

Photojournalism

WEEK THIRTEEN: The future of photojournalism.

Learning Outcomes



At the end of this week, you should be able to:

1. Understand the future of journalism
2. Explore the future of Photography
3. Analyze the future of photojournalism

Introduction

According to Media Career Development Network (2021), the new generation of photojournalists will work in a completely different way from the old photojournalists. They know the possibilities of working with social media and are not locked into only stills photography. Presently, visual storytelling is becoming more critical – if you're good at that, you will survive. Digital technology has drastically changed the role of photography in society. Advances in 360-degree VR, augmented reality, XR, and promises of holographic imagery with sound syncing from a smartphone, surprise us with every tech generation. Already in the works, camera lenses that adjust automatically to weather conditions are being assessed. Probably most alarming, is that images on social media pages already can be used as legal evidence, because timestamps are embedded in them. Other cameras are being developed that will be able to help reenact events or moments, providing layers, and layers, of data upon which to investigate a crime or incident (Cheers, 2022). During the earlier analogue age, not everyone had access to a camera. It was considered a privilege to have a photograph taken. Also, the process of taking a photograph was a long and delicate process. In today's society, almost everyone has access to a camera, they can be found on cell phone and on computers. Pictures can be taken without much effort. It is as easy as pressing down on a single button. Digital technology has improved the quality and speed at which a picture can be transferred, process and accessed. Society is more connected in a way where pictures can be sent around the globe in seconds. Friends and family are more connected they can share their life stories through their photos.

According Reuter Institute, the five global trends are based on recent research conducted at the Reuters Institute, reflect changes to the way people access news, transformations in professional journalism and the business of news, as well as changing political environments in some parts of the world.

5 things everybody needs to know about the future of journalism:

1. We have moved from a world where media organisations were gatekeepers to a world where media still create the news agenda, but platform companies control access to audiences
2. This move to digital media generally does not generate filter bubbles. Instead automated serendipity and incidental exposure drive people to more and more diverse sources of information
3. Journalism is often losing the battle for people's attention and in some countries for the public's trust
4. The business models that fund news are challenged, weakening professional journalism and leaving news media more vulnerable to commercial and political pressures
5. News is more diverse than ever, and the best journalism in many cases better than ever, taking everyone from the most powerful politicians to the biggest private companies

The report argues that these five trends will play out – with variation due to cultural, economic, political, and social context – across the globe in years to come. According to Whelan (2022), the new technology has even found its way into media powerhouses like the Wall Street Journal, the Associated Press, Forbes, and Reuters. Many media companies who are reluctant to use automated journalism to replace journalists have still incorporated some form of AI into their business structures, such as the BBC's "Juicer" that automatically sorts articles by subject, relevance, and other factors, and the New York Times' "Editor" that works to make information more accessible by automatically tagging key phrases. While the rate of AI integration into the media sector grows, advancements and improvements in the technology increases as well. Soon, you might not be able to differentiate "real" and "robot" journalism.

The Future of photography

According to Bryan-Smith (2023), photography has had a long and eventful history. From wet plates to smartphones. Camera technology has changed dramatically over the years. And trends have come and gone. But what about the future of photography? What changes and developments can we expect in the coming years? And how will photography change our lives? The future of photography is marked by several exciting trends and developments as technology, art, and culture continue to evolve. Spyn Team (2023), argues that the future of photography consists of emerging trends and advancements, including AI-powered cameras, augmented and virtual reality experiences, 3D imaging, computational photography, and more. Using drones, 360-degree cameras, and other cutting-edge technologies is also expected to reshape how you capture and share images. A growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical practices in photography will likely significantly impact the industry. Additionally, how you consume and share photographs will likely continue evolving, with social media and digital platforms playing an increasingly important role. While it's impossible to predict the entire future of photography, there are several key areas that are likely to shape the direction of the field:

1. **Advancements in Camera Technology:**

- The ongoing improvement in camera technology, particularly in smartphone cameras and mirrorless systems, will lead to higher image quality, more compact equipment, and innovative features.
- Cameras, including those in smartphones, will continue to evolve with improved sensors, lenses, and computational photography capabilities. Expect better image quality and enhanced low-light performance.

2. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):**

- AI-driven photography tools and software will become more integrated, offering features like automated image editing, intelligent scene recognition, and enhanced image stabilization.
- AI-driven photography features, such as image recognition, scene optimization, and automated editing, will become more prevalent, making photography more accessible and user-friendly.

3. **Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR and AR):**

- Photography will intersect with VR and AR, allowing for immersive and interactive visual experiences. These technologies have the potential to change the way we consume and create visual content.
- Photography will expand beyond traditional 2D images. AR and VR will enable immersive, interactive visual experiences that go beyond static photos.
- The autofocus and image stabilization systems both use AI to achieve precise results, as does tracking and automatic exposure features. And similar AI software is being introduced to smartphone cameras and editing apps (Bryan-Smith, 2023).
- The iPhone 7 has a new Portrait mode which blurs the background to create a pleasing shallow depth of field. And Skylum's Luminar has AI-powered filters that make editing a breeze.
- The editing software on your computer will also develop with more AI over time. It will be able to recognise specific objects and label them. It will change your setting without you needing to request it.

4. Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Practices:

- Eco-conscious photography, focusing on sustainable equipment, materials, and processes, will gain prominence to address environmental concerns.
- Environmental concerns will influence the photography industry, promoting sustainable practices, eco-friendly materials, and reducing the carbon footprint associated with equipment and storage.

5. Personalization and Filters:

- Customization and personalization through filters and effects will remain popular, allowing individuals to express their creativity and unique style.
- Photography enthusiasts will increasingly use filters and effects to personalize and stylize their images, reflecting the desire for creative expression and individuality.

6. Cultural and Social Influences:

- Photography will continue to be influenced by cultural and social trends, such as the emphasis on social justice, diversity, and inclusion.
- Social and cultural trends, such as social justice movements and diversity and inclusion efforts, will influence the themes and subjects of photography.

7. Legal and Ethical Considerations:

- Copyright, privacy, and ethical concerns in photography will continue to be important, especially with the rise of image manipulation and deepfakes.
- As image manipulation and deepfakes become more sophisticated, legal and ethical concerns in photography, including copyright, privacy, and image authenticity, will remain important.

8. Global Perspectives:

- Photography will offer global and local insights, highlighting both international events and community experiences. The field will continue to serve as a medium for sharing diverse stories.
- Photographers will continue to capture both global stories and local insights, offering unique perspectives on pressing issues and community experiences.

9. Multimedia Storytelling:

- Photography will blend with other media forms like video, audio, and text to create multimedia narratives that offer a rich and immersive storytelling experience.

- Photography will blend with other forms of media, such as video, audio, and text, to create comprehensive, immersive storytelling experiences. Multimedia will become an integral part of visual narratives.

10. Mobile Photography:

- Smartphone photography will remain a dominant force, as mobile devices become primary tools for capturing and sharing images. Mobile apps and social media platforms will continue to influence photography.
- Smartphones will remain primary tools for capturing and sharing images, and mobile apps and social media platforms will continue to shape photography practices.
- Since 2010, digital camera sales have fallen 80%. And it's not because people are taking fewer photos. On the contrary, people are taking more photos than ever. But now everyone uses their smartphone (Bryan-Smith, 2023).
- The latest phones are capable of near-professional level image quality. It's not just about uploading selfies to your social media. You can take high-standard photos for professional purposes (Bryan-Smith, 2023).

11. Accessible Photography Education:

- Photography education will become more accessible through online courses, tutorials, and communities, enabling aspiring photographers to learn and connect globally.

12. NFTs and Blockchain Technology:

- The integration of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and blockchain technology has introduced new possibilities for copyright protection, provenance, and the monetization of digital images.

13. Visual Language and Communication:

- Photography will continue to serve as a universal visual language for communication, transcending linguistic and cultural boundaries.

14. AI-Generated Art and Photography:

- The creation of digital and AI-generated art and photography will challenge traditional notions of authorship and creativity.
- AI-generated and algorithmically generated art and photography will challenge traditional notions of authorship and creativity.

15. Professional and Amateur Collaboration:

- The distinction between professional and amateur photographers will blur as platforms allow for wider collaboration and contributions from a diverse range of creators.
- Continuing education and training will be crucial as photographers adapt to evolving technologies and changing industry standards.

16. Aerial and Drone Photography:

- Drones and aerial photography will continue to offer unique perspectives and creative possibilities. They are expected to become more accessible for both professionals and enthusiasts.
- Drones equipped with high-resolution cameras have opened up new possibilities for aerial photography and videography. The future of photography will definitely rely heavily on drones. Hence you can learn more about drones (Spyne Team, 2023).

The future of photojournalism

The future of photojournalism is shaped by ongoing technological advancements, changing media landscapes, and evolving audience preferences. While the industry faces various challenges, it also offers opportunities for growth and innovation. Estrin (2017), argues that in history, there have been professions that basically disappeared. There's still a few chimney sweeps around, but not like there once was. The question is, what will photojournalism evolve into, and can someone earn a living doing it? Or is everybody now a photographer, like everyone thinks they are Ernest Hemingway just because they have Microsoft Word? While these trends and possibilities offer insights into the future of photojournalism, it is important to note that the industry will continue to evolve and adapt to the changing landscape. The core principles of truthful and impactful storytelling will remain fundamental, regardless of the technological advancements or shifts in media consumption patterns.

The future of photojournalism is both challenging and promising. Kavanagh (2019), argues that Significant technological advances are being made across a range of fields, including information communications technology (ICT); artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in terms of machine learning and robotics; nanotechnology; space technology; biotechnology; and quantum computing to name but a few. These breakthroughs are expected to be highly disruptive and bring about major transformative shifts in how societies function. While the industry faces issues like ethical concerns and changing business models, there are numerous opportunities for photojournalists to leverage new technologies and methods to continue informing and engaging audiences with compelling visual narratives. Ultimately, the core principles of truth, accuracy, and storytelling will remain at the heart of photojournalism as it evolves in response to the demands of the digital

age. The following are some key trends and considerations that may shape the future of photojournalism:

1. Digital Transformation:

- Photojournalism has undergone a significant shift toward digital platforms. With the decline of print media, digital publications, social media, and online news outlets have become primary platforms for photojournalistic content.
- The shift towards digital platforms and online media has significantly impacted photojournalism. The future will likely see an increased emphasis on digital storytelling, multimedia formats, and interactive visual content.
- As technology continues to advance, photographers and news organizations will need to adapt to new tools, formats, and storytelling techniques. The integration of multimedia elements, such as video and interactive graphics, will become more common.
- Photojournalism has largely moved from print publications to digital platforms. This trend will continue, with photojournalists expected to produce content for online news outlets, social media, and multimedia presentations.

2. Mobile Photography:

- Mobile devices, especially smartphones, have become powerful tools for capturing and sharing images. Mobile photography apps and platforms have made it easier for citizen journalists and professional photojournalists to share stories quickly.
- With the widespread use of smartphones and social media, photojournalists are increasingly using mobile devices to capture and share images in real-time. Mobile journalism, or "mojo," enables instant reporting and immediate dissemination of visual stories.
- Smartphone cameras have become increasingly capable, and many photojournalists now use them as tools for capturing and transmitting news images. Mobile journalism, or "mojo," is likely to gain prominence.

3. Social Media and User-Generated Content:

- Social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are important for the dissemination of photojournalistic content. User-generated content can play a significant role in breaking news stories.
- Mobile Journalism (MoJo), with the ubiquity of smartphones, mobile journalism has gained prominence. Many photojournalists now capture, edit, and publish stories using mobile devices. This trend is likely to continue, making photojournalism more accessible and immediate.

- Audience engagement will play a crucial role in the future of photojournalism. Social media platforms, live streams, and interactive features will be used to connect with and involve the audience in storytelling.

4. **Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR):**

- Photojournalism has shifted towards digital platforms, and photographers and news organizations will need to adapt to new tools, formats, and storytelling techniques. Integration of multimedia elements like video and interactive graphics will become more common.
- New technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) offer exciting possibilities for immersive storytelling. Photojournalists may explore these technologies to engage audiences in innovative ways.

5. **Data Journalism:**

- The integration of data visualization and multimedia content in journalism is growing. Photojournalists are increasingly collaborating with data journalists to tell complex stories using visuals and data.
- Visualizing data through photography and infographics is becoming increasingly important in explaining complex issues. Photojournalists may collaborate with data journalists to convey information in a more accessible manner.

6. **Drone Photography:**

- Drones have opened up new perspectives for photojournalism, enabling the capture of aerial shots and images in hard-to-reach locations. They are especially valuable for covering events like natural disasters or protests.

7. **Ethical Concerns:**

- As technology advances, the ethical considerations surrounding photojournalism become increasingly complex. The rise of deepfakes, image manipulation, and the spread of misinformation pose challenges to the credibility and trustworthiness of visual journalism. Photojournalists will need to navigate these ethical dilemmas and maintain the integrity of their work.
- Maintaining high ethical standards and credibility will be vital for the future of photojournalism. The public's trust in the media depends on the industry's ability to deliver accurate and unbiased reporting.
- Photojournalists must navigate challenges such as fake news, misinformation, and privacy concerns. Ethical conduct, fact-checking, and responsible reporting are essential safeguards.
- Protecting the rights and intellectual property of photographers will remain important as images are shared and distributed online.

8. Monetization and Sustainability:

- The economic challenges of the industry persist. Photojournalists and publications are exploring new revenue models, such as crowdfunding, subscriptions, and grants, to support quality journalism.
- Photojournalists must navigate challenges such as fake news, misinformation, and privacy concerns. Ethical conduct, fact-checking, and responsible reporting are essential safeguards.

9. Local and Community Journalism:

- There is a renewed focus on local and community journalism, and photojournalists are crucial in capturing and sharing the stories that matter to specific regions and communities.
- There has been an increase in freelance and independent photojournalists who work on a project-by-project basis. As traditional news organizations evolve, freelancers may play a significant role in delivering news content.
- Building and engaging an audience is becoming increasingly important. Photojournalists may need to connect with their viewers, listeners, or readers directly through social media and other online platforms

10. Environmental and Social Issues:

- Environmental and ethical concerns are impacting the field. There is a growing focus on sustainability, both in terms of the environment and fair treatment of photojournalists. These issues may influence the future practices of the industry.
- Documenting environmental and social issues, including climate change, social justice, and humanitarian crises, is expected to be a significant focus for photojournalists in the future.

11. Visual Storytelling:

- The power of visual storytelling is as strong as ever. Photojournalists will continue to create compelling narratives that engage and inform audiences.
- In an era of information overload, compelling visual storytelling will continue to be essential. Photojournalists will need to create images that engage and inform audiences quickly and effectively.
- The future may bring innovations in multimedia storytelling, combining photographs, video, audio, and text to provide richer, more comprehensive narratives.

- In an era of information overload, compelling visual storytelling will continue to be essential. Photojournalists will need to create images that engage and inform audiences quickly and effectively.
- Beyond traditional single images, photojournalists are embracing long-form visual storytelling through photo essays, multimedia projects, and documentaries. Storytelling is becoming more narrative-driven and immersive.

12. Collaboration and Cross-Media Work:

- Photojournalists are collaborating with writers, videographers, and data analysts to produce comprehensive multimedia stories that leverage the strengths of various mediums.
- Continued professional development and training will be essential for photojournalists to adapt to evolving technologies and storytelling methods.

13. Citizen Journalism:

- With the ubiquity of smartphones, citizen journalists can capture and share news events in real time. This phenomenon presents both challenges and opportunities for professional photojournalists in terms of verification and competition.
- The proliferation of social media platforms has democratized the production and distribution of news and visual content. Citizen journalists and user-generated content play a significant role in shaping the future of photojournalism, providing alternative perspectives and firsthand accounts of events.
- Audience engagement will play a crucial role in the future of photojournalism. Social media platforms, live streams, and interactive features will be used to connect with and involve the audience in storytelling.
- The industry has seen an increase in freelance and independent photojournalists who work on a project-by-project basis. As traditional news organizations evolve, freelancers may play a significant role in delivering news content.

14. Sustainability and Business Models:

- The photojournalism industry is grappling with financial challenges, including declining print media and diminishing budgets.
- As traditional media outlets face financial challenges, photojournalists may explore alternative revenue streams, such as self-publishing, crowdfunding, subscriptions, or partnerships with NGOs and advocacy organizations. This will be essential for the future viability of photojournalism.

15. Diverse Voices and Perspectives:

- There is an increasing emphasis on diverse and inclusive storytelling. The industry is working to amplify underrepresented voices and address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The industry is becoming more conscious of the need for diverse voices and representation in photojournalism.

- The industry is making strides in promoting diversity and inclusion, ensuring that a broader range of voices and perspectives is represented in photojournalism.

16. Global Events:

- The future of photojournalism is likely to be a dynamic blend of traditional and innovative practices, with an emphasis on accuracy, responsible storytelling, and ethical conduct.
- Photojournalists will need to be adaptable, tech-savvy, and socially conscious to meet the evolving demands of the industry and maintain their relevance in an ever-changing media landscape
- Political, social, and environmental events will continue to shape the focus and direction of photojournalism.
- Major events, like pandemics, natural disasters, and social movements, underscore the need for accurate and impactful visual reporting. Political, social, and environmental events will continue to shape the focus and direction of photojournalism.
- Photojournalists will continue to cover global stories, and technology allows for near-instantaneous distribution. This global reach can foster a greater understanding of international events and issues.

FURTHER READING

Top 12 Predictions Regarding the Future of Photography

According to Spyne Team (2023), while it's difficult to predict the future with certainty, here are 12 potential predictions for you regarding the future of photography:

1. AI will become a more prominent part of photography, helping photographers automate repetitive tasks, analyze data, and create new art forms.
2. The use of 3D printing technology will continue to grow, allowing photographers to create physical prints of their digital images.
3. The demand for high-quality, immersive virtual and augmented reality experiences will increase, creating new photography forms designed specifically for these mediums.
4. Social media will continue to play an important role in the world of photography like fashion photography, with more photographers sharing their work and building communities online.
5. Cameras will continue to become more compact and portable, allowing for easier travel and creative possibilities.

6. Drones will become increasingly popular for aerial photography and videography, allowing photographers to capture unique and dramatic perspectives.
7. The demand for environmental and social justice photography will continue to increase as photographers use their art to raise awareness and promote positive change.
8. Minimalist and abstract photography styles will continue to grow in popularity, emphasizing simplicity, form, and texture.
9. New forms of lighting technology will emerge, allowing for more creative control and flexibility in photography.
10. Collaborative and community-driven photography projects will continue gaining traction as photographers seek new ways to collaborate and share their art.
11. The use of film-inspired aesthetics in digital photography will continue to be popular. As photographers seek to recreate the look and feel of classic film stocks.
12. The rise of mobile photography will continue as smartphones become more powerful and more people turn to their phones as their primary cameras.

These are just a few potential predictions regarding the future of photography. The industry is constantly evolving and adapting to new technologies, trends, and social issues.



The future of photography is characterized by a dynamic and evolving landscape, where technology and creativity intersect. As photographers adapt to changing tools and practices, they will continue to play a vital role in documenting and interpreting the world around them. The enduring power of photography as a medium for storytelling and expression is expected to persist and expand. The future of photography is an exciting and rapidly evolving landscape driven by technological advancements, creative innovations, and changes in how images are captured, shared, and consumed. The demand for photography will continue to grow in many areas. Such as commercial advertising, social media marketing, and event photography. Photographers will also have opportunities to work in emerging fields. Such as augmented and virtual reality, 3D printing, and artificial intelligence.

The future of photojournalism will continue to evolve as technology advances and the media landscape changes. However, the core principles of truthful and impactful storytelling will remain essential in capturing and conveying the realities of our world. The future of photojournalism will be marked by both challenges and opportunities. While the industry must address ethical concerns, economic pressures, and evolving media landscapes, it also has the potential to reach global audiences, engage with new technologies, and create impactful narratives that inform, inspire, and drive change.

Adaptable, skilled photojournalists who embrace innovation and uphold ethical standards will continue to play a vital role in shaping the future of journalism.

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