



## INDUSTRY OVERVIEW: MEDIA

### What is Media?

Media is a broad term that encompasses many sectors and occupations. Generally speaking, the purpose of media is to communicate some kind of message to a target audience. This is done through a variety of mediums including print and broadcast journalism; book, magazine, and newspaper publishing; film and television production; and interactive and online media. Within each of these areas there are essentially two sides, the creative side and the business side. In general, the creative side makes the content and the business side sells it. Both sides of the business have many different career tracks and opportunities. Below we will highlight just some of the careers in the industry.

### Career Tracks

Journalists (Reporters, Analysts, Columnists, Photojournalists and Correspondents): Journalists gather information about current events, trends, issues and people that becomes news. They may create reports for broadcast or publication in mass media such as newspapers, television, radio, magazines, documentary film, and the Internet. Journalists have to find sources for their work and are often expected to report in the most objective and unbiased way to serve the public good. A degree in Journalism, English or Communications is beneficial for those wishing to pursue a career in this field. Working for a small newspaper is highly recommended as a place to break in and learn the trade. Writing for a school paper is a great way to get started and build a portfolio.

Writers: Writers conceptualize and develop content for various print sources including books, magazines, online publications, radio and television broadcasts. There are many different types of writers including Copywriters, Technical Writers, Grants/Proposal Writers, Speech Writers, Authors, Poets, Novelists, Composers, Lyricists, Playwrights, Mythographers, Journalists, and Film Scriptwriters. The best way to get started is simply to write. Many people start off writing for the school newspaper or magazine, starting an online blog, writing freelance articles, or taking a creative writing class.

Editors: Editors review and revise the work that writers and directors have created. They must have a good eye for detail and understand the subject and intentions of the work. There are many types of editors, including Copy Editors, Business Editors, Film Editors, Literary Editors, and Picture Editors. In the editing field, and for film editing especially, the ability to work with digital media is becoming increasingly important since most editing now takes place on a computer. However, few industry-wide standards exist, so companies often look for people with skills in the hardware or software they are currently using. There are classes, workshops, and interactive media for sale that teach these software products.

Publishing: Publishing traditionally refers to the distribution of books, newspapers, and magazines, but has more recently expanded to include electronic resources, websites and blogs. Today online publication is becoming increasingly more popular. Authors typically seek out publishers and submit manuscripts for approval. When a manuscript is approved, the monetary and distribution negotiations are settled and the author works with editors, proofreaders, and designers of the publishing company to make the final product. The publishers are in charge of the marketing and advertising of the work as well, and often have printing houses where they print the publication. Large publishing houses offer an enormous diversity of opportunities in editorial, sales and marketing, financial, technological and other capacities. Publishing is a competitive business, and good way to break in is to build up experience doing general duties within a small publishing house as a way to learn the business. Many people get their start in publishing as assistants in editorial, publicity, marketing, production, or sales departments. These areas are quite different, so it's important to know which area is the best fit for one's skills and interests.

Interactive and Online Media: Interactive and online media is the largest industry in this sector. In broad terms, the industry covers web and internet, off-line multimedia, electronic games and interactive TV. Rather than passive watching or listening, interactive media enables the consumer to interact with the media they are experiencing. It is a fast-changing area, which includes IT, telecommunications, broadcasting, design, communications and publishing. Like the other sectors of media, interactive and online media have both the business side and the creative side. Traditionally, most of the interactive media companies are small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, many of the larger traditional media organizations are now incorporating a department dedicated to this area as well.

Producers: Producers are involved in every phase of television or film production on both the creative and the business sides. They are always in search of ideas that they believe can be turned into lucrative film projects or television shows. They may see many films, read hundreds of manuscripts, and maintain numerous contacts with literary agents and publishers. Producers are also responsible for all of the financial aspects of a film, including finding financing for its production. Once financing is obtained, the producer works out a detailed budget and sees to it that the production costs stay within that budget. In a large production, the producer also works closely with production managers, who are in charge of crews, travel, casting, and equipment.

Directors: Directors interpret the script and develop its thematic and visual images for the film. They are also involved in every stage of production on both the creative and business sides. They may supervise hundreds of people, from screenwriters to costume, lighting, and set designers. Directors are in charge of all technical and artistic aspects of the film or television show. They conduct auditions and rehearsals and approve the location, scenery, costumes, choreography, and music. In short, they direct the entire cast and crew during shooting. Some directors assume multiple roles, such as director-producer or writer-producer-director. Successful directors must know how to hire the right people and create effective teams.

Screenwriters: Screenwriters turn an idea into a screenplay or a script for a television pilot (a sample episode of a proposed television series) or movie. Screenwriters work closely with producers and directors. Before filming or taping can begin, screenwriters will prepare a “shooting script,” which has instructions pertaining to shots, camera angles, and lighting. Frequently, screenwriters make changes to reflect the directors’ and producers’ ideas and desires. The work, therefore, requires not only creativity, but also an ability to collaborate with others, and to write and rewrite many versions of a script under pressure. One way to break into screenwriting is to seek an internship under an experienced and successful screenwriter. As this is a highly competitive field, many people also go to film school for the experience and the contacts. Understanding genre’s, plots and tone is important when writing a screenplay and there are books for sale on this topic.

Cinematographers, camera operators, and gaffers: Cinematographers, camera operators, and gaffers work together to capture the scenes in the script on film. Cinematographers compose the film shots to reflect the mood the director wishes to create. They do not usually operate the camera; instead, they plan and coordinate the actual filming. Camera operators handle all camera movements and perform the actual shooting. Assistant camera operators check the equipment, load and position cameras, run the film to a lab or darkroom, and take care of the equipment. Commercial camera operators specialize in shooting commercials. This experience translates easily into filming documentaries or working on smaller-budget independent films. Gaffers, or lighting technicians, set up the different kinds of lighting needed for filming. They work for the director of photography, who plans all lighting needs. Many cinematographers get their start in trade schools or vocational institutions that teach cinematography or filmic photography. Learning about film emulsions (film chemistry), camera types and uses, lighting techniques and basics and film lenses is very important in this field.

Sound engineering technicians, film recordists, and boom operators: Sound engineering technicians record dialogue, sounds, music, and special effects during the filming. They are the “ears” of the film, supervising all sound generated during filming. They select microphones and the level of sound from mixers and synthesizers to assure the best sound quality. Recordists help to set up the equipment and are in charge of the individual tape recorders. Boom operators handle long booms with microphones that are moved from one area of the set to another. One person often performs many of these functions because more and more filming is done on location and the equipment has become compact, lighter, and simpler to operate. Sound engineers usually have either a college or technical school education, or they go through a formal training program.

**Multimedia artists and animators:** Multimedia artists create the movie “magic.” Through their imagination, creativity, and skill, they can create anything required by the script, from talking animals to flaming office buildings and earthquakes. They typically need a vibrant imagination and excellent drawing skills, as well as electronics skills, self-motivation, and a great deal of patience. Computer skills are very important in this field, as many areas of television and film production, including animation and visual effects, now rely heavily on computer technology. Other related careers include: assistant animators, background and layout artists, and visual development artists, animators working on effects alone, storyboard artists, and graphic designers to name a few. Creating a portfolio and/or website that includes drawings, computer generated images, and several minutes worth of animations is a good way to get started in the business. There are also graduate degree programs in animation available.

**Blogger:** Bloggers are freelance writers who maintain an online journal, also known as a blog. These journals are shared by people who post entries about a variety of topics. Bloggers can choose to write about anything ranging from literature, fashion, and lifestyle, to technology and social issues. Bloggers are generally of two kinds: bloggers for hire and web publishers. A blogger for hire is one who blogs for others and gets paid in return. Web publishers create their own blogs and may or may not monetize them. It is necessary for bloggers to choose topics wisely and write posts about subject matter they are knowledgeable about. Those wishing to take up blogging professionally need to conduct significant background research regarding target audiences and their viewpoints. The job market for bloggers is large, and finding employment is relatively easy. Another advantage of this profession is that bloggers have the independence to work from home and set their own work schedules.

**Social Media Coordinator:** Social Media Coordinators are responsible for daily posts/tweets to applicable social media outlets. Excellent verbal and written communication skills as well as expert knowledge of social networking skills are needed. Other duties include coordinating online activity, tracking social media influence measurements, partnering with other departments to ensure proper online messaging and relevancy, ensuring consistency of messages across multiple networks, preparing reports to update internal staff on usage statistics, and continuous monitoring and coverage of all sites.

### **Additional Related Sectors**

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cable and Telephone Media   | Market Research                     |
| Broadcasting                | Public Relations                    |
| Satellite                   | Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) |
| Blogging                    | Video on demand (VOD)               |
| Announcing                  | Digital Video Disc (DVD)            |
| Recorded Music              | Technical Writing                   |
| Radio                       | Ad Copy Writing                     |
| Podcasting                  | Feature Writing                     |
| Video and Electronic Gaming | News Copy Writing                   |
| Advertising                 | Creative Writing                    |

### **Requirements / Skills**

Requirements and skills vary greatly within the media industry depending on the sector and position. Overall, most occupations in the media industry require problem solving skills, persuasive skills, working both independently and with a team, and working under pressure and with deadlines. For writing, editing, and publishing careers, written and verbal communication skills are critical. Editors especially need the ability to evaluate ideas and read for information and clarity. Reporters need skills in observing people, data, and things, gathering information, informing and explaining. Producers and directors need organizational, planning, and financial skills. They also need to be able to analyze and design, negotiate, network, and hire the right people. Cinematographers, camera operators, gaffers, sound engineering technicians, film recordists, and boom operators need more technical skills such as photography, digital and video-editing, and using technical equipment.

## Salary

Compensation for media positions ranges greatly depending on industry, position and size of the organization. Typical entry-level starting salaries for production assistants can fall around \$26,000 per year in New York City, and slightly lower in the rest of the country. This is an industry in which one can move up fairly quickly, although it is highly competitive. Some top producers, technicians, and actors can make millions per production. In the writing/editing area look to basic entry level salaries of between \$30,000- \$35,000, while higher level positions can reach around \$80,000. Artist and animators can start around \$43,000 and reach around \$80,000 as well.

## Publications

American Theatre  
Back Stage  
Billboard  
On Location  
Variety  
Show Business News  
Theater Times  
Entertainment Employment Journal  
[www.iwantmedia.com/publications/](http://www.iwantmedia.com/publications/)

## Associations

American Copy Editors Society  
American Federation of Television and Radio Artists  
(AFTRA)  
American Society of Journalists and Authors  
American Society of Magazine Editors  
American Society of Media Photographers  
American Society of Newspaper Editors  
Society for Features Journalism  
Associated Press Managing Editors  
Association of Music Writers and Photographers  
Association for Women Journalists  
Broadcast Education Association  
Directors Guild of America  
Editorial Freelancers Association  
National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences  
National Association of Broadcasters

## Websites

### Media

[www.mediabistro.com](http://www.mediabistro.com)  
[www.themediainline.co.za](http://www.themediainline.co.za)

### Writing/Editing

[www.writersmarket.com](http://www.writersmarket.com)  
[www.writersweekly.com](http://www.writersweekly.com)  
[www.sunoasis.com](http://www.sunoasis.com)  
[www.writerswrite.com](http://www.writerswrite.com)  
<http://aupnet.org/jobs/joblist.php>

## Directories

[www.visualnet.com](http://www.visualnet.com)  
Music Business Handbook & Career Guide  
NY Theatrical Sourcebook  
[www.aboutpublicrelations.net/mediadir.htm](http://www.aboutpublicrelations.net/mediadir.htm)

National Association of Television Program  
Executives  
National Press Club  
National Press Photographers Association  
National Writers Union  
New York Women in Communications  
The Newspaper Guild  
Online News Association  
Public Relations Society of America  
Radio-Television News Directors Association  
Recording Industry Association of America  
Screen Actors Guild (SAG)  
Society of American Business Editors and Writers  
Society of Professional Journalists  
Society for News Design  
White House Correspondents' Association  
Writers Guild of America

### Journalism/Publishing

[www.journalismjobs.com](http://www.journalismjobs.com)  
[www.bisg.org](http://www.bisg.org)  
<http://bookwire.com>  
[www.cencom.org](http://www.cencom.org)  
[www.ed2010.com](http://www.ed2010.com)  
[www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com)  
[www.bookjobs.com](http://www.bookjobs.com)

**Production**

<http://mandy.com>

[www.entertainmentcareers.net](http://www.entertainmentcareers.net)

[www.screenwritersutopia.com](http://www.screenwritersutopia.com)

[www.visualnet.com](http://www.visualnet.com)

**Additional**

[www.riaa.com](http://www.riaa.com)

[www.variety.com](http://www.variety.com)

[www.namac.org](http://www.namac.org)

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

<http://adage.com>

[www.magazine.org](http://www.magazine.org)

[www.nielsen.com/us/en/solutions/capabilities/audio.html](http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/solutions/capabilities/audio.html)

[www.entertainmentjobs.com](http://www.entertainmentjobs.com)