

# Ethics still a priority for journalists

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Credit: Lance Page, [truthout.org](http://truthout.org)

An Australian-first survey of media professionals shows that despite newspapers moving online, the majority of journalists are still committed to quality, ethical journalism.

Journalism at the Speed of Bytes, a report co-authored by Dr. David McKnight from UNSW's Journalism and Media Research Centre and Penny O'Donnell from the University of Sydney, involved interviews with 100 editors and senior journalists from the major Australian metropolitan and national newspapers.

The report shows that 75 per cent of senior journalists nominated journalism with a "strong element of public benefit" as the most

important characteristic of quality journalism. Two-thirds of respondents described the quality of online journalism in Australia as “average” or “poor” while only 14 per cent described it as “excellent.”

Associate Professor McKnight said the finding was positive considering the challenges the industry faces after cost-cutting measures recently led to the loss of more than 1500 editorial jobs at Fairfax and News Ltd.

"Australian [journalists](#) are idealists at heart. They see themselves performing a public service and they see public benefit as one of the main justifications for their work.

"The economic foundation of newspapers is weakening and there is no obvious substitute for the old advertising-based model to pay for good [quality](#) print journalism," he said.

The report was funded by the Australian Research Council and the Walkley Foundation.

**More information:** [bit.ly/OgXopJ](http://bit.ly/OgXopJ)

Provided by University of New South Wales

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