



Changing Newsrooms 2020

Addressing Diversity and Nurturing Talent at
a Time of Unprecedented Change

Federica Cherubini, Nic Newman,
and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

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Contents

About the Authors	6
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Executive Summary	7
1. The Impact of Remote Working	9
2. Reckoning with the Lack of Diversity in Newsrooms	13
3. Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Talent	18
Conclusions	20
Survey Methodology	21

References	23
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Executive Summary

The year 2020 has meant deep disruption for journalism as the global COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected people's health, habits, and livelihoods. Journalists play a central role in reporting on these changes even while simultaneously being personally affected by them. Lockdowns and safety restrictions have changed the way news is produced, with long hours and extensive remote working making communication and day-to-day production more complex. COVID-19 has also increased economic uncertainty after a steep decline in advertising revenues, leading to widespread layoffs and increased pressure on an already challenged industry.

At the same time, high-profile events have brought to the surface a series of social and generational changes and fundamental disagreements that are testing newsrooms in other ways. The killing of George Floyd in Minnesota and the Black Lives Matter protests have helped focus attention on racial injustice and social inequality and led to questions around the media's coverage of these issues. Prompted also by the #MeToo movement, documented instances of sexual abuse and harassment in the media, and continued disclosure of gender pay gaps, newsrooms across the world have been wrestling with how to confront enduring forms of social inequality internally and how to better represent audiences through greater diversity in their news coverage.

For this Reuters Institute report, we surveyed a strategic sample of newsroom leaders from around the world on how their organisations are adapting to these external and internal challenges. The survey included both a set of closed questions and open-ended fields for respondents to share their experiences. We hope the findings provide valuable context for leaders in journalism on the range of approaches taken by their peers. The data are based on a survey of a strategic sample of 136 news industry leaders from 38 countries, completed between 21 September 2020 and 7 October 2020. More details of the methodology and make-up of the sample are provided in the section at the end of the report.

Overall, we find many news media are struggling to cope with reporting one of the biggest stories of our lifetimes while also trying to confront the need for various forms of internal change.

- The remote working practices that have become more widespread as a result of the COVID-19 crisis may, according to our respondents, have made organisations more efficient (55%), but our respondents are worried about the impact on creativity and on teams. Almost eight in ten (77%) feel remote working has made it harder to build and maintain relationships, with many raising concerns about how to communicate effectively and about the mental health of employees.
- Despite this, it is clear that many news organisations may continue to operate in a more distributed fashion even after the crisis. Almost half of our respondents (48%) say their companies are planning to downsize their physical premises. Hybrid newsrooms – with some staff in the office, some working from home, and some on the go – are likely to be an integral part of the future media landscape.
- Even as our respondents feel significant progress has been made in closing the gender diversity gap, ethnic, political, and other forms of diversity are lagging far behind. In the wake of the Black Lives Matters protests and increased public scrutiny of often relatively monochrome newsrooms, improving ethnic diversity (42%) is highlighted as the most pressing diversity priority in the year ahead – named by more than twice as many as cite gender diversity (18%).

- The majority of respondents say that their news organisation collects and shares diversity data about staff (64%) and leadership (54%) – while more than four in ten (41%) say they now monitor the make-up of their contributors and interviewees. Around half (46%) of our respondents say their organisation has someone formally in charge of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, but only a third (36%) have a budget for internal initiatives to actively promote diversity.
- While many respondents say their organisation is doing a good job on diversity at junior levels (84%), only a minority (37%) feel the same is the case at the senior leadership level. Several point out that this gap between diverse rank and file and much less diverse leadership raises questions for some staff (and perhaps outside critics) about the credibility of public statements about the desire to fundamentally address change.
- The economic problems of the news industry have not increased confidence amongst news leaders when it comes to attracting and retaining talent – especially in non-editorial roles. Less than a quarter of our respondents say they are confident about recruiting and keeping product (23%), data (21%), and technical (18%) talent. The news industry leaders we surveyed say that they are struggling to compete on pay and other benefits compared with other industries.

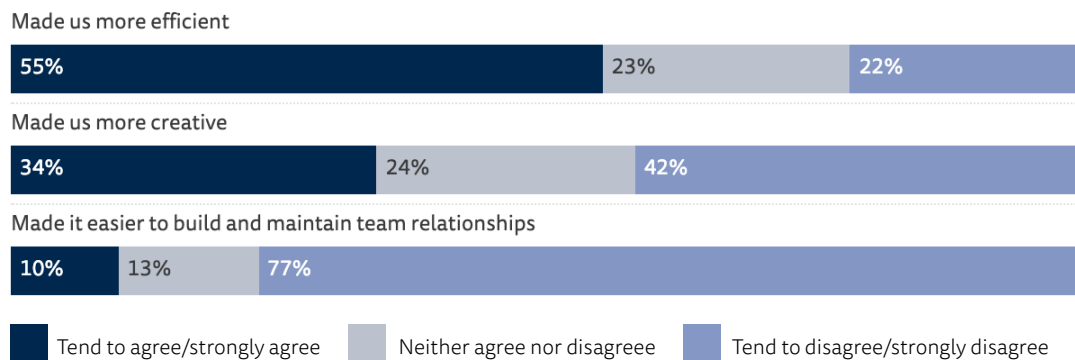
The data in this report is based on a survey of a strategic sample of 136 news industry leaders from 38 countries, completed between 21 September 2020 and 07 October 2020. Respondents include Editors in Chief, CEOs as well as other senior positions in editorial, commercial and product. The sample includes individuals working in a wide range of different companies with a print, magazine, broadcast and news agency background – as well as digital-born news organisations. The majority of the respondents are from the Global North, and most of them work in mid-size and large organisations, and our results thus do not capture the often very different situation faced by small organisations and those operating in poor and/or authoritarian countries. It is not a representative sample, and it is not a random sample, and it thus does not allow for generalisation to the industry at large. More details of the methodology and make-up of the sample are provided in the Survey Methodology section at the end of the report.

1. The Impact of Remote Working

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, as governments across the world imposed lockdowns, news organisations have had to change their thinking about the importance of the physical newsroom. Almost overnight, we've witnessed dramatic changes to workflows, including online editorial conferences, remote editing, and virtual brainstorming. TV shows have been presented from home, while newspapers have been produced with not a single journalist in the office. Newsrooms have been forced to rely more heavily on digital collaboration tools like Zoom, Teams, and Slack to support remote working practices.

In our survey, we asked executives and newsroom leaders what impact these transformations had on their newsrooms and workforce. The majority of the respondents (55%) believe that remote working has made them more efficient. They feel that social interactions and team spirit, however, have suffered as has creativity to a lesser degree. More than three-quarters (77%) say that remote working has made it harder to build and maintain relationships in a team.

Figure 1. Impact of remote working on efficiency, creativity, and relationships



Q2. Since coronavirus, more of us are using online collaboration tools to support remote working. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: 135.

Loss of Creativity

Several industry executives mentioned the challenge of recreating the energy and sparking the creative process of newsroom discussions in an online setting, with spontaneous exchanges diminishing with the lack of in-person interactions: 'Journalists need physical proximity to debate ideas, share experiences, and to innovate', says Vincent Giret, Managing Director at FranceInfo. Other editors and publishers take a similar view:

For people who know each other well, it's possible to work efficiently remotely. But remote work still lacks the serendipitous conversations that can sometimes lead to great ideas from newsrooms, and people can get tired and distracted on calls easily.

Rohan Venkataramakrishnan, Associate Editor, Scroll Media, India

The remote newsroom offers scope to work privately and without constraints, however you lack the camaraderie necessary to shape ideas and develop insight.

Dapo Olorunyomi, Publisher, Premium Times, Nigeria

Many of our respondents recognised that remote newsrooms worked better in some areas than

others. Broadcasters were often most keen to get back to their studios and to the intimacy of face-to-face contact with guests, while digital-born companies found it easier to work from home where all the normal tools could be accessed online.

We are a new newsroom and have only worked remotely. The challenge we face is that remote work does not help build a team that connects beyond the day-to-day business of the company.
Macie May, Editor, The Longmont Leader, USA

Mental and Physical Health

People's well-being and mental health was an important area of concern for the news industry leaders we surveyed. Fears included exhaustion from too many video calls and a blurred demarcation between work time and personal time. Home working setups may vary significantly between staff members and with that the impact on their ability to work effectively. Respondents voiced particular concern for junior staff in flat-sharing setups, as well as people living alone. 'As the coronavirus pandemic drags on, it is becoming more and more important that we as employers take responsibility for the ergonomics of the home workspace', says one newspaper's digital director, 'But how?'

Alongside rebuilding workflows, working patterns, and operations, with working from home came challenges around technology and tools, as well as IT security, with the need to ensure that all staff have the equipment and software they need. In some countries and geographical areas this is worsened by unreliable power and internet connectivity.

In addition to the challenges in managing distributed teams, respondents also highlighted the health and safety of staff reporting on the ground as a concern. While many organisations moved to fully distributed operations, broadcast and radio newsrooms faced additional difficulties linked to their reliance on physical studios and technical infrastructure.

Some countries also face additional challenges. In places where digital security is of greater concern, communication with sources gets impacted.

I think the biggest difficulty for us is that in Colombia our most important sources feel that their communications are intercepted illegally by Intelligence and it's difficult to get them to tell you things on the phone. I personally have a difficulty getting a true feeling of what's going on in the country, that is not evident on the surface, if I can't get to talk to sources in person.
Colombian news editor

Communication Struggles

Survey respondents expressed that remote working had consequences not just on an operational level, but also on the more intangible – yet equally crucial – aspect of shaping newsroom culture. Effective communication and management were mentioned by several of our survey respondents, worried about morale and team cohesion.

The biggest challenge for a daily news operation is the loss of instant communication which you have in a newsroom and the understanding by everyone why something is being done and how. In addition, the camaraderie and joint purpose, the human contact, the humour and spontaneity are bled dry by lack of contact and by technical interaction.
Ben de Pear, Editor, Channel 4 News, UK

A number of respondents said it was hard to get the same efficiency in communication when

working remotely. The process, they say, takes longer, the tone is often lost, and there tends to be less interaction and two-way feedback than with a conventional process.

What emerges from these comments is a sense that successful leadership requires a more conscious and proactive effort from managers: communicating more to keep everyone aligned, maintaining a sense of organisational cohesion and team unity, making sure that all voices are heard, and identifying teammates in need of help and support:

[Our challenge is] to make sure that everyone's voice is heard in news meetings, not only those who like to be on stage – to keep everyone informed.

Editor from a leading European publication

Onboarding and training new colleagues was highlighted as a particular challenge when everything is done remotely.

Positive Opportunities to Speed up Change

Some respondents see the shock of COVID-19 and the disruption to entrenched habits as an opportunity to reimagine workflows and accelerate transformation processes that were already underway. One editor from a traditional print organisation saw this moment as a chance to break entrenched habits and push the company towards much-needed modernisation and digitalisation.

Despite the challenges of keeping a healthy work-life balance when work and life happen in the same room, the news industry leaders we surveyed also cited increased flexibility as an improvement linked to remote working. No time lost to commuting and the ability to arrange one's schedule around other commitments like childcare duties are amongst the other benefits some identified.

It's good for a more effective use of time, good for some home tasks, good for climate change. It also gives the opportunity to have more people all over the country and all over the world.

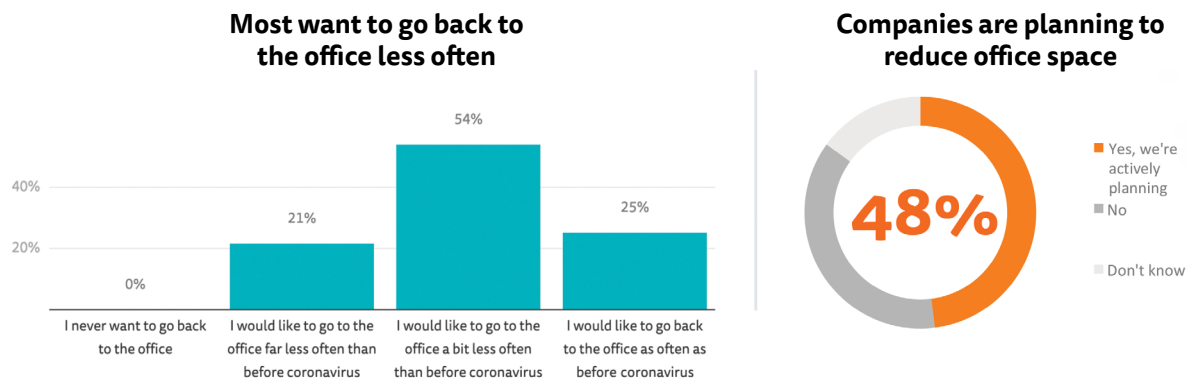
María Ramírez, Director of Strategy, eldiario.es, Spain

Increased flexibility also plays an important role in recruitment. When no longer tied to an office location, a bigger and often more diverse talent pool becomes available.

Few People Wish to Return to How Things were Before

When asked about their personal views on the matter, 54% of respondents said that they would like to go to the office a bit less often than before coronavirus and 21% that they'd like to go back far less often.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, it is clear that newsrooms are rapidly advancing plans to change their physical footprint. Almost half of our respondents said their organisation is actively looking at plans to downsize their office space.

Figure 2. Expectations for after the pandemic

Q3. In terms of your personal views, which of the following comes closest to how you feel? Base: 134.

Q4. Is your company actively considering reducing desk/office space as a result of increased remote working during the pandemic? Base: 134.

However, this won't be the end of newsrooms. An accelerated shift to hybrid newsrooms – with some staff in the office, some working from home, and some on the go – is likely to be a lasting legacy of the coronavirus crisis. Such a model could offer benefits including reduced costs and increased flexibility, but will require extensive planning and could be difficult to get right, news industry leaders say. It's important to note that a quarter (25%) do want to get back to an office environment as often as before. Remote working won't work for everyone and employers will need to address these different needs.

2. Reckoning with the Lack of Diversity in Newsrooms

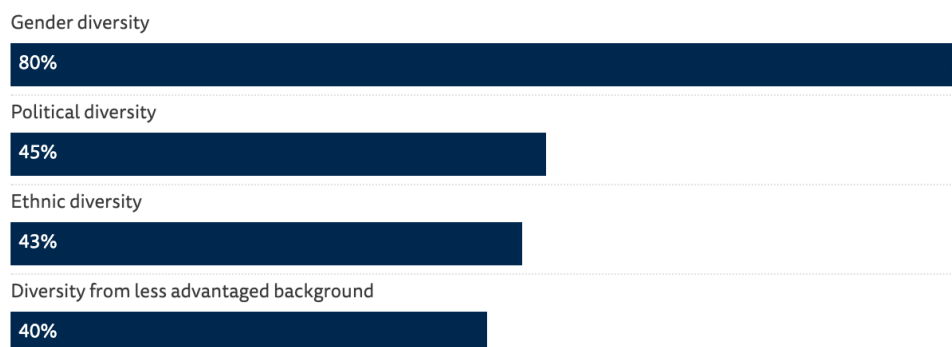
As societal questions of diversity, equity and inclusion gained greater global public prominence in 2020, especially in the wake of the George Floyd killing, journalism has been pushed to reckon with its own practices, both internally in the industry, and in how it covers the news.

Attention to diversity is not new, with similar movements to address other imbalances in recent years, focusing specifically on the gender divide prompted by the #MeToo movement, a debate on gender pay gaps in many countries including the UK, and increasingly explicit criticism of deep-seated sexist attitudes in, for example, French newsrooms (Newman 2020).

Data from our previous survey at the start of this year (Newman 2020) showed that many publishers felt they were making significant progress on gender diversity issues, with around three-quarters saying they felt that their organisation had done a good job. But they also recognised there was further to go in other areas.

The overall trend is confirmed by data in this report. A clear majority of respondents (80%) believe their organisation has done a good job when it comes to gender diversity. But the figure drops to 45% when it comes to political diversity, 43% when it comes to ethnic diversity, and 40% when it comes to diversity in terms of less advantaged groups (e.g. by class).¹

Figure 3. My news organisation has done a good job with _____



Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. I feel my news organisation is doing a good job with ____ Base: 125.

The focus on gender diversity has included top-down programmes to improve female recruitment to certain roles as well as to reduce gender pay gaps. But not all the most successful initiatives have come from management. The '50:50 The Equality Project' was started by internal teams at the BBC in 2017 as a bottom-up project to encourage content-makers to create journalism that represents women and men equally. It now involves 70 organisations in over 20 countries. Of the programmes involved in the project for at least two years – their site declares² – the vast majority (78%) reached 50% women contributors, indicating that cultural change is taking hold, and that it is sustainable. 'If data is the engine of 50:50, then proof and peer group dynamics is what drives its expansion', writes 50:50 Project Founder Ros Atkins.³

¹ It is important to recognise that, as the black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) has argued for decades, both individually and institutionally, structural discrimination and privilege is the product of intersecting social and political identities, and that looking at any of these in isolation risks obscuring how e.g. gender, ethnicity, and class leave some far more marginalised than, say, their gender alone would suggest.

² <https://www.bbc.com/5050/impact2020>

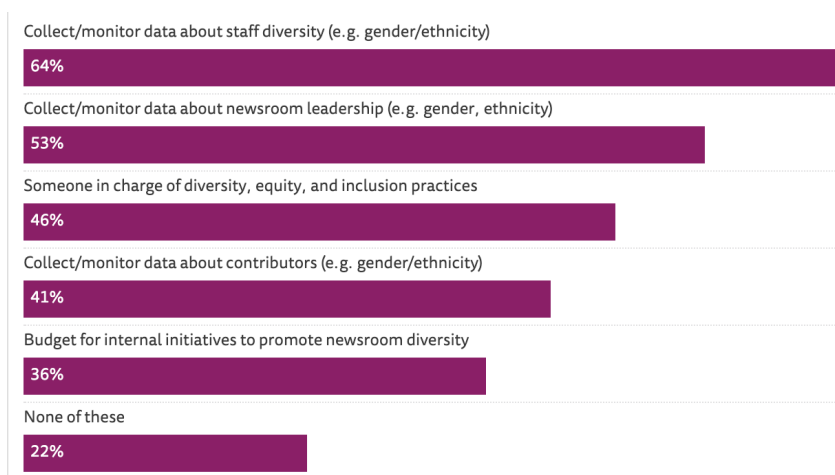
³ <https://www.bbc.com/5050/ourstory>

Industry Initiatives Gathering Pace

A first important step in driving change has been to gather a range of performance data related to diversity. If problems around diversity are poorly documented they are hard to analyse and address, and progress (or lack thereof) impossible to measure. Our survey indicates that such data collection is now happening – to some extent at least – in a large number of newsrooms: 64% of our respondents said that their organisation collects and makes available data about diversity of staff, whilst 53% collect and make available data about diversity of the leadership.

Diversity is also reflected in the sources, contributors, and interviewees that a newsroom selects (in many countries historically very heavily skewed towards male, white, often privileged voices and sources). Of our respondents 41% said their organisation now collects data about diversity of contributors and interviewees. In addition to the BBC's 50:50 initiative, organisations like *Dagens Nyheter* in Sweden and the *Financial Times* in the UK use gender bots to track the gender diversity of experts and sources they quote (Borchardt et al. 2019).

Figure 4. Top diversity initiatives



Q10. To the best of your knowledge does your organisation do any of the following? Select all that apply Base: 121.

Alongside tracking data, some organisations have someone responsible for their diversity, equity, and inclusion practices (DEI). According to our survey, 46% of the respondents said they have someone formally in charge of DEI practices. Dedicated resources to promote diversity are still less widely available – just 36% said they have a budget for internal initiatives to actively promote diversity in their newsrooms.

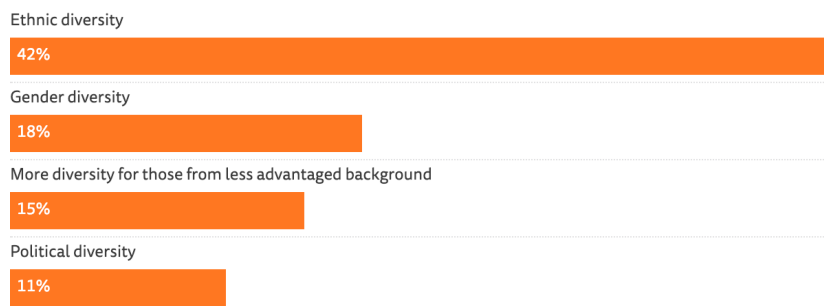
And despite the increased focus on diversity in many countries and in many newsrooms, we should also report that 22% of industry leaders surveyed said their organisations undertake none of the types of initiatives discussed here – collect no data on diversity, do not have anyone in charge of DEI practices, and do not have a dedicated budget for promoting diversity.

New Focus on Ethnic Diversity

In many parts of the world it seems that attention is switching to ethnic diversity (though this is not a universal trend, and the most pronounced historical and present forms of structural inequality vary from context to context). With the rise of Black Lives Matter protests, pressure has been building from audiences and from ethnic minority staff to ensure that journalists are more sensitive to the concerns of black and other minority groups – as well as to historical injustices.

In our survey more than four in ten (42%) cited ethnic diversity as the most important diversity priority this year, while 18% named gender diversity, and 15% more diversity for people with less advantaged backgrounds.

Figure 5. Biggest diversity priority in the year ahead



Q7. In terms of newsroom diversity, which of the following is the single most important priority in the year ahead? Base: 123.

The debate on racial inequalities and discrimination has been particularly active in the United States, where several newsrooms including the *Los Angeles Times* have recently embarked on a soul-searching journey. Under the helm of Michele B. Chan and Patrick Soon-Shiong, who acquired the publication in 2018, the *Los Angeles Times* has recently engaged in a very public process of acknowledging biases of the past when covering race and includes stories by staff reporters and columnists, examining from a personal perspective aspects of the paper's coverage of non-white communities and treatment of journalists of colour.⁴

Lack of Diversity in Senior Positions could be a Barrier to Change

Looking at diversity across different levels of seniority within news organisations, our respondents generally think progress has been made at the more junior level, but few say the same about the top tier. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they feel confident their organisations are doing a good job with junior staff (84%) and a majority (59%) say the same about mid-level. But just 37% believe they are doing a good job at the senior level of their organisation.

Figure 6. Self-rating of diversity performance at different levels of the organisation



Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following. My organisation is doing a good job with diversity at a _____ level. Base: 124.

Previous research by the Reuters Institute has also highlighted the lack of diversity at senior levels, both around gender and ethnicity. Across a sample of 200 major news outlets in ten different markets, we found that only 23% of top editors were women (Andi et al. 2020). Looking at a

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-09-27/los-angeles-times-reckoning-on-race>

sample of 100 major news outlets in five different markets, we found that only 18% of top editors were non-white, though across the countries covered, on average, 41% of the population is non-white (Nielsen et al. 2020).

Responses from news industry leaders to open questions in our survey show how the picture varies considerably by country. While issues of gender and ethnic diversity are top of mind in the US and UK, the process has been slower elsewhere:

Promoting diversity has not been a priority in Italy until recent years so we have to cope with generations of male leaders.

Newspaper editor

Another European editor talked about a 'lack of awareness of what's at stake', especially when it comes to ethnic diversity. In some other countries a lack of widespread sense of urgency in fixing structural biases is accompanied by a persisting sense that being led by a man with longstanding experience is a factor that increases the credibility of an organisation. One respondent highlighted this mindset as a big obstacle to increasing diversity:

The idea that [there] are some topics that are complicated for some groups ... and that for security reasons and/or to have better relationships with the sources, it's better to have a man with years of experience.

Editor, digital-born publication in the Global South

Even in societies often seen as more equitable and egalitarian, there is still more to be done:

In a finance-oriented newsroom [we see] traditional gender preferences. Male journalists specialise in breaking news and finance reporting, more women are drawn to feature stories etc. [This can] create local bubbles of low diversity in a newsroom that is statistically quite gender diverse at the higher level.

Scandinavian editor

Building a genuinely diverse and inclusive culture goes beyond merely achieving parity in numbers and roles. It's about the way in which stories are told and who is allowed to tell them:

It is about allowing staff from diverse backgrounds to tell stories that are important to that group through the lens of that background and for people from that background in a way that resonates with them vs a homogeneous approach.

CEO, digital-born publication, Asia-Pacific

Editors make important decisions every day and their way of seeing the world gets reflected in conscious or unconscious choices of who and what they decide to feature in their journalism. The diversity (or lack thereof) of top editors is also symbolically important and likely to shape how news media are perceived by different parts of the public (Andi et al. 2020).

Further Barriers to Increasing Diversity

The path to greater representation in journalism remains steep, with education levels and traditional recruitment practices also a key factor, according to our respondents. In many countries journalists have in recent years mostly been drawn from a relatively small group of highly educated elites.

Students with traditional backgrounds are overrepresented in journalism schools in Sweden, which makes it difficult to find educated journalists with a broad range of experiences and backgrounds.

Executive, Swedish broadcaster

As previous research has indicated, recruitment processes need to take a more proactive approach to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds and less traditional educational backgrounds (Borchardt et al. 2019). But in some countries, low staff turnover, restrictive labour laws, and sometimes perhaps unions' priorities can perpetuate existing inequalities and slow down change. Limited resources, budget constraints, and more generally, the financial state of the industry – shrinking in many countries – has reduced publishers' ability to expand, leaving them stuck with a recruitment freeze and redeployment policies:

We aren't realistically able to change the make-up of our workforce. We're highly unionised, [we] are in a challenging economic landscape and looking for cuts. The ability to make practical changes and hire and retain younger, more diverse people is restricted.

Editor, UK publisher

The COVID-19 crisis has worsened the situation globally, making survival the key driver:

With shrinking resources and demand for the few left in the newsroom to do more, effectiveness/ability is overriding diversity.

Churchill Otieno, Head of Development and Learning, Nation Media Group, Kenya

The coronavirus crisis has not made the challenge of tackling diversity any easier but news executives know that they need to change traditional practices if they are to remain relevant to the next generation and serve ever more diverse audiences.

3. Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Talent

News organisations have navigated a tremendous amount of change in the last decade and have undertaken transformation in several aspects of their newsrooms and their businesses. They had to deal with digitalising their outputs, processes, and operations, as well as reimagining funding models. All of these changes required keeping the workforce up-to-date, whether through hiring new staff or retraining and upskilling existing employees.

When asked how confident they were in their organisations' ability to attract and retain talent, news leaders who participated in the survey expressed some confidence in being able to do so in editorial areas (53%). This may be helped by the economic downturn which may have reduced opportunities to work elsewhere. But the level of confidence in attracting and retaining talent is much, much lower across key areas including product, audience, and design (23%), data and insights (21%), and technology (18%). This is worrying: as Lucy Kueng (2017) has shown, the gradual merging of journalism, tech, and data is key for news publishers to adapt to a digital media environment, and this will necessarily require new talent beyond traditional editorial skillsets.

Figure 7. Confidence in attracting and retaining talent

Showing proportion that are very or extremely confident

Editorial talent

53%

Product, audience and design

23%

Data and insights

21%

Technology

18%

Q12. How confident are you that your organisation can attract and train the talent you need in the following areas? Base: 122.

When it comes to these increasingly important skills, our respondents are finding that the media industry simply is not very appealing compared with the other options available to relevant talent:

The media industry is not attractive for people coming from other industries, while they are the most needed if we want to perform better.

Gaël Hurlimann, Editor-in-Chief for Digital, *Le Temps*, Switzerland

Instability of the future of the organisation, sometimes level of salaries, the level of bureaucracy (speed of the decisions), unattractive premises.

Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė, Director General, Lithuanian National Radio and Television

Product, data science, and technology staff in particular often have a pick of options and will frequently look for alternative workplaces where they are provided with real autonomy and can innovate at speed – and often have higher salaries. Media companies can rarely compete on salary alone, but it also seems clear that newsroom cultures that have been slow to adopt iterative

development and are reluctant to take risks can be unattractive and stifling workplaces for people who have skills that the news industry urgently needs.

Despite being aware of the skills and expertise needed to take their organisations into the future, news media in some countries face shortages:

It's important to note that many of the skills and roles above are (and have been) obvious needs for modern media companies – even small ones – but they are still largely non-existent in Romanian media companies, especially independent ones, which are all staffed by journalists, which is why they often suffer when it comes to innovating or pivoting or being a leader in the field.

Cristian Lupsa, Founder and Editor, DoR (Decât o Revistă), Romania

Attracting the best and brightest talent from the next generation will not just be about the fact that a challenged industry is unable to compete with other sectors on salary alone. It is also about culture and values. This is the case for diversity, as well as for the different kinds of talent that news media need. As Lucy Kueng has noted, 'news media will have to rise to the challenge of intergenerational tensions in their own organisations, differences between the values and priorities of many younger professionals, and an often older generation of leaders in news'.⁵ This brings us back to the urgency around issues like diversity and inclusion, as well as the ability of news organisations to change fast enough – in their internal culture and organisation as well as in how they cover the news – to remain relevant in changing societies.

⁵ <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2020/handling-inter-generational-tensions-news-media>

Conclusions

Our analysis here aims to help us understand how newsrooms are – and are sometimes not – changing in response to the long-term ongoing structural shift to a more digital, mobile, and platform-dominated media environment, the direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and wider social and political issues, including increased focus on diversity in many countries.

None of this is easy. Changing a legacy broadcast or print organisation into one able to survive or even thrive in a digital environment is hard, as is starting something new from scratch in an exceptionally competitive market. Continuing this while also covering a global pandemic and dealing with the organisational and financial impact of the coronavirus crisis is even harder. Simultaneously reckoning with the news media's frequent relative lack of internal diversity and often troubling history of dealing with different kinds of structural inequality is harder still.

But it has to be done. The reality is that audiences are embracing digital media, even if publishers may have reservations about them, that the coronavirus is here, and that a reckoning on diversity is underway.

The continued survival, success, and social standing of individual publishers and of the news media as an institution depend in large part on facing up to these tough challenges. Faced with rapid and complex change, sticking to business-as-usual will arguably be suicidal for the news industry.

Sometimes addressing one challenge may help with others – greater internal diversity is often associated with more creativity and innovation, and may help show sceptical citizens that news media genuinely aim to serve the whole public. In other cases there are hard choices to be made. With limited resources, it may be hard to increase diversity along all parameters simultaneously, or attract and retain the talent news media need. And sometimes some people have to step away to create space for others to step forward.

Some news media have already shown that disruptions, challenging as they are, can also serve as catalysts, create opportunities for positive change, and accelerate transformations already underway. Others have had their hands full keeping things running even as the fundamental challenges remain.

We hope this report, with new data on how news industry leaders in different organisations and different companies are facing those challenges, will be of some practical use – as well as more broadly advance our understanding of how newsrooms are changing.

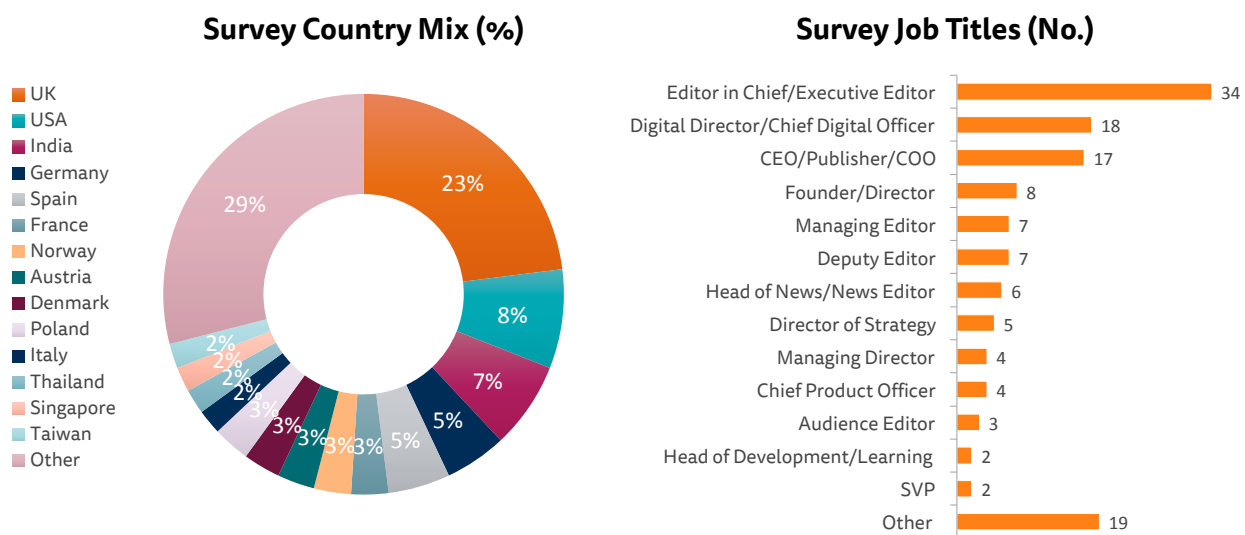
Survey Methodology

This report is based on a survey of a strategic sample of newsroom leaders from around the world. The questionnaire was sent directly to individual potential respondents by one of the three authors. It included both a set of closed questions and open-ended fields for respondents to share their experiences.

Target participants were selected because they hold senior positions in a wide range of different traditional or digital-born publishing companies operating in different countries. The results reflect this strategic sample of select news industry leaders, not a representative sample. Because of the size and nature of the sample we report only topline findings here, and no breakdowns or comparisons.

The survey was completed by 136 individuals between 21 September and 7 October 2020. The news industry leaders involved hold senior positions in editorial, commercial, and product. Typical job titles included Editor-in-Chief/Executive Editor, CEO, Digital Director, Head of News, Founder, Managing Editor.

Figure 8. Participants and countries surveyed



136 newsroom leaders surveyed in 38 countries, between 21 September 2020 and 07 October 2020. Base = 136.

Of these participants 68 were from organisations with a print background (50%), 29 (21%) represented commercial or public service broadcasters, 32 came from digital-born media (23%), and a further 5 from news agencies.

The respondents work in 38 different countries, including Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Indonesia, Kenya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Nigeria, Poland, and Thailand, but the majority came from the UK, US, India, France, Denmark, Germany, and Spain. As noted at the outset, while the survey was sent to news industry leaders in many different countries, the majority of the respondents are from the Global North, and most of them work in mid-size and large organisations. Our results thus do not capture the often very different situation faced by small organisations and those operating in poor and/or authoritarian countries.

Women were 39% of respondents, men 61%. This in part reflects the relative lack of diversity in more senior positions in the industry, highlighted by our respondents themselves, and documented in our own previous research (e.g. our finding that women make up only 23% of top editors in the sample analysed by Andi et al. 2020).

Participants filled out an online survey with specific questions around remote working, diversity, and talent in 2020. Around 90% answered all questions, although response rates vary. The majority contributed comments and ideas in open questions and some of these are quoted with permission in this document.

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Cover photo: Writers and editors of ABS-CBN, the country's biggest broadcaster, work at the newsroom in their headquarters, following orders by telecoms regulator to cease its operations in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, May 6, 2020. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

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