

## **Ethical Challenges for Journalists in Times of Fake News and Hate Speech: A Survey with German Journalists**

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**Abstract :** Journalists worldwide have been confronted with a variety of ethical challenges over the last years. Because of massive changes in media technology and the public sphere, especially online journalism has trouble to uphold the fundamental values of journalism. In particular, the increasing amount of fake news and hate speech puts journalists under more and more pressure. In order to understand better how journalists judge this development and how they adapt in their daily work, a survey with journalists in Germany was carried out. 303 professional journalists participated in an online questionnaire. Results show that 65% underline that economic pressure grows and nearly the same number describe a change in the role of journalists in society. Furthermore, 61% agree that they put more time into research to secure their work against accusations of fabricating fake news. Interestingly, over 60% see a change in the role of journalists in society. The majority (85%) confirms that print journalism has to give way for online platforms and that the influence of social media for journalism grows (75%). Half of the surveyed advocate for more personalized public activism on part of journalists, such as appearance in talk shows and public talks. The results of the study will be discussed in light of the ongoing debate on ethical standards as a condition for a sustainable and trustworthy digital public sphere.

**Keywords :** ethics, fake news, journalism, public sphere

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