

## Social Journalism Study 2013 United Kingdom

Report by Cision & Canterbury Christ Church University (UK)



#### 1. Executive Summary

- Social media is now an everyday professional tool with 96% of UK journalists using it on a daily basis.
- 42% of UK journalists say that they would not be able to carry out their work without social media.
- Twitter is proving to be the quintessential social media tool for UK journalists with 92% of them using it regularly for work. It is the most important social media tool for a variety of professional tasks.
- The five professional social media user types, identified in last year's study, retained their basic characteristics. However, over the last twelve months the number of Observers, Architects and Sceptics increased, while the number of Promoters and Hunters declined. This indicates a shift towards segmentation of social media users into heavy users on one end and more passive and low-level users on the other.

"Social media was an add-on originally, a little something extra you used to do, now it's intrinsic to everyday life, it's completely woven into the newsroom."

#### 2. Survey Background

The 3rd annual Social Journalism Study, conducted by Cision and Canterbury Christ Church University, is the latest instalment in our efforts to understand how journalists use social media for work and in their communication with PR professionals.

Similar to previous years, the findings of this year's study show that journalists are using a greater variety of social media tools and are increasingly reliant on social media for a variety of different tasks. Generally, views about the impacts of social media are positive, but journalists remain unsure whether these tools have made them more productive. Unique to our study is the identification of a typology which groups journalists into five categories according to particular patterns of social media practices and attitudes.

These five profile groups - Architects, Hunters, Observers, Promoters and Sceptics - reveal specific ways professionals adapt in their work to changes in communication technologies.

In this report, we explore how UK journalists use social media, what factors influence this usage, what knowledge they have about the tools, and their views on the impact of social media on their working practices and profession. New to this year's report is the use of qualitative data from interviews with journalists, as is a more detailed look at changes in the way PRs and journalists communicate and the impact social media has on their relationship.

#### 3.1 Frequency and diversity of social media use

The vast majority (96%) of UK journalists use social media for their work on a daily basis. The patterns of use, however, vary greatly. Nearly two-thirds of journalists use the tools up to two hours a day and 11% for more than four hours. The majority of them use at least two types of social media tools for professional tasks.

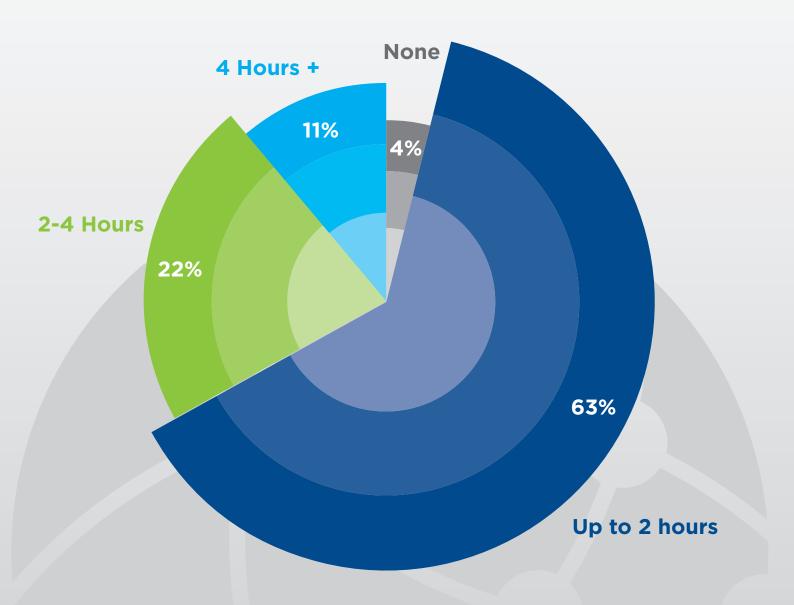


Figure 1 - Number of hours spent daily using social media for work (% of respondents)

Over the last three years, the frequency of social media use has increased as has the diversity of tools used. The use of all main social media tools has risen, but professional social networks, such as LinkedIn, saw the largest increase (30%) since 2011. The use of blogs has grown from 58% in 2011 to 82% in 2013. Social bookmarking sites are also becoming more important, although still less mainstream compared to more established forms. The use of these tools has risen from 20% to 39% since last year. Nevertheless, the tool which is proving to be the most essential for UK journalists is Twitter (microblogs). It was already the most popular tool in 2011 with 70% of respondents using it for work in a typical week, but that figure increased to 92% this year.

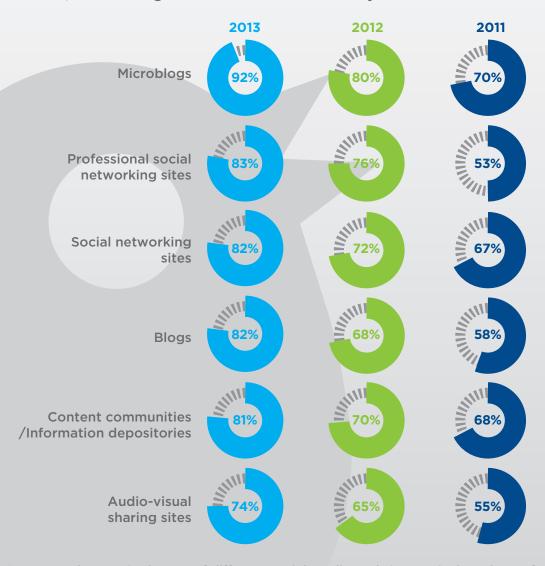


Figure 2 - Changes in the use of different social media tools in a typical week (% of respondents)

The expansion of social media use can be also detected in other indicators. For example, the number of followers journalists have on their preferred social media sites has also risen. The percentage of those who have more than 500 followers has increased from 48% to 62% in the last twelve months, while the number of those who have no followers decreased from 8% to 6% and those with less than 100 also decreased from 21% to 14%. These changes not only reflect a general increase in the frequency of use, but also an expansion of the number of tools used, and a more diversified application of the tools used for work.

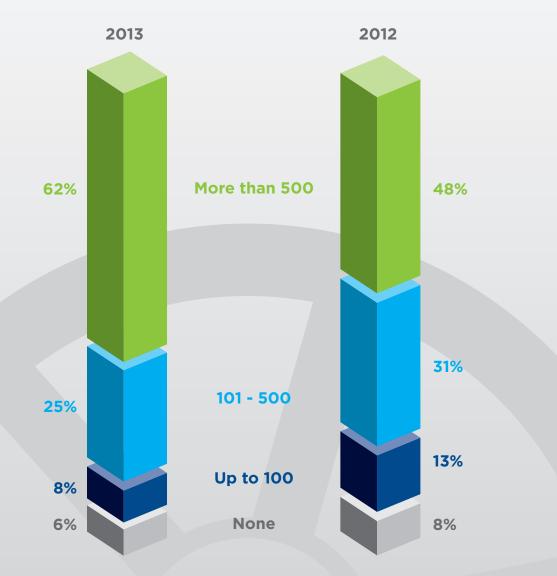


Figure 3 - Number of followers on preferred social media site (% respondents)

"Three main reasons:
it's a good opportunity
to source news stories,
it's a good way to
crowdsource reactions
to stories that you've
already got, and it's
also a really good
way of promoting."

#### 3.2 Reasons for using social media

Journalists use social media for a variety of tasks in their work. Indeed, professional use of the tools has diversified, as social media has evolved and become more segmented in its appeal. Publishing and promoting own content and sourcing information are the two most important reasons for social media use, a pattern that has remained stable over the last three years. But whereas last year, there was a slightly higher level of use for sourcing (84%) compared to publishing and promoting (81%), this year the trend was the opposite. Now, 91% of journalists reported that they use social media for publishing and promoting in a typical week compared to 89% for sourcing. Over the last twelve months, the largest increase was reported in relation to use for networking, which rose from 74% to 87%. This trend ties in with the increasing use of professional social networks over the same period. Social media is less significant for monitoring and verifying information, but even for these tasks over two-thirds of UK journalists apply these tools and the use of them has increased by 10%.

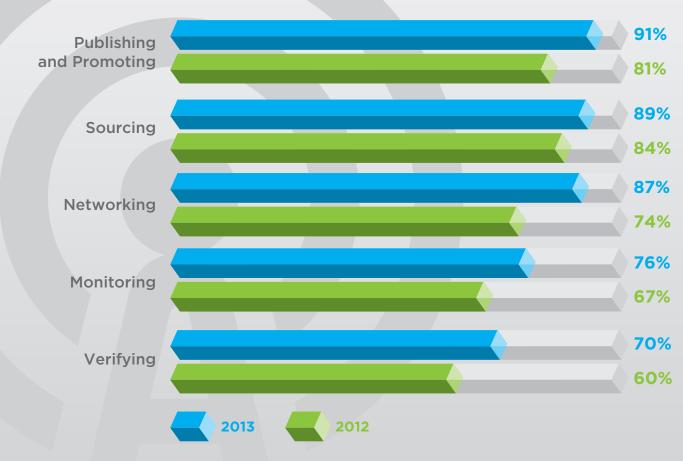


Figure 4 - Use of social media for professional tasks in a typical week (% of respondents)

Journalists use a variety of social media tools for each professional task and there is an increasing number of journalists who use two or more tools for each task. This year Twitter was the most popular social media tool for sourcing information (75% of respondents using microblogs in a typical week), followed by blogs (57%) and content communities (50%). Over the last three years, the use of each social media tool has increased for sourcing information and the level of growth has been especially notable in the cases of microblogs (27% increase since 2011), blogs (19% increase) and content communities (28% increase).

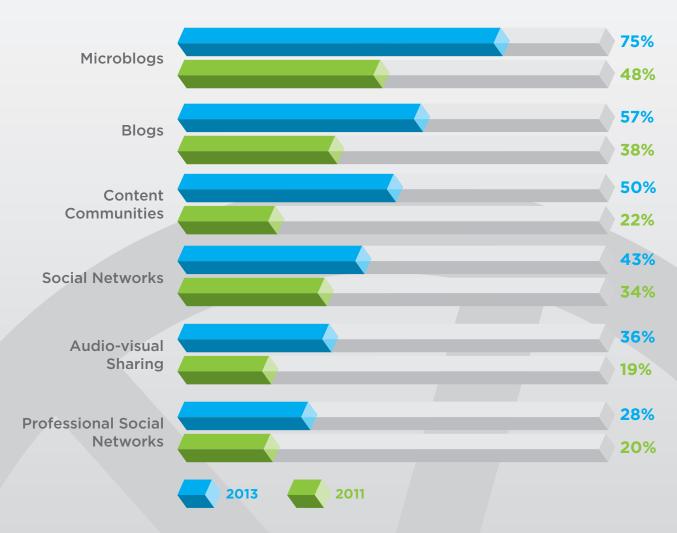


Figure 5 - Percentages of respondents using specific social media tools for sourcing information in a typical week

Patterns of specific social media use vary depending on how they are used for specific professional tasks. For example, professional social networks are mainly used for networking, audio-visual sharing sites for publishing and promoting, and content communities for verifying and sourcing information. Twitter is notable because of its widespread use for a variety of professional tasks; it is the most important tool for publishing and promoting content, for sourcing information and for monitoring, as well as the second most popular tool for networking and verifying information. Our surveys have always shown that Twitter plays an important role in a journalist's social media toolkit, but, as the figures below illustrate, its use for all main professional tasks has risen significantly over the last twelve months. Blogs are also notable for their increasing importance for sourcing stories, their use for this task having grown from 46% to 57% in the last year. Apart from their networking function, professional social networks are also becoming more important for publishing and promoting content.

	Publish/ Promote		Sour	cing	Networking		Verifying		Monitoring	
	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012
Professional Social Networks	39%	25%	28%	25%	66%	58%	22%	16%	29%	20%
Blogs	40%	32%	57%	46%	12%	12%	21%	17%	29%	26%
Social Reader/Bookmarking	5%	5%	15%	12%	1%	3%	4%	3%	10%	9%
Social Networks	62%	52%	43%	38%	46%	39%	14%	15%	43%	31%
Audio-visual Sharing	23%	27%	36%	43%	5%	4%	10%	15%	18%	19%
Microblogs	82%	66%	75%	56%	64%	42%	32%	20%	62%	42%
Content Communities	4%	7%	50%	50%	2%	3%	51%	42%	13%	16%

Note: figures in **red** show a significant (10% or more) increase

Figure 6 - Professional uses of specific social media tools in a typical week (% of respondents)

When looking at specific social media activities, posting original comments and reading other people's posts were among the most popular pursuits. 58% of respondents posted original comments on social networking or microblogging sites daily and another 23% at least weekly. While 55% read the posts of people they follow daily and another 28% at least weekly. Maintaining a work-related blog, publishing a story based on information found on social media and contributing to content communities or crowdsourcing sites are less frequent activities; just over one in ten journalists carry them out on a daily basis. Social media use in general has expanded during the last twelve months, but the frequency of specific activities increased to differing extents. Posting original comment and using social media to make new contacts saw the largest growth (11% and 10% increase respectively).

	Daily	Weekly
Post original comment on social networking or microblogging site	58%	23%
Read the posts of people they follow	55%	28%
Re-post on a microblogging site	49%	28%
Monitor discussions on social media about own content	45%	27%
Reply to comments they receive in relation to their work on social media sites	34%	36%
Read blogs	33%	32%
Use social media to make new contacts in their field of work	26%	38%
Maintain a work-related blog	13%	18%
Publish a story based on information they found on social media	11%	27%
Contribute to content communities or crowdsourcing sites	11%	16%

Figure 7 - Patterns of social media activities (% of respondents)

# 4. Influences on Social Media Use

Several demographic and professional factors correlate with journalists' views and uses of social media. The three most significant variables in our study were age, the media sector journalists worked in and the type of journalistic content they produce.

In relation to last point, somewhat different patterns of social media use emerged between news-orientated types of professionals and journalists who produce reviews and features. Around two-fifths of hard-news journalists (42%) and soft-news journalists (39%) spend more than two hours a day using social media for their work, while the figures for feature and reviews journalists are lower, 24% and 23% respectively. 18% of hard and 19% of soft-news journalists published a story based on information they found on social media on a daily basis, while the figures for feature and reviews journalists were 12% and 8% respectively. On the other hand, 39% of review writers read online forums on a daily basis compared with only 25% of hard and 17% of soft-news journalists. Review writers are also busy blog readers, almost half of them (49%) reported that they read blogs on a daily basis, while 33% of hard and 25% of soft-news journalists do. A majority of review writers use social media tools for each main professional task. 100% of reviewer respondents use social media for publishing and promoting in a typical week, 96% for sourcing, 92% for networking, 80% for verifying and 82% for networking.

'100% of review respondents use social media for publishing and promoting.'

# 4. Influences on Social Media Use

The media sector journalists work in is also a significant factor shaping how they use social media, with those working in print media sectors the least active and, unsurprisingly, those in online the most active. For example, 9% of newspaper journalists reported that they do not use social media daily, while the figure for online respondents was only 1%. And while 41% of broadcast journalists use social media in their work for at least two or more hours every day, only 19% of magazine journalists do so. How journalists use social media is also affected by the media sector they are in. While the level of social media use for networking is very similar across all sectors, the use of the tools for publishing and promoting content and verifying information varies. Online journalists are the highest users (97% and 76% respectively), while newspaper journalists use the tools the least for these purposes (85% and 65% respectively).

Age is also an important variable influencing the extent and the ways in which journalists use social media. Younger professionals use more social media tools and they use them more often. For instance, while all 18-27 year olds use social media daily for work, 10% of over 45s do not use the tools daily at all. And 48% of the former age group use social media at least two hours a day, while only 24% of the over 45s do. While younger journalists apply the tools in most areas of their work, over 45s tend to use them more narrowly, mainly for publishing and sourcing stories.

# 5. Perceived knowledge

Journalists' opinions of their own knowledge of social media have improved in the last three years. This year, 80% of respondents said that their knowledge is at least good with 10% claiming expert knowledge. Only 1% felt that they had no knowledge of social media, although a fifth (20%) said that their knowledge of social media was limited.

"It's testing out different kinds of tweets or Facebook messages and playing around with photos... going back and figuring out what works and what doesn't. I've never had any formal training."

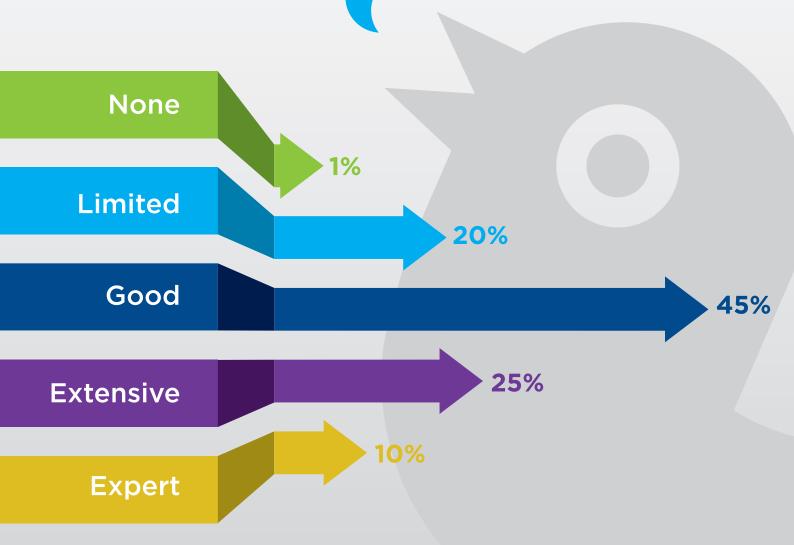


Figure 8 - Self-rated knowledge of social media (% of respondent)

#### 5. Perceived knowledge

Perceived knowledge has clear correlations with the extent and patterns of social media use. Those who report having no knowledge of social media do not spend any time in a typical week using social media for their work.

The majority of those with a good knowledge of social media (71%) spend less than two hours a day using social media for their work. Just under half of those who rated themselves as having extensive knowledge of social media (47%) spend at least two hours a day using social media for their work and 16% spend at least four hours using it. Those rating themselves as having an expert level of knowledge of social media spend by far the most time using social media in a typical day. Nearly half of them (45%) spend four hours or more, almost a third (31%) of them six hours or more, and nearly a fifth of them (17%) spend more than eight hours a day using social media for their work. Data from the interviews indicate that most journalists have acquired their social media knowledge through self-learning rather than through organised training.

## 6.1 Views about the impacts of social media on working practices

UK journalists perceive the impacts of social media to be significant, although views vary about specific consequences. Respondents were generally positive about the impacts on how they promote themselves and their work, on the relationship with their audience and on how they gather information. 42% thought that social media was so important that they would not be able to carry out their work without it. Journalists were especially optimistic about the impacts on the relationship with their audience with 80% agreeing that they were more engaged with their readers thanks to social media tools. However, respondents were less sure to what extent social media tools have improved their productivity as well as how essential social media tools are for their work overall. Just over half (54%) thought that social media improved their productivity, and a similar figure (53%) agreed that online sources were more important than offline sources for gathering information.

"It is changing ... the ways you process and gather information and particularly [in that] you have a two way relationship with your audience and your news source."



Figure 9 - Perceptions about the impacts of social media on journalists' working practices (% respondents who agree)

Views about the impacts have remained remarkably stable over the last three years. Comparing this year's figures to 2011's, similar percentages agreed that social media improved their productivity and that they are more engaged with their audience because of it. However, the percentage of those who disagreed that social media improved their productivity increased from 20% to 25% over the period.

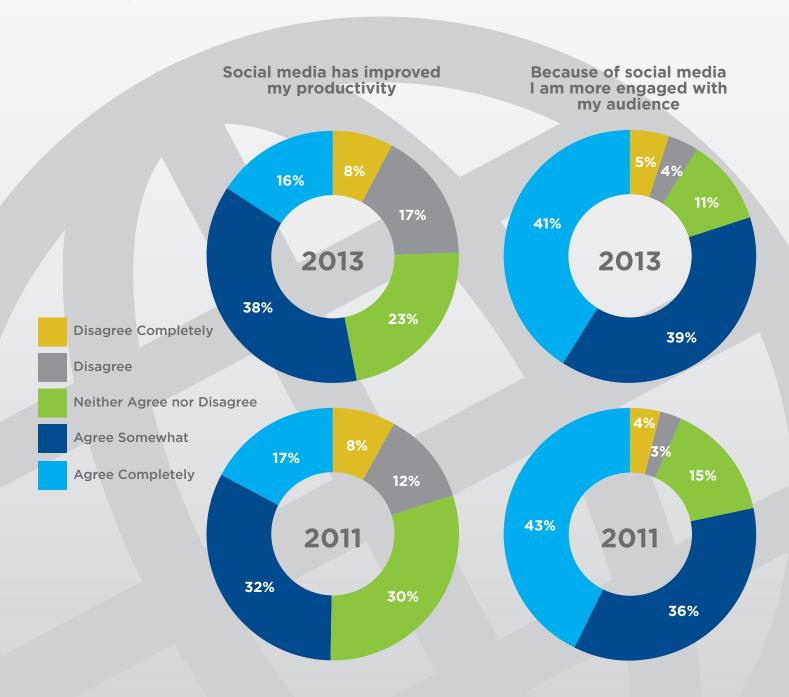


Figure 10 - Changes in views about the impacts of social media on journalists' work (% of respondents)

## 6.2 Views about the impacts of social media on the profession

The survey also asked journalists about their views on the impacts of social media on their profession. Respondents were generally positive about these impacts. For example, the vast majority (89%) thought that social media would not lead to the death of professional journalism. However, there were some concerns about the impacts on traditional journalistic values, with 38% of UK journalists believing that social media undermines values such as objectivity. Journalists were especially concerned about the accuracy of social media information. 73% agreed that accuracy is the biggest problem with social media.

"One of the things it does do, it creates a need for you to immediately publish, because if you're not writing it somebody else is... so you're compelled to tweet at the same rate which means you haven't got quite as much time as you would have in the past to maybe check all the facts are accurate."

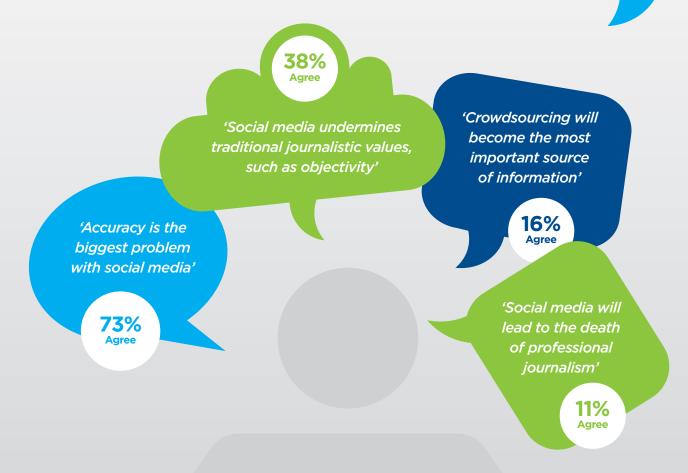


Figure 11 - Perceptions about the impacts of social media on journalistic profession (% respondents who agree)

There have been some, albeit not major, shifts in perceptions about the impacts on the profession over the last three years. The most significant change was in relation to journalists' views on whether social media will lead to the death of professional journalism. The proportion of journalists with a pessimistic view of their profession has fallen dramatically since 2011; the percentage who agreed that social media will lead to the death of journalism fell from 23% to 11%. Perceptions about accuracy problems also improved to an extent. While 80% of respondents agreed in 2011 that accuracy was the biggest problem, this year the figure dropped to 73%. These shifts in views suggest that as social media has become embedded in everyday journalistic practices, perceptions about the tools have become more nuanced. Views about social media on audience relationship remained remarkably similar.

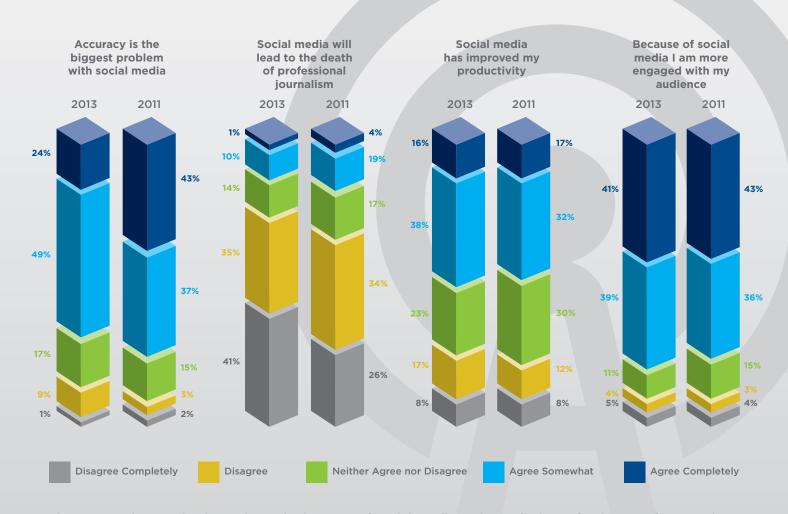


Figure 12 - Changes in views about the impacts of social media on journalistic profession (% of respondents)

#### 6.3 Concerns and perceived barriers

There remain concerns about using social media, including pressure to use it and its implications for journalists' workloads as well as unease about accuracy and possibilities for being misinformed. There were also some other barriers. 24% of respondents agreed that concerns over privacy and data security were an impediment to social media use for work. 15% of them worried about online hate and trolling, while 10% were particularly concerned about too many regulations in their organisations regarding social media use.

"[In the early days]
there was a lot of
pressure on tweeting
at certain times and
having rotas for
Twitter duty ... it's
kind of working
24/7 now."

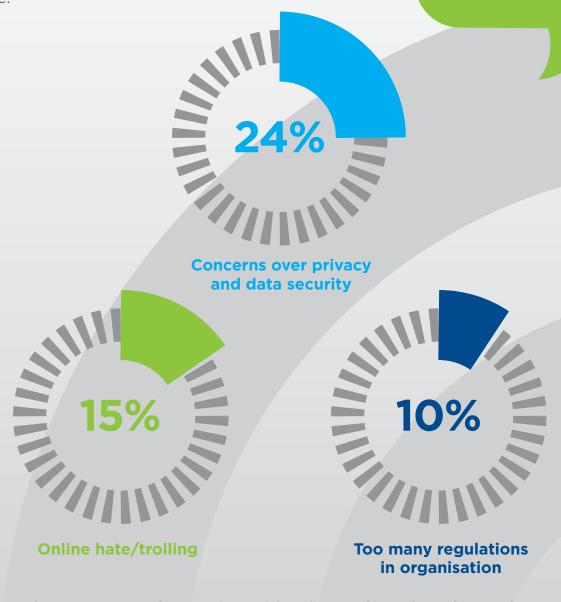


Figure 13 - Reasons for not using social media more for work (% of respondents)

#### 7. Communication with PR practitioners

Social media is having an impact on the relationship between journalists and PR practitioners. The extent and direction of this impact is not as clear as in the case of the relationship between journalists and their audience, but certainly some practices appear to be shifting. Social media is now the third most important tool for PR practitioners communicating with journalists after email and telephone.

Not surprisingly, a number of variables influence how PR practitioners and journalists communicate. Online journalists are much more likely to be contacted through social media, with 35% naming social media as one of the two most common ways that PR practitioners contact them. This compares to 12% for newspaper journalists and 9% for magazine journalists. Type of journalism is also an influencing factor, with non-news journalists more likely to be contacted through social media. 34% of reviewers and 39% of editorial journalists chose social media as one of the two most common ways PR practitioners contacted them, while the figures for hard-news and soft-news journalists were 6% and 25% respectively. However, all journalists preferred to use social media more in their communication with PR practitioners. When asked how they would prefer to be contacted almost a third of respondents (30%) chose social media as one of the two main methods. This compares with one in five (19%) who said that social media is one of the most common ways PR professionals currently contact them. Younger journalists had a higher preference than older professionals, and so did broadcasting and online journalists compared to print journalists. But there was a general agreement that they would like to be contacted less by telephone and more by social media.

34% of reviewers and 39% of editorial journalists chose social media as one of the two most common ways PR practitioners contacted them

### 7. Communication with PR practitioners

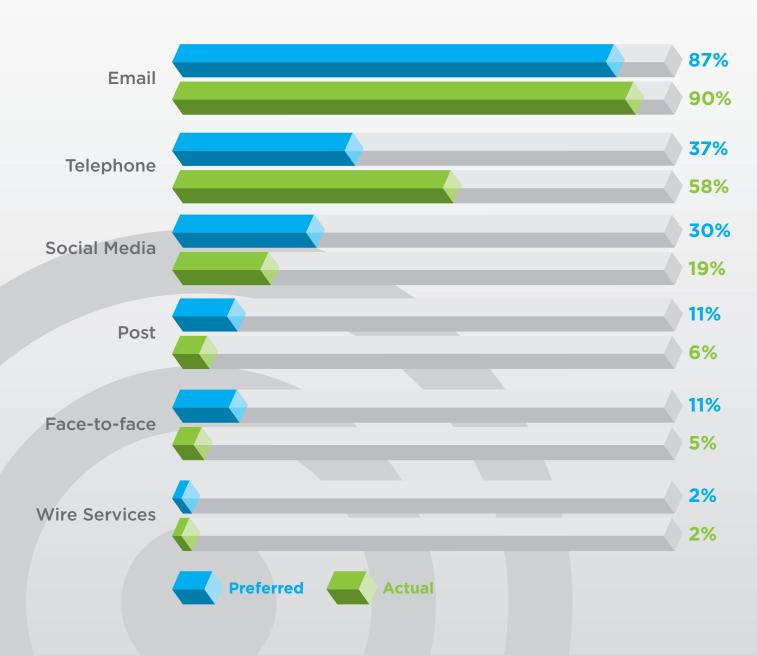


Figure 14 - Reasons for not using social media more for work (% of respondents)

#### 7. Communication with PR practitioners

PR practitioners remain important sources of information for UK journalists, and social media does not seem to have a significant impact on the extent to which journalists rely on them. Respondents were split when asked whether they are less reliant on PR professionals because of social media: 39% disagreed, 36% agreed and 26% were not sure. However, views were heavily influenced by how much journalists trusted PR sources in the first place. Levels of trust varied depending on the type of journalists. Reviewers had the most trust, with 63% of them agreeing that PR sources are reliable. In contrast, 39% hard-news and 42% investigative journalists do not think that PR practitioners are reliable sources of stories.

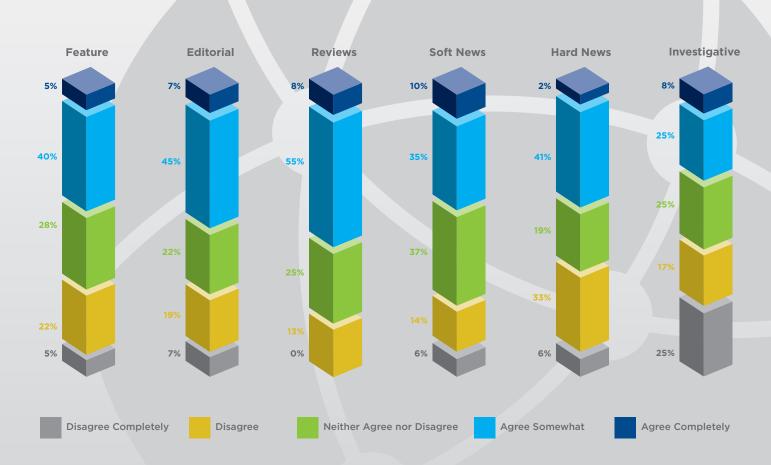


Figure 15 - Trust in PR sources according to journalist types (% of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement that PR practitioners are a reliable source of stories)

The 2012 Social Journalism Study identified five types of professional social media users according to patterns of use, knowledge, purpose and attitude. This year's study found the same profiles indicating that they capture long-term trends in the adaptation of social media for professional work. What has changed during the last twelve months are the relative sizes of the different profile groups.



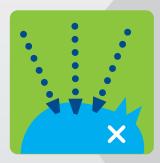
#### **Promoters**

- Use social media for a variety of reasons but a key function is publishing and promoting own content.
- Regular users of a range of social media forms.
- Regularly monitor discussions on social media about their own content.



#### **Observers**

- Visit social networking sites at least weekly.
- Tend to use narrow range of social media forms.
- Mainly use social media to source information.
- Irregular content creators and contributors.



#### **Hunters**

- Regular users of social media.
- Mostly use social media for networking and sourcing information.
- High number of Twitter followers.
- Keep up-to-date profiles on social networking sites but give limited contributions as content creators.



#### **Sceptics**

- Spend the least amount of time on social media.
- Have the least knowledge of social media.
- Almost never contribute to social media sites.
- Tend to have negative views about usefulness and impact of social data.



#### **Architects**

- Spend the most hours on social media.
- Use social media extensively for a variety of purposes.
- Have highest knowledge of social media.
- Key content contributors.
- 'Movers and shakers' of professional networks.

#### 8.1 Changes in profiles since last year

Compared to last year, there are more Observers, Architects and Sceptics, while the numbers of Promoters and Hunters have declined. The Architects saw the largest increase (from 12% to 26%) and the Hunters the largest contraction (from 35% to 16%). The changes reflect that social media adaptation is an evolving process and practices change. Thus, some of last year's Promoters and Hunters have become Architects through embedding social tools to a greater extent in their working practices, while others have become Observers or even Sceptics having moderated their social media use. It remains to be seen whether the changes over the last twelve months indicate a general trend towards polarisation of social media users.

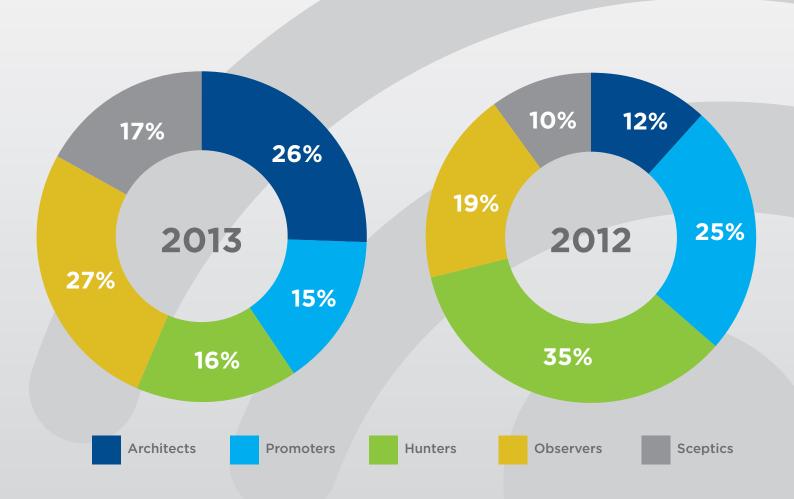


Figure 17 - Ratio of profile groups

Although each group is using social media more compared to last year, differences between the groups in terms of extent of use remain significant. The percentage of journalists who use social media for more than 4 hours daily is 1% for Sceptics, 5% for Observers, 10% for Hunters, 12% for Promoters and a significantly higher 28% for Architects. Architects use the most types of social media and use them for a wider range of professional tasks. Sceptics use social media tools the least. Observers' use of microblogs increased since last year, but their use of blogs and audio-visual sharing sites for work remain lower than those of the Promoters, Architects and Hunters.

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Observers	Sceptics		
Professional Social Networks	89%	88%	90%	88%	52%		
Blogs	99%	96%	85%	75%	49%		
Social Reader/Bookmarking	56%	32%	51%	33%	15%		
Social Networks	96%	78%	94%	84%	51%		
Audio-visual Sharing	92%	82%	79%	73%	38%		
Microblogs	100%	97%	99%	97%	59%		
Content Communities and Crowdsourcing	89%	83%	89%	84%	52%		

Figure 18 - Use of social media tools by specific Profile groups (%)

Differences between the groups also emerge when looking at specific social media activities. Architects and Promoters are the only groups who maintain a work related blog on a daily basis. Hunters are more active users of social media for networking compared to Promoters. 51% of the former use social media to make new contacts, which is a similar figure for Architects. Only 3% of Promoters are making new social connections on a daily basis. Architects and Hunters are also much more likely to publish a story daily based on information they found on social media compared to the three other groups.

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Observers	Sceptics
Maintain a work-related blog	89%	88%	90%	88%	52%
Re-post on microblogging site	99%	96%	85%	75%	49%
Use social media to make new contacts in your field of work	56%	32%	51%	33%	15%
Start following someone you met in person on a social networking site	96%	78%	94%	84%	51%
Reply to comments received in relation to your work on social media sites	92%	82%	79%	73%	38%
Provide links to other people's online content in your postings	100%	97%	99%	97%	59%
Read content communities or crowdsourcing sites	96%	78%	94%	84%	51%
Publish a story based on information you found on social media	92%	82%	79%	73%	38%
Read posts of people you follow	100%	97%	99%	97%	59%
Read blogs	89%	83%	89%	84%	52%

Figure 19 - Patterns of social media activities among the profile groups (% of those who perform the activity on a daily basis)

The different profile groups also have predictably divergent views about the impacts of social media. Architects and Hunters tend to be the most positive about social media and Sceptics the least. More than two-thirds of Architects said that they would not be able to carry out their work without social media, while this figure was 8% for the Sceptics. 65% of Hunters and 75% of Architects thought that social media improved their productivity, while only half of the Observers and Promoters agreed. This was true for merely one in five Sceptics.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences between the groups in relation to their views on whether accuracy is the biggest problem with social media; in all groups 68-78% of respondents agreed. There were, however, differences in terms of judging whether social media was undermining traditional journalistic values or not. Half of the Sceptics agreed that it was undermining them, while the figure for the Architects was 26%.

	Architects	Promoters	Hunters	Observers	Sceptics
I would not be able to carry out my work without social media	68%	49%	51%	32%	8%
Social media has improved the productivity of my work	75%	50%	65%	51%	18%
Because of social media I am more engaged with my audience	96%	84%	91%	83%	41%
Social media is undermining traditional journalistic values, such as objectivity	26%	37%	34%	46%	50%
Accuracy is the biggest problem with social media	70%	71%	78%	78%	68%

Figure 20 - Percentage of respondents who agree with each of the statements by specific profile groups (%)

This report is based on 589 responses from UK journalists collected during July – August 2013 as part of the 2013 Social Journalism Study as well as 20 interviews carried out during the same period. In the survey, the proportion of male and female respondents is 56% and 44% respectively. Slightly more than half of the respondents were from the 28-45 age bracket. Respondents were more likely to work for large organisations (34%) but there is good spread across different professional settings. There is also a good spread in relation to types of journalists, both news-orientated as well as feature and reviews-orientated journalism are represented in the sample.

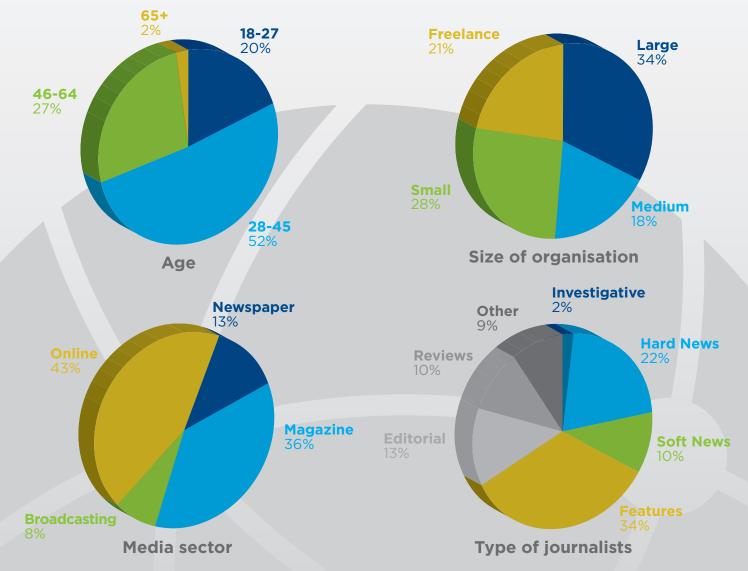


Figure 21 - Demographic characteristics of data

# 10. About the Survey

Cision and Canterbury Christ Church University conducted an online survey about the use of, and attitudes toward, social media among journalists. Respondents were taken from Cision's global media database. This year's study received over 3,000 responses from journalists in 11 different countries: UK, US, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. Throughout the survey the term 'journalist' is used to include other media professionals e.g. researchers, editors etc. The statistical analysis, based on a 95% confidence interval, examined the differences and similarities between sub-populations of respondents. The types of professional social media users were developed using cluster analysis.

The survey is designed to enhance the media industry's understanding of social media uptake and the impact of social media technologies and processes on journalists' work. Cision conducts this survey on an annual basis to continue to inform on best practices within the PR and communications field and to deepen the industry's understanding of how journalists and professional communicators use and value social media and other resources. The research examined the patterns of social media usage of journalists, which professional tasks they use social media for and how they view the impact of social media on journalistic practices and professional values.

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#### **About Cision**

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