

## MODERN MEDIA CONVERGENCE AND THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF JOURNALISTS

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### Abstract

Media convergence has transformed journalism from a profession organized around separate media platforms into a multiplatform form of content production. A contemporary journalist may work simultaneously with text, photography, video, audio, social media, live streams, data, and mobile publishing. This article examines how modern media convergence changes journalists' professional competence and identifies the skills required for effective work in convergent newsrooms. The study applies a qualitative analytical approach based on research on convergence culture, digital journalism education, and recent media industry trends. The analysis demonstrates that convergence does not simply require journalists to master more technologies. It changes the organization of work, the relationship between journalists and audiences, the speed of news production, and the boundaries between traditional professional roles. The contemporary journalist therefore needs a combination of traditional journalistic competencies—verification, interviewing, writing, ethics, and editorial judgment—with digital storytelling, multimedia production, data literacy, platform awareness, audience analytics, and collaborative skills. The article argues that professional mastery in a convergent newsroom should be understood not as universal technical specialization, but as the ability to select appropriate tools and formats while preserving the principles of accuracy, public interest, independence, and accountability.

**Keywords:** Media convergence, journalism, professional competence, digital journalism, multimedia storytelling, newsroom, social media, journalistic skills.

### Introduction

Media convergence is one of the most significant transformations in contemporary journalism. The traditional division between newspaper journalism, radio journalism, and television journalism has been weakened by digital technologies. News organizations increasingly distribute the same story through websites, mobile applications, social networks, video platforms, podcasts, newsletters, and other digital channels. As a result, the journalist is no longer working for only one medium. The professional task is increasingly to produce information that can move across platforms while preserving its factual and editorial integrity. Convergence is not merely a technological process. Deuze describes it as a broader cultural and professional transformation that blurs boundaries between channels, forms, formats, production and consumption, and different parts of the media enterprise [1]. Larrondo Ureta and Peña Fernández similarly emphasize that multimedia convergence and social media require



journalists to work in environments characterized by cooperation, multitasking, and continuous technological change [2].

The contemporary media environment also changes audience behavior. The Reuters Institute reports that news consumption continues to shift toward social media and video platforms, while traditional news organizations face declining engagement and growing competition from creators, influencers, and alternative media [3]. This means that journalists must understand not only how to produce a story but also how audiences encounter, interpret, share, and respond to it.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the professional competencies required by modern media convergence and to identify how journalists can combine traditional journalistic standards with multimedia, digital, and audience-oriented skills.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of convergence has been discussed from technological, organizational, cultural, and professional perspectives. Jenkins treats convergence as a process involving the flow of content across multiple media platforms and the active participation of audiences. In journalism studies, convergence has been connected with changes in newsroom organization, cross-platform production, professional identity, and the relationship between journalists and users. Deuze argues that convergence affects professional identity because journalists increasingly operate across different media forms and production environments [1]. The journalist's work becomes more flexible but also more demanding. A reporter may be expected to gather information, write a web story, record a video, take photographs, conduct a live broadcast, produce social media content, and monitor audience reactions.

Research on journalism education has consequently focused on whether training programs adequately prepare students for convergent environments. Larrondo Ureta and Peña Fernández found that journalism organizations increasingly require multiplatform delivery and professionals capable of multitasking and collaboration [2]. The challenge is therefore not simply to add technical courses to the curriculum but to integrate digital skills into the broader logic of journalistic work.

Recent media trends reinforce this need. The Reuters Institute reports that news organizations are experimenting with new products, video formats, personalization, AI-assisted production, and audience-oriented strategies [3], [4]. Consequently, professional competence increasingly includes the ability to adapt content to different formats and platforms without reducing journalism to platform optimization.

## 3. Methodology

The article uses qualitative analytical and comparative methods. The research examines academic literature on media convergence and journalism professionalism together with recent evidence on changes in news production and audience behavior. The analysis focuses on five dimensions of professional competence: editorial competence, multimedia competence, digital and platform competence, data and verification competence, and collaborative and adaptive competence.



The purpose of this framework is not to create a rigid list of technologies that every journalist must master. Technologies change rapidly, while professional principles are more stable. Therefore, the study distinguishes between durable journalistic competencies and technical skills that must be continuously updated.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

4.1. From Single-Medium Journalism to Multiplatform Journalism. In the traditional newsroom, professional roles were closely associated with specific media. A newspaper reporter primarily produced text, a radio journalist focused on sound, and a television journalist worked with images and video. Digital convergence has weakened these boundaries. A single news event may now require a written article, a short video, a photo gallery, a social media post, a live update, and a longer analytical story.

This does not mean that one journalist must become an expert in every medium. Rather, professional competence increasingly involves understanding the logic of different formats and selecting the appropriate one. A breaking event may require a short mobile update first, followed by a video package and a detailed article. A complex investigation may require interactive graphics, documents, explanatory text, and a documentary-style video.

4.2. Editorial Competence Remains the Foundation. Despite technological change, the core of journalism remains editorial judgment. A convergent journalist must be able to identify what is newsworthy, distinguish fact from opinion, evaluate sources, verify claims, provide context, and construct a coherent narrative. Without these skills, multimedia production can simply multiply weak or inaccurate information.

This is particularly important in social media environments where speed and visibility can create pressure to publish before verification is complete. Platform metrics may reward emotionally intense or highly engaging content, but professional journalism requires proportionality and accuracy. The journalist must therefore understand the difference between audience engagement and editorial value.

4.3. Multimedia Storytelling. Multimedia storytelling is one of the defining skills of convergent journalism. It involves combining text, photography, audio, video, graphics, maps, data, and interactive elements so that each component contributes something meaningful to the story. The objective is not to place the same information in several formats, but to use the specific strengths of each format.

For example, a television interview may provide emotional and visual evidence, while a written article can offer detailed chronology. A map can explain geographical relationships more effectively than a paragraph, while a short social media video can introduce the key issue to audiences who have not yet encountered the full report. Professional competence therefore includes narrative planning across formats.

4.4. Mobile and Social Media Competence. Social platforms have changed the rhythm of news production. Journalists now work in environments where the audience may discover a story through a short video, a social post, or a recommendation system before reaching the news organization's website. The journalist therefore needs platform literacy: an understanding of format, timing, audience expectations, visual conventions, and distribution mechanisms.



Platform competence, however, should not become platform dependence. A journalist who writes exclusively for algorithms risks allowing commercial metrics to determine editorial priorities. The professional task is to adapt presentation while preserving the same standards of accuracy and public interest across platforms.

4.5. Data and Verification Skills. Digital journalism increasingly requires the ability to work with data. Journalists may need to interpret spreadsheets, public databases, statistical reports, geospatial information, or social media datasets. Data literacy allows journalists to identify patterns and test claims that cannot be adequately assessed through interviews alone.

Verification has also become more complex. Images and videos can be manipulated, old materials can be presented as new, and automated systems can generate realistic synthetic content. Consequently, the convergent journalist needs basic verification techniques, source triangulation, reverse-image search, metadata awareness, and the ability to distinguish primary evidence from secondary circulation.

4.6. AI as a New Layer of Convergence. Artificial intelligence is adding another layer to media convergence. AI can assist with transcription, translation, summaries, headlines, content adaptation, recommendation, and production workflows. Recent Reuters Institute research indicates that publishers see AI as increasingly important for back-end automation, personalization, content creation, and newsgathering [4].

For journalists, this means that AI literacy is becoming part of professional competence. The journalist does not necessarily need to become a programmer, but must understand what AI tools do, what their limitations are, how outputs should be verified, and what ethical risks may arise. AI competence should therefore be understood as critical technological literacy rather than simple tool usage.

4.7. Audience Analytics and the Changing Relationship with Users. Convergent journalism has also transformed the relationship between journalists and audiences. In traditional media, audience feedback was often delayed and indirect. Digital platforms provide immediate indicators such as views, shares, comments, watch time, and click-through rates. These data can help journalists understand whether a story is reaching its intended audience.

However, analytics should inform editorial decisions rather than replace them. A story may have low initial engagement but high public importance. Conversely, a sensational story may receive large numbers of clicks without providing meaningful public value. Professional competence therefore includes the ability to interpret audience data critically.

4.8. Collaboration and Multitasking. Convergent newsrooms increasingly rely on teamwork. Reporters, video journalists, editors, designers, social media specialists, data journalists, developers, and audience teams may contribute to a single story. The journalist must therefore communicate across professional boundaries and understand the basic requirements of other roles.

Multitasking can increase productivity, but excessive multitasking can also reduce concentration and depth. The ideal convergent newsroom should therefore combine flexibility with specialization. A journalist should be able to perform several tasks when necessary while knowing when a particular task requires the expertise of another professional.

4.9. Ethical Competence in a Convergent Environment. The multiplication of platforms increases ethical responsibility. A mistake published on one platform can rapidly spread to



others. A misleading headline may be separated from the original article and circulate independently. An edited video may be interpreted differently when viewed without its original context.

Therefore, ethical competence should include awareness of context collapse, privacy, consent, copyright, manipulation, disclosure of corrections, and responsible use of user-generated content. The journalist must also understand that digital permanence increases the importance of careful publication decisions.

4.10. The Competency Model of the Modern Journalist. The analysis suggests that professional competence in a convergent newsroom can be organized into five interconnected layers. The first is the editorial layer: reporting, interviewing, verification, writing, ethics, and judgment. The second is the multimedia layer: photography, video, audio, graphics, and visual storytelling. The third is the digital layer: social platforms, mobile publishing, content management systems, and audience analytics. The fourth is the data and technology layer: data literacy, verification tools, AI literacy, and digital security. The fifth is the adaptive layer: collaboration, lifelong learning, creativity, and the ability to respond to changing technologies. These layers should not be understood as separate qualifications. Their value comes from integration. A strong journalist can decide which information is important, verify it, construct a narrative, select the appropriate format, adapt it to the relevant platform, and evaluate audience response without allowing technology to dictate the editorial purpose.

## 5. Implications for Journalism Education

The transformation of professional competence has direct implications for journalism education. Training programs should move beyond the simple separation of print, radio, television, and online journalism. Students should work on integrated assignments in which one reporting project is developed into several platform-specific outputs.

At the same time, technology training should not displace core journalism education. Verification, media ethics, interviewing, research, source evaluation, and writing remain fundamental. Digital skills should be embedded within these disciplines rather than taught as isolated technical modules.

Practical education should also include AI literacy, data journalism, mobile reporting, multimedia editing, visual verification, social media analysis, and audience research. Students should learn not only how to use tools but also when not to use them. This distinction is essential for developing professional independence.

## 6. Conclusion

Modern media convergence has fundamentally changed the professional environment of journalism. The journalist increasingly works across platforms, formats, technologies, and professional teams. This transformation requires broader competence, but it does not reduce journalism to technical production.

The central conclusion is that professional mastery in a convergent newsroom is based on the integration of traditional journalistic values with new digital capabilities. Verification, editorial judgment, ethics, independence, and public interest remain the foundation, while multimedia



storytelling, mobile publishing, data literacy, platform awareness, audience analytics, collaboration, and AI literacy expand the journalist's professional toolkit.

The future journalist should therefore not be understood simply as a person who can operate many technologies. A more appropriate definition is a professional who can move confidently between formats and platforms, select appropriate tools, collaborate with specialists, understand audiences, and adapt to technological change without losing the principles of journalism. Convergence changes the form of journalism, but professional responsibility remains its central substance.

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