+11.2*
Romanesko (on Poynter.com)	4.0	7.5	+ 3.5*
Editorandpublisher.com	2.2	2.7	+ 0.5

<sup>a</sup> N=402 (varies slightly by variable)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$  for difference of proportions test

Table 3

Percentage belonging to professional organizations by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and organization size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
Gender			
Men (N=306)	45.9%	38.6%	- 7.3**
Women (N=93)	52.1	39.8	-12.3**
Years worked in journalism <sup>c</sup>			
15 or fewer (N=146 in '02, 87 in '07)	42.5	25.3	-17.2*
16 through 29 (N=209 in '02, 191 in '07)	50.2	47.4	- 2.8
30 or more (N=47 in '02, 124 in '07)	48.9	35.8	-13.1
Race/ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic white (N=370)	45.4	37.6	- 7.8*
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=27)	70.4	55.6	-14.8
Media type <sup>d</sup>			
Daily newspapers (N=220 in '02, N=208 in '07)	45.9	37.0	-8.9**
Weekly newspapers (N=59 in '02, N=50 in '07)	50.8	46.0	-4.8
Television (N=39 in '02, N=34 in '07)	48.7	41.2	-7.5
Radio (N=47 in '02, N=47 in '07)	48.9	40.4	-8.5
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=37 in '02, N=42 in '07)	45.9	40.5	-5.4
Newsroom size <sup>f</sup>			
25 or fewer (N=152 in '02, N=139 in '07)	44.1	36.7	- 7.4
26 through 100 (N=111 in '02, N=112 in '07)	47.7	42.0	- 5.7
101 or higher (N=113 in '02, N=121 in '07)	54.0	39.7	-14.3*

<sup>a</sup> "Do you belong to any organizations or associations that are primarily for people in journalism or the communications field?" (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 4

Comparison of percentage who dropped membership in professional organizations vs. others by workplace perceptions, organizational characteristics and career intentions, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	<i>Dropped membership<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Joined/retained/never member<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Difference<sup>d</sup></i>
<b>Perceptions of job, workplace</b>			
Satisfied or very satisfied with job in '07 <sup>e</sup>	72.8%	84.1%	+11.3*
Agreed morale at news organization is high <sup>f</sup>	27.6	40.7	+13.1**
Agreed journalistic quality rising <sup>g</sup>	40.6	53.7	+13.1**
Agreed profits were higher priority than jour <sup>h</sup>	55.2	43.9	-11.3
Agreed newsroom resources were shrinking <sup>i</sup>	72.4	67.2	-5.2
Workload has increased within last year <sup>j</sup>	67.8	63.5	-4.3
<b>Organizational characteristics</b>			
Size of newsroom declined in last 12 months	53.4	50.9	-2.5
Organization has had buyouts or layoffs	39.7	32.7	-7.0
<b>Career intentions</b>			
Wants to be working outside media in 5 years	33.9	19.1	-14.8*

<sup>a</sup> "Do you belong to any organizations or associations that are primarily for people in journalism or the communications field?"

<sup>b</sup> N= 59 (N varies slightly by variable). This group includes journalists who reported belonging to one or more professional organizations in 2002 but not in 2007.

<sup>c</sup> N = 341 (N varies slightly by variable). This group includes journalists who joined a professional organization between 2002 and 2007, who belonged to an organization in both years or who did not belong to an organization in both years.

<sup>d</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>e</sup> "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job?" Four-point response scale from "very dissatisfied" (1) to "very satisfied" (7).

<sup>f</sup> "The morale of journalists at my news organization is high." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>g</sup> "The quality of journalism at my news organizations has been steadily rising over the past few years." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>h</sup> "At my news organization, profits are a higher priority than good journalism." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>i</sup> "At my news organization, newsroom resources have been shrinking over the past few years." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>j</sup> "All in all, has your workload within the last year increased, decreased or stayed about the same?"

Table 5  
 Percentage regularly reading one or more professional publications by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and organization size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
Gender			
Men (N=307)	32.9%	40.1%	+7.2**
Women (N=94)	27.7	29.8	+2.1
Years worked in journalism <sup>c</sup>			
15 or fewer (N=146 in '02, 87 in '07)	26.0	29.9	+3.9
16 through 29 (N=209 in '02, 191 in '07)	35.4	37.7	+2.3
30 or more (N=47 in '02, 124 in '07)	31.9	43.5	+11.6
Race/ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic white (N=372)	30.9	37.1	+6.2**
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=27)	37.0	40.7	+3.7
Media type <sup>d</sup>			
Daily newspapers (N=220 in '02, N=208 in '07)	30.9	37.0	+6.1
Weekly newspapers (N=59 in '02, N=51 in '07)	49.2	49.0	- 0.2
Television (N=39 in '02, N=35 in '07)	12.8	17.1	+4.3
Radio (N=47 in '02, N=47 in '07)	34.0	42.6	+8.6
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=37 in '02, N=42 in '07)	24.3	33.3	+9.0
Newsroom size <sup>f</sup>			
25 or fewer (N=152 in '02, N=139 in '07)	36.8	41.7	+4.9
26 through 100 (N=111 in '02, N=112 in '07)	22.5	37.5	+15.0*
101 or higher (N=113 in '02, N=121 in '07)	33.6	34.7	+1.1

<sup>a</sup> "Which professional publications, if any, do you read regularly – that is, almost every issue?" (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 6  
 Percentage regularly reading one or more Web sites for journalists by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and organization size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
Gender			
Men (N=307)	22.1%	35.8%	+13.7*
Women (N=94)	22.3	33.0	+10.7**
Years worked in journalism <sup>c</sup>			
15 or fewer (N=146 in '02, 87 in '07)	27.4	36.8	+9.4
16 through 29 (N=209 in '02, 191 in '07)	21.1	40.3	+19.2*
30 or more (N=47 in '02, 124 in '07)	10.6	25.8	+15.2*
Race/ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic white (N=372)	21.2	33.9	+12.7*
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=27)	29.6	48.1	+18.5
Media type <sup>d</sup>			
Daily newspapers (N=220 in '02, N=208 in '07)	25.9%	40.4%	+14.5*
Weekly newspapers (N=59 in '02, N=51 in '07)	11.9	17.6	+ 5.7
Television (N=39 in '02, N=35 in '07)	20.5	37.1	+16.6
Radio (N=47 in '02, N=47 in '07)	8.5	21.3	+12.8
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=37 in '02, N=42 in '07)	35.1	50.0	+14.9
Newsroom size <sup>f</sup>			
25 or fewer (N=152 in '02, N=139 in '07)	11.8	18.0	+ 6.1
26 through 100 (N=111 in '02, N=112 in '07)	27.9	41.1	+13.2*
101 or higher (N=113 in '02, N=121 in '07)	31.9	50.4	+18.5*

<sup>a</sup> "Which Web sites for journalists, if any, do you read regularly – that is, almost every day?" (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 7

Comparison of percentage whose Web reading increased vs. others by workplace perceptions, organizational characteristics, career intentions and desire for training, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	<i>Web reading increased<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Web reading same, lower<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Difference<sup>d</sup></i>
<b>Perceptions of job, workplace</b>			
Satisfied or very satisfied with job in '07 <sup>e</sup>	75.6%	84.5%	+8.9*
Agreed morale at news organization is high <sup>f</sup>	34.9	39.9	+5.0
Agreed organization's journalistic quality rising <sup>g</sup>	41.8	54.5	+12.7**
Agreed profits were higher priority than journ <sup>h</sup>	53.5	43.3	-10.2**
Agreed newsroom resources were shrinking <sup>i</sup>	81.4	64.3	-17.1*
Workload has increased within last year <sup>j</sup>	72.9	62.0	-10.9**
<b>Organizational characteristics</b>			
Size of newsroom declined in last 12 months	66.3	47.1	-19.2*
Organization has had buyouts or layoffs	41.2	31.7	-9.5**
<b>Career intentions</b>			
Wants to be working outside media in 5 years	26.7	19.7	-7.0
Wants more training <sup>k</sup>	88.4	80.1	-8.3**

<sup>a</sup> "Which Web sites for journalists do you read regularly – that is, almost every day?"

<sup>b</sup> N= 86 (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>c</sup> N = 316 (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>d</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>e</sup> "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job?" Four-point response scale from "very dissatisfied" (1) to "very satisfied" (7).

<sup>f</sup> "The morale of journalists at my news organization is high." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>g</sup> "The quality of journalism at my news organizations has been steadily rising over the past few years." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>h</sup> "At my news organization, profits are a higher priority than good journalism." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>i</sup> "At my news organization, newsroom resources have been shrinking over the past few years." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>j</sup> "All in all, has your workload within the last year increased, decreased or stayed about the same?"

<sup>k</sup> "Would you like additional training in journalism or other subjects?"

Table 8  
 Percentages for professional autonomy indicators for reporters, 2002 and 2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng
Almost always able to get subject covered <sup>b</sup>	55.4%	50.6%	-4.8
Almost complete freedom to select stories <sup>c</sup>	39.9	41.9	+2.0
Almost complete freedom to choose emphasis <sup>d</sup>	42.8	45.5	+2.7

<sup>a</sup> Respondents who say they report regularly or occasionally (N=314. N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> "If you have a good idea for a subject which you think is important and should be followed up, how often are you able to get the subject covered?"

<sup>c</sup> "How much freedom do you usually have in selecting the stories you work on?"

<sup>d</sup> "How much freedom do you usually have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized?"

Table 9

Percentage who are almost always able to get subject covered by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and newsroom size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men (N=239)	56.9%	50.4%	-6.5
Women (N=76)	51.3	52.0	+0.7
<b>Years worked in journalism<sup>c</sup></b>			
15 or fewer (N=123 in '02, 73 in '07)	56.1	46.6	-9.5
16 through 29 (N=157 in '02, 149 in '07)	53.5	50.3	-3.2
30 or more (N=36 in '02, 94 in '07)	61.1	54.3	-6.8
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Non-Hispanic white (N=292)	57.5	50.7	-6.8**
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=21)	23.8	47.6	+23.8
<b>Media type<sup>d</sup></b>			
Daily newspapers (N=152 in '02, N=154 in '07)	59.9	47.4	-12.5*
Weekly newspapers (N=54 in '02, N=46 in '07)	64.8	65.2	-0.4
Television (N=35 in '02, N=30 in '07)	45.7	40.0	-5.7
Radio (N=42 in '02, N=45 in '07)	45.2	57.8	+12.6
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=33 in '02, N=28 in '07)	42.4	46.4	+4.0
<b>Newsroom size<sup>f</sup></b>			
25 or fewer (N=135 in '02, N=122 in '07)	57.8	59.0	+1.2
26 through 100 (N=77 in '02, N=85 in '07)	54.5	42.4	-12.1
101 or higher (N=84 in '02, N=88 in '07)	56.0	50.0	-6.0

<sup>a</sup> "If you have a good idea for a subject which you think is important and should be followed up, how often are you able to get the subject covered?" Respondents who say they report regularly or occasionally. (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 10

Percentage with almost complete freedom to select stories to work on by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and newsroom size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men (N=240)	38.3%	40.6%	+2.3
Women (N=77)	45.5	46.7	+1.2
<b>Years worked in journalism<sup>c</sup></b>			
15 or fewer (N=123 in '02, 73 in '07)	40.7	45.2	+4.5
16 through 29 (N=157 in '02, 149 in '07)	38.0	39.2	+1.2
30 or more (N=36 in '02, 94 in '07)	45.9	43.6	-2.3
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Non-Hispanic white (N=294)	40.8	43.0	+2.2
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=21)	33.3	28.6	-4.7
<b>Media type<sup>d</sup></b>			
Daily newspapers (N=153 in '02, N=154 in '07)	39.2	38.3	-0.9
Weekly newspapers (N=54 in '02, N=46 in '07)	51.9	58.7	+6.8
Television (N=35 in '02, N=30 in '07)	34.3	23.3	-11.0
Radio (N=43 in '02, N=45 in '07)	55.8	60.0	+4.2
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=33 in '02, N=27 in '07)	9.1	29.6	+20.5*
<b>Newsroom size<sup>f</sup></b>			
25 or fewer (N=136 in '02, N=122 in '07)	57.4	59.0	+1.6
26 through 100 (N=78 in '02, N=85 in '07)	28.2	35.3	+7.1
101 or higher (N=84 in '02, N=87 in '07)	27.4	29.9	+2.5

<sup>a</sup> "How much freedom do you usually have in selecting the stories you work on?" Respondents who say they report regularly or occasionally. (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 11

Percentage with almost complete freedom to decide which aspects to emphasize by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and newsroom size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men (N=240)	41.7%	43.7%	+2.0
Women (N=77)	46.8	52.0	+5.2
<b>Years worked in journalism<sup>c</sup></b>			
15 or fewer (N=123 in '02, 73 in '07)	42.3	47.9	+5.6
16 through 29 (N=157 in '02, 149 in '07)	41.8	42.6	+0.8
30 or more (N=36 in '02, 94 in '07)	48.6	48.4	-0.2
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Non-Hispanic white (N=294)	44.9	46.4	+1.5
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=21)	19.0	33.3	+14.3
<b>Media type<sup>d</sup></b>			
Daily newspapers (N=153 in '02, N=153 in '07)	38.6	39.9	+1.3
Weekly newspapers (N=54 in '02, N=46 in '07)	57.4	52.2	-5.2
Television (N=35 in '02, N=30 in '07)	60.0	50.0	-10.0
Radio (N=43 in '02, N=45 in '07)	48.8	64.4	+15.6
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=33 in '02, N=27 in '07)	12.1	40.7	+28.6*
<b>Newsroom size<sup>f</sup></b>			
25 or fewer (N=136 in '02, N=122 in '07)	55.1	59.0	+3.9
26 through 100 (N=78 in '02, N=84 in '07)	37.2	35.7	-1.5
101 or higher (N=84 in '02, N=87 in '07)	32.1	37.9	+5.8

<sup>a</sup> "How much freedom do you usually have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized?" Respondents who say they report regularly or occasionally. (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p < .05$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 12  
Professional autonomy indicators by organizational and workload changes, 2007<sup>a</sup>

	Workload change <sup>b,f</sup>		Staff size change <sup>b,g</sup>		Buyouts or layoffs <sup>b,h</sup>	
	Workload is same, less	Workload increased	Staff size same, larger	Staff size has declined	No buyouts, layoffs	Had buyouts, layoffs
Able to get subject covered <sup>c</sup>						
Occasionally or more often than not	41.4%	53.4%	45.3%	54.3%	43.3%	63.1%
Almost always	58.6	46.6	54.7	45.7	56.7	36.9
	$X^2=4.135 (1df)^*$		$X^2=not\ significant$		$X^2=10.844 (1df)^*$	
Freedom to select stories to work on <sup>d</sup>						
No or some freedom	6.4%	18.6%	9.3%	20.0%	11.1%	20.6%
A great deal of freedom	51.8	39.7	40.4	46.7	44.7	41.2
Almost complete freedom	41.8	41.7	50.3	33.3	44.2	38.2
	$X^2=9.886 (2df)^*$		$X^2=12.147 (2df)^*$		$X^2=5.158 (2df)^{**}$	
Freedom to decide story emphasis <sup>e</sup>						
No or some freedom	7.3%	12.8%	9.3%	12.8%	8.7%	15.7%
A great deal of freedom	41.8	44.8	38.5	48.3	42.0	45.1
Almost complete freedom	50.9	42.4	52.2	38.9	49.3	39.2
	$X^2=not\ significant$		$X^2=5.521 (2df)^{**}$		$X^2=4.689 (2df)^{**}$	

<sup>a</sup> 2007 respondents who say they report regularly or occasionally (N=314. N varies slightly by variable.).

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$

<sup>c</sup> "If you have a good idea for a subject which you think is important and should be followed up, how often are you able to get the subject covered?"

<sup>d</sup> "How much freedom do you usually have in selecting the stories you work on?"

<sup>e</sup> "How much freedom do you usually have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized?"

<sup>f</sup> Respondent's workload decreased or stayed the same during previous 12 months (N=111) vs. increased (N=204)

<sup>g</sup> Size of staff at respondent's news organization grew or stayed same in previous 12 months (N=161) vs. shrunk (N=151).

<sup>h</sup> Organization has had layoffs or buyouts within previous 12 months (N=103) vs. those that have not (N=208).

Table 13  
Change in support for statements on perceived organizational goals and conditions by increasing/declining autonomy<sup>a</sup>

	<i>Less ability to get subject covered<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Greater ability to get subject covered<sup>d</sup></i>
Change in degree of support for statement: Profits higher priority than good journalism <sup>e</sup>	.677	-.068*
Change in degree of support for statement: Resources for news shrinking <sup>f</sup>	1.302	.373*
Change in degree of support for statement: Quality of organization's journalism steadily rising <sup>g</sup>	-.815	.103*

<sup>a</sup> "If you have a good idea for a subject which you think is important and should be followed up, how often are you able to get the subject covered?" Respondents who say they report regularly or occasionally.

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$  on difference of means test between less ability/greater ability

<sup>c</sup> Respondents who reported a decline in "ability to get subject covered" between 2002 and 2007. N = 65. N varies slightly by item.

<sup>d</sup> Respondents who reported an increase in "ability to get subject covered" between 2002 and 2007. N = 59. N varies slightly by item.

<sup>e</sup> Values are means for a variable assessing change in degree of support between 2002 and 2007 for this statement. Positive values indicate increased support for statement from 2002 to 2007, negative values decreased support for the statement: "At my news organization, profits are a higher priority than good journalism."

<sup>f</sup> Values are means for a variable assessing change in degree of support between 2002 and 2007 for this statement. Positive value indicates increased support for statement from 2002 to 2007: "At my news organization, newsroom resources have been shrinking over the past few years."

<sup>g</sup> Values are means for a variable assessing change in degree of support between 2002 and 2007 for this statement. Positive values indicate increased support for statement from 2002 to 2007, negative values decreased support for the statement: "The quality of journalism at my news organizations has been steadily rising over the past few years."

Table 14  
Percentage saying a journalistic role conception is extremely important<sup>a</sup>

<i>Indicators of journalistic functions</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>Chng<sup>b</sup></i>
Interpretive function			
Analyze, interpret complex problems <sup>c</sup>	48.8%	59.0%	+10.2*
Investigate government claims <sup>d</sup>	69.7	73.4	+3.7
Analyze, interpret international developments <sup>e</sup>	45.0	40.8	-4.2
Discuss development of national policies <sup>f</sup>	41.1	40.3	-0.8
Adversarial function			
Be an adversary of public officials <sup>g</sup>	17.0	25.7	+8.7*
Be an adversary of businesses <sup>h</sup>	14.5	18.6	+4.1
Disseminator function			
Get information to the public quickly <sup>i</sup>	59.1	59.5	+0.4
Provide entertainment, relaxation <sup>j</sup>	12.2	12.4	+0.2
Avoid stories where facts cannot be verified <sup>k</sup>	53.5	57.4	+3.9
Concentrate on news of interest to widest audience <sup>l</sup>	14.7	21.2	+6.5*
Populist mobilizer function			
Give ordinary people chance to express views <sup>m</sup>	38.8	43.1	+4.3
Develop intellectual, cultural interests <sup>n</sup>	16.7	19.5	+2.8
Motivate ordinary people to get involved <sup>o</sup>	30.8	31.2	+0.4
Point people toward solutions to social problems <sup>p</sup>	22.2	24.7	+2.5
Set political agenda <sup>q</sup>	3.2	5.6	+2.4

<sup>a</sup> N=402 (N varies slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> "Provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems." Four-point response scale for these items ranges from "not really important" (1) to "extremely important" (7).

<sup>d</sup> "Investigate claims and statements made by the government."

<sup>e</sup> "Provide analysis and interpretation of international developments."

<sup>f</sup> "Discuss national policy while it is still being developed."

<sup>g</sup> "Be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions."

<sup>h</sup> "Be an adversary of businesses by being constantly skeptical of their actions."

<sup>i</sup> "Get information to the public quickly."

<sup>j</sup> "Provide entertainment and relaxation."

<sup>k</sup> "Stay away from stories where factual content cannot be verified."

<sup>l</sup> "Concentrate on news that's of interest to the widest possible audience."

<sup>m</sup> "Give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs."

<sup>n</sup> "Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public."

<sup>o</sup> "Motivate ordinary people to get involved in public discussion of important issues."

<sup>p</sup> "Point people toward possible solutions to society's problems."

<sup>q</sup> "Set the political agenda."

Table 15  
Means for degree of support of selected role conceptions, 2002 and 2007<sup>a</sup>

<i>Indicators of journalistic functions</i>	2002 <sup>b</sup>	2007
Interpretive function items		
Analyze, interpret complex problems <sup>c</sup>	5.65	5.82*
Analyze, interpret international developments <sup>d</sup>	5.47	4.99*
Discuss development of national policies <sup>e</sup>	5.19	5.01*
Adversarial function item		
Be an adversary of public officials <sup>f</sup>	3.77	4.15*
Populist mobilizer function		
Develop intellectual, cultural interests <sup>g</sup>	3.86	4.07*

<sup>a</sup> N=402 (Values for N vary slightly by variable.)

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$  for paired-sample t-test of difference between means for 2002 and 2007.

<sup>c</sup> "Provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems." Four-point response scale for these items ranges from "not really important" (1) to "extremely important" (7).

<sup>d</sup> "Provide analysis and interpretation of international developments."

<sup>e</sup> "Discuss national policy while it is still being developed."

<sup>f</sup> "Be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions."

<sup>g</sup> "Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public."

Table 16  
Regression of change measures on organizational- and individual-level predictors for journalistic functions<sup>a, b</sup>

	Adver- sarial <sup>c</sup>	Interp (gen.) <sup>d</sup>	Interp (geo.) <sup>e</sup>	Dissem- inator <sup>f</sup>	Populist mobilizer <sup>g</sup>
Block I					
Organizational structure					
Newsroom size					
Daily newspaper <sup>h</sup>					
Weekly newspaper					
Television					
Radio					
Perceptions of organization					
Profits higher priority <sup>i</sup>					
Quality of journalism rising <sup>j</sup>					
News resources shrinking <sup>k</sup>		-.126**	.178*		
Strong market orientation <sup>l</sup>	-.109**				
Individual characteristics					
Race/ethnicity (minority) <sup>m</sup>	.100**				
Gender (female) <sup>n</sup>					
Supervises workers <sup>o</sup>					
Years working in journalism <sup>p</sup>			-.093**	-.100**	
Political conservatism <sup>q</sup>					
Amount of reporting <sup>r</sup>					
R <sup>2</sup> for Block I	.040	.026	.110*	.038	.036
Block II					
Organizational change					
Has had buyouts, layoffs <sup>s</sup>	.155*				
Staff size reduced <sup>t</sup>		.160*		-.129**	
Workload increased <sup>u</sup>					
R <sup>2</sup> for Block II	.021**	.016	.003	.015	.005
R <sup>2</sup> for Model	.061	.042	.112*	.053	.041

<sup>a</sup> N = 335. N varies slightly by model. Dependent variables are change variables in which value on scale in 2002 was subtracted from value on scale in 2007.

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$

<sup>c</sup> Table 14 lists items in this scale under "adversarial function."

<sup>d</sup> "General" interpretive function scale items are "analyze and interpret complex problems" and "investigate claims and statements made by the government."

<sup>e</sup> "Geographic" interpretive function scale items are "provide analysis of international developments" and "discuss national policy while it's still being developed."

<sup>f</sup> Table 14 lists items in this scale under "disseminator function."

<sup>g</sup> Table 14 lists items in this scale under "populist mobilizer function."

<sup>h</sup> Effects coded with "other" as reference category.

<sup>i</sup> "At my news organization, profits are a higher priority than good journalism." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>j</sup> "The quality of journalism at my news organizations has been steadily rising over the past few years." Five-point response scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

<sup>k</sup> “At my news organization, newsroom resources have been shrinking over the past few years.” Five-point response scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

<sup>l</sup> “My news organization does a lot of audience research to learn what kinds of information our audience wants or needs.” Five-point response scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

<sup>m</sup> Dummy coded for race/ethnicity, with 1 = non-white and/or Hispanic

<sup>n</sup> Dummy coded for gender, with 1 = female.

<sup>o</sup> Dummy coded for supervisory responsibilities, with 1 = supervises news employees.

<sup>p</sup> Number of years of experience working in journalism

<sup>q</sup> “Overall, then, do you consider yourself pretty far to the left, a little to the left, in the middle of the road, a little to the right or pretty far to the right.” Five-point response scale from “pretty far to the left” (1) to “pretty far to the right” (7).

<sup>r</sup> “How often do you do reporting? Would you say regularly, occasionally, seldom or never?” Response scale ranging from (1) never to (7) regularly.

<sup>s</sup> Dummy coded for buyout and layoffs, with 1 = has had buyouts or layoffs at news organization.

<sup>t</sup> Dummy coded for staff size change, with 1 = staff size has shrunk within last 12 months.

<sup>u</sup> Dummy coded for workload change, with 1 = workload has increased during last 12 months.

Table 17

Mean for degree of support for role conception by blogs, doesn't blog

<i>Indicators of journalistic functions</i>	<i>Doesn't blog for organization<sup>a,b</sup></i>	<i>Blogs for news organization<sup>a</sup></i>
Interpretive function items		
Investigate government claims <sup>c</sup>	6.27	6.52**
Analyze, interpret international developments <sup>d</sup>	4.92	5.33**
Populist mobilizer function items		
Point people toward solutions to social problems <sup>e</sup>	4.30	4.91*
Set political agenda <sup>f</sup>	2.09	2.58*

<sup>a</sup> Values are means on a four-point scale from “not very important” (1) to “extremely important” (7). N for “does not blog” = 335; N for “writes blog” = 67

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of means test

<sup>c</sup> “Investigate claims and statements made by the government.”

<sup>d</sup> “Provide analysis and interpretation of international developments.”

<sup>e</sup> “Point people toward possible solutions to society's problems.”

<sup>f</sup> “Set the political agenda.”

Table 18  
Percentage saying ethical decisions that are justified on occasion<sup>a</sup>

	2002 sample	2002 panel	2007 panel	'02-'07 chg <sup>b</sup>
Paying for confidential information <sup>c</sup>	17%	16.9%	8.7%	-8.2*
Using confidential documents <sup>d</sup>	78	77.4	68.0	-9.4*
Claiming to be somebody else <sup>e</sup>	14	11.2	8.5	-2.7
Breaking a pledge of confidentiality <sup>f</sup>	8	8.2	8.0	-0.2
Badgering an unwilling informant to get a story <sup>g</sup>	52	51.1	43.1	-8.0*
Using personal documents without permission <sup>h</sup>	41	38.3	36.6	-1.7
Getting a job to gain inside information <sup>i</sup>	54	53.7	40.5	-13.2*
Using hidden microphones or cameras <sup>j</sup>	60	56.3	52.3	-4.0
Using recreations, dramatizations of news <sup>k</sup>	29	28.0	22.4	-5.6**
Disclosing the names of rape victims <sup>l</sup>	36	36.1	34.0	-2.1

<sup>a</sup> N=402. (N varies slightly by item.) Values in the "2002 sample" column are for the 2002 national probability sample of 1,149 journalists. Other columns report percentages for the present panel of 402 journalists.

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$  for difference of proportions test

<sup>c</sup> "Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve under any circumstances. First, paying people for confidential information."

<sup>d</sup> "Using confidential business or government documents without authorization."

<sup>e</sup> "Claiming to be somebody else."

<sup>f</sup> "Agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so."

<sup>g</sup> "Badgering unwilling informants to get a story."

<sup>h</sup> "Making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission."

<sup>i</sup> "Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information."

<sup>j</sup> "Using hidden microphones or cameras."

<sup>k</sup> "Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors."

<sup>l</sup> "Disclosing the names of rape victims."

Table 19  
Mean values on ethical aggressiveness scale by gender, years working in journalism, race/ethnicity, media type and newsroom size, 2002-2007<sup>a</sup>

	2002	2007	Chng <sup>b</sup>
Gender			
Men (N=287)	3.85	3.34	-0.51*
Women (N=80)	3.81	3.00	-0.81*
Years worked in journalism <sup>c</sup>			
15 or fewer (N=137 in '02, 79 in '07)	4.00	3.44	-0.56*
16 through 29 (N=186 in '02, 167 in '07)	3.70	3.26	-0.44*
30 or more (N=45 in '02, 106 in '07)	3.91	3.12	-0.79*
Race/ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic white (N=340)	3.84	3.23	-0.61*
Non-white and/or Hispanic (N=26)	3.96	3.50	-0.46
Media type <sup>d</sup>			
Daily newspapers (N=206 in '02, N=152 in '07)	3.74	3.19	-0.55*
Weekly newspapers (N=52 in '02, N=46 in '07)	3.65	2.83	-0.82*
Television (N=38 in '02, N=30 in '07)	4.71	4.20	-0.51**
Radio (N=42 in '02, N=42 in '07)	3.31	3.02	-0.29**
Other <sup>e</sup> (N=30 in '02, N=36 in '07)	4.47	3.97	-0.50
Newsroom size <sup>f</sup>			
25 or fewer (N=139 in '02, N=125 in '07)	3.60	2.88	-0.72*
26 through 100 (N=107 in '02, N=101 in '07)	3.99	3.30	-0.69*
101 or higher (N=101 in '02, N=103 in '07)	4.02	3.64	-0.38*

<sup>a</sup> Scale created by summing 10 items (Table 16) on ethical decisions in which respondent would approve a particular decision "on occasion." Values range from zero through 9 for 2002 and zero through 8 for 2007.

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .10$  for paired-sample t-tests. Change values shown in the table are for differences between group means for 2002 and 2007. Those values differ slightly from the average mean differences used in the paired-sample t-test.

<sup>c</sup> Compares respondents with a given number of years of experience working in journalism in 2002 and with respondents who have the same number of years of experience working in journalism in 2007.

<sup>d</sup> Compares respondents who were at news organizations of a given type in 2002 with those in a news organization of the same type in 2007.

<sup>e</sup> News magazines, wire services or online.

<sup>f</sup> Compares respondents who were in newsrooms of a given size in 2002 with those in a newsroom of the same size in 2007.

Table 20  
Predictors of ethical aggressiveness<sup>a, b</sup>

	2002	2007	Change <sup>u</sup>
Block I-Organizational characteristics <sup>c</sup>			
Number of full-time journalists	-.045	.065	-.136** <sup>b</sup>
Daily newspaper <sup>d</sup>	-.066	-.073	
Weekly newspaper <sup>d</sup>	-.020	-.029	-.188*
Television <sup>d</sup>	.180*	.147*	
Radio <sup>d</sup>	-.146*	-.032	
R2 for Block I	.041*	.055*	.026
Block II-Prof. values, perceptions, duties			
Support for adversarial function <sup>e</sup>	.128*	.067	
Support for interpretive function <sup>f</sup>	.198*	.292*	.128**
Support for disseminator function <sup>g</sup>	-.227*	-.213*	
Support for populist mobilizer function <sup>h</sup>	.023	-.008	
Importance of job security <sup>i</sup>	-.055	-.117*	
Importance of chance to help people <sup>j</sup>	-.132*	-.019	
Ability to get stories covered <sup>k</sup>	-.056	.001	
Freedom to select stories to work on <sup>k</sup>	.022	-.115*	
Perceived success in serving public <sup>l</sup>	-.071	-.095**	
Incremental increase in R <sup>2</sup> for Block II	.145*	.197*	.042
Total R <sup>2</sup> for Blocks I and II	.185*	.253*	.067
Block III-Individual characteristics			
Years worked in journalism <sup>m</sup>	-.015	-.094**	
Gender <sup>n</sup>	-.010	-.030	
Race/ethnicity <sup>o</sup>	.025	.028	
Supervises editorial employees <sup>p</sup>	-.012	-.030	
Frequency of reporting <sup>q</sup>	.095	.099**	
Incremental increase in R <sup>2</sup> for Block III	.009	.021	.015
Total R <sup>2</sup> for Blocks I, II and III	.195*	.274*	.082
Block IV-Organizational change <sup>c</sup>			
Staff size shrinks <sup>r</sup>		-.039	
Workload increases <sup>s</sup>		.040	
Time spent on Web work <sup>t</sup>		-.029	
Incremental increase in R <sup>2</sup> for Block IV		.003	.002
Total R <sup>2</sup> for Blocks I through IV		.277*	.085

<sup>a</sup> N=338 for '02 and N= 305 for '07.

<sup>b</sup> \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .10$

<sup>c</sup> To permit comparisons across time, betas and explained variance for Blocks I, II and III are for models with only Blocks I through III entered. For Block IV, betas and explained variance are for the 2007 model with all three blocks entered.

<sup>d</sup> Effects coded with reference group as "other"

<sup>e</sup> Adversarial function (items listed in Table 14)

<sup>f</sup> Interpretive function (items listed in Table 14)

<sup>g</sup> Disseminator function (items listed in Table 14)

<sup>h</sup> Populist mobilizer function (items listed in Table 14)

- <sup>i</sup> Importance of job security in satisfaction with a job
- <sup>j</sup> Importance of chance to help others in satisfaction with job.
- <sup>k</sup> Indicators of journalistic autonomy. Items listed in Table 8.
- <sup>l</sup> "How good a job of informing the public do you think your own news organization is doing? Would you say outstanding, very good, good, fair or poor?"
- <sup>m</sup> Years working in journalism
- <sup>n</sup> Dummy coded for gender, with 1 = female.
- <sup>o</sup> Dummy coded for race/ethnicity, with 1 = non-white and/or Hispanic
- <sup>p</sup> Dummy coded for supervisory responsibilities, with 1 = supervises news employees.
- <sup>q</sup> "How often do you do reporting? Would you say regularly, occasionally, seldom or never?" Response scale ranging from (1) never to (7) regularly.
- <sup>r</sup> Dummy coded for staff size change, with 1 = staff size has shrunk within last 12 months.
- <sup>s</sup> Dummy coded for workload change, with 1 = workload has increased during last 12 months.
- <sup>t</sup> "About what percent of your time at work is spent creating or editing content specifically for the Web sites of your news organization."
- <sup>u</sup> Dependent variable reflects change in scale scores between 2002 and 2007. Change variable was created by subtracting 2002 value from 2007 value.

## Appendix 1

This table shows selected demographic and social characteristics from the 2002 probability sample of the American Journalists study and 2007 panel drawn from that sample.

<i>Demographics, social characteristics</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>2002</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>2007</i> <sup>c</sup>
Gender		
Male	67.0%	76.6%
Female	33.0	23.4
Minority status		
White	90.5	93.2
Minority	9.5	6.8
Type of news organization		
Daily newspaper	49.7	54.7
News magazine	5.4	2.5
Radio	9.1	11.7
Television	14.2	9.7
Weekly newspaper	15.6	14.7
Wire service	6.0	6.7
Marital status		
Single, never married	23.4	10.3
Unmarried, living with partner	5.9	4.0
Separated	1.1	1.0
Divorced	7.8	10.3
Widowed	0.9	1.8
Now married	60.8	72.7
Party affiliation		
Democrat	35.9	34.1
Republican	18.0	13.9
Independent/no party	32.5	40.8
Other	10.5	5.2
Don't know, refused	3.1	6.0
Education		
High school graduate	1.8	1.7
Some college, no degree	8.9	7.7
Undergraduate college degree	68.0	67.7
Some graduate education	4.7	5.5
Graduate degree	16.6	17.4

<sup>a</sup> N varies slightly by item.

<sup>b</sup> Figures are from a 2002 probability sample of 1,149 U.S. journalists. See *The American Journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2007). David H. Weaver, Randal A. Beam, Bonnie J. Brownlee and Paul S. Voakes. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

<sup>c</sup> Figures based on 402 journalists who were interviewed in 2002 and then re-interviewed in 2007.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Katharine Q. Seelye and Andrew Ross Sorkin, "Newspaper chain agrees to sale for \$4.5 billion," *New York Times*, March 13, 2006; retrieved June 26, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database.

<sup>2</sup> Neil Hickey, "Will Time Inc. get back on top?" *Columbia Journalism Review*, November/December 2002; retrieved July 1, 2008, from Lexis Nexis data base.

<sup>3</sup> Joe Sappell, "Time to go," *American Journalism Review*, June/July 2008; retrieved June 3, 2008, from [www.ajr.org](http://www.ajr.org) Web site.

<sup>4</sup> Matt McKinney, "Private group will buy *Star Tribune*; the McClatchy Co. surprised observers with the \$530 million sale to New York investment firm Avista Capital Partners," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Dec. 27, 2006; retrieved June 26, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database.

<sup>5</sup> "Network TV," *State of the News Media 2004*, Project for Excellence in Journalism; retrieved June 26, 2008, from [www.stateofthemediamedia.org](http://www.stateofthemediamedia.org) Web site.

<sup>6</sup> Seelye and Sorkin, "Newspaper chain agrees to sale for \$4.5 billion," March 13, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> McKinney, "Private group will buy *Star Tribune*," Dec. 27, 2006; retrieved June 26, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas S. Mulligan and Dawn Chmielewski, "Editor of *Times* leaves in dispute over budget," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 21, 2008; retrieved June 26, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Perez-Pena, "News space and staff to be cut by *Tribune*," *New York Times*, June 6, 2008; retrieved June 26, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database.

<sup>10</sup> Annys Shin and Frank Ahrens, "Time Inc. to eliminate nearly 300 magazine jobs," *Washington Post*, Jan. 19, 2007; retrieved June 26, 2008, from [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) Web site.

"Overview on Time Inc.," Time Warner Corp. Web site, retrieved July 1, 2008, from [www.timewarner.com/corp/businesses/detail/time\\_inc/index.html](http://www.timewarner.com/corp/businesses/detail/time_inc/index.html).

<sup>11</sup> Bill Carter, "CBS moves ahead with layoffs in news," *New York Times*, April 2, 2008; retrieved April 2, 2008, from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) Web site. "Network TV: Economics, evening news revenue" *State of the News Media 2008*, Project for Excellence in Journalism; retrieved June 26, 2008, from [www.stateofthemediamedia.org](http://www.stateofthemediamedia.org) Web site.

<sup>12</sup> Jon Fine, "The daily shrinking planet," *Business Week*, June 23, 2008; retrieved June 26, 2008, from [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com) Web site.

<sup>13</sup> Sappell, "Time to go," June/July 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Kelly Wilson, "High Anxiety," *American Journalism Review*, February/March 2008; retrieved July 1, 2008, from [www.ajr.org](http://www.ajr.org) Web site.

<sup>15</sup> Dan Barry, David Barstow, Jonathan D. Glater, Adam Liptak and Jacques Steinberg, "Correcting the record; *Times* reporter who resigned leaves long trail of deception," *New York Times*, May 11, 2003; retrieved June 19, 2008, from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) Web site. Jacques Steinberg, "Editor of *USA Today* resigns; cites failure over fabrications," *New York Times*, April 21, 2004; retrieved June 19, 2008, from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) Web site. Paul Farhi, "'Dateline' ethics debate: NBC newsmagazine paid pedophile watchdog group to run sting," *Washington Post*, April 9, 2006; retrieved June 19, 2008, from [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) Web site.

<sup>16</sup> The 2002 American Journalist study included a probability sample of 1,149 journalists and five smaller non-probability samples of minority and online journalists.

<sup>17</sup> Fifty-two individuals who were retired, who no longer worked full time or who had moved to another country did not meet study criteria for inclusion. Six individuals were deceased.

<sup>18</sup> The eligibility of another 499 who took part in the 2002 survey could not be determined, in most cases because they were no longer at their 2002 telephone number and efforts to locate them were unsuccessful. By comparison, the adjusted response rate for the 2002 study was 79 percent.

<sup>19</sup> Christine Tatum, "New president plans to boost membership, SPJ," *Quill*, September 2006; retrieved June 20, 2008, from [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org) Web site.

<sup>20</sup> David H. Weaver, Randal A. Beam, Bonnie J. Brownlee, Paul S. Voakes and G. Cleveland Wilhoit. *The American journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: U.S. news people at the dawn of a new millennium* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007), p. 132.

<sup>21</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, p. 133.

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- <sup>22</sup> American Society of Newspaper Editors, "Newsrooms shrink; minority percentage increases slightly," press release, April 13, 2008; retrieved June 16, 2008, from [www.asne.org](http://www.asne.org) Web site.
- <sup>23</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, p. 135
- <sup>24</sup> In interviews, respondents listed the publications or Web sites that they "read regularly – that is almost every issue" for publications or "almost every day" for Web sites. The first three mentioned were coded for each variable, and the number mentioned in 2002 was subtracted from the number mentioned in 2007. That created "change" variables for reading of publications and of Web sites.
- <sup>25</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, p. 71-73.
- <sup>26</sup> Geraldine Fabrikant and Richard Siklos, "Big media a tough sell to jittery investors," *New York Times*, Nov. 3, 2005; retrieved June 26, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database. Richard Perez-Pena, "Papers facing worst year for ad revenue," *New York Times*, June 23, 2008; retrieved June 26, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database.
- <sup>27</sup> Richard Perez-Pena, "Tribune Co. plans sharp cutbacks at papers," *New York Times*, June 6, 2008; retrieved June 16, 2008, from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) Web site.
- <sup>28</sup> John Merrill, "Deciding what is news," in Everette E. Dennis and John C. Merrill, *Media debates: Great issues for the digital age, 4<sup>th</sup>* (Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2006), pp. 110-122.
- <sup>29</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, p. 75.
- <sup>30</sup> In the 2002 national probability sample, 52 percent of respondents said that they almost always can get an important subject covered; 40 percent said they had almost complete freedom to select the stories that they work on; and 42 percent said that they had almost complete freedom to decide what aspects of the story to emphasize.
- <sup>31</sup> N = 21 for non-white and/or Hispanics who say that they report regularly or occasionally.
- <sup>32</sup> One of the three measures declined a little more than 10 points at daily newspapers and a second measure declined to a similar degree at television stations. Two of the indicators increased at radio stations. The largest percentage increases were for the "other" category, which consists of news magazines, wire services and Web sites.
- <sup>33</sup> Change was measured by subtracting the reporter's 2002 response on an indicator from his or her 2007 response on that same indicator, producing a value that suggested growth or decline for that individual on that measure. For example, the 2002 value for "can get a subject covered" for a respondent was subtracted from the value of his or her 2007 response.
- <sup>34</sup> "Economics," *State of the News Media 2008*.
- <sup>35</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, p. 139.
- <sup>36</sup> John W.C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, *The news people: A sociological portrait of American journalists and their work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976).
- <sup>37</sup> Johnstone et al., 1976.
- <sup>38</sup> David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American journalist: A portrait of U.S. news people and their work* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986); David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American journalists in the 1990s: U.S. news people at the end of an era* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996).
- <sup>39</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, pp. 139-146
- <sup>40</sup> W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence and Steven Livingston, *When the press fails: Political power and the news media from Iraq to Katrina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
- <sup>41</sup> Rebecca Mackinnon, "Blogging, journalism and credibility," *The Nation*, March 17, 2005; retrieved June 29, 2008, from [www.thenation.com](http://www.thenation.com) Web site.
- <sup>42</sup> "Overview," *State of the News Media 2008*.
- <sup>43</sup> Perez-Pena, "Papers facing worst year for ad revenue," June 23, 2008.
- <sup>44</sup> To create the function scales, individual responses from each item in 2002 were subtracted from the comparable item in 2007. Then these change measures for the individual items were combined into a change scale for each of the five functions – the two interpretive functions plus the disseminator, adversarial and populist mobilizer functions.
- <sup>45</sup> Kelly Heyboer, "Bloggin' in the newsroom," *American Journalism Review*, December/January 2004; retrieved June 26, 2008, from [www.ajr.org](http://www.ajr.org) Web site.

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<sup>46</sup> William P. Cassidy, "Online news credibility: An examination of the perceptions of newspaper journalists," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, no. 2 (2007), <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue2/casidy.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Randal A. Beam, "Journalism professionalism as an organizational-level concept," *Journalism Monographs* no. 121 (1990).

<sup>48</sup> Code of Ethics, Society of Professional Journalists, retrieved June 29, 2008, at <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>; Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, Radio and Television News Directors Association, retrieved June 29, 2008, at [http://www.rtnda.org/pages/media\\_items/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct48.php](http://www.rtnda.org/pages/media_items/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct48.php)

<sup>49</sup> Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, *The elements of journalism: What newspeople should know and what the public should expect* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> Rem Rieder, "The Jayson Blair Affair," *American Journalism Review*, June 2003; retrieved June 18, 2008, from [www.ajr.org](http://www.ajr.org); Blake Morrison, "Ex-USA Today reporter faked major stories," *USA Today*, March 18, 2004; retrieved on June 18, 2008, from Lexis Nexis database; Farhi, 2006, "Dateline' ethics debate."

<sup>51</sup> Barry et al., *New York Times*, May 11, 2003.

<sup>52</sup> Kristina Nwazota, "Jayson Blair: A case study of what went wrong at *The New York Times*, Online Newshour, Dec. 10, 2004, retrieved June 18, 2008, from [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org) Web site.

<sup>53</sup> Weaver et al., 2007, p. 163

<sup>54</sup> The mean difference in a paired-sample t-test was 0.521, which was significant at  $p \leq .05$ .