

News Editors Evaluate Journalism Courses and Graduate Employability

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Abstract

This research project used face-to-face interviews with news editors in Perth, Western Australia, to evaluate journalism courses and student employability in five Perth-based universities that teach journalism. The editors work in print, online, broadcast and television. All of them employ journalism graduates. The project aims to assess whether the journalism programmes provide graduates with the skill set prospective employers seek. Editors are uniquely placed as they employ journalism graduates as interns, or as full-time employees when they complete their studies, and they know what attributes and skills will help journalism graduates to succeed. The editors, for the most part, agreed that there was a key role for universities in Western Australia to provide both an educational background and skills-based training for graduates contemplating a career in journalism and early career journalists. There was, however, some disagreement as to the precise content of an ideal university-based journalism programme.

Keywords

News editors, journalism education, journalism graduate skills, journalism graduate employability, curriculum development

Introduction

It is more than 90 years since the first Australian university-based journalism programme was established, with the University of Western Australia (UWA) the first to offer informal lectures for journalists in 1919. The first formal courses were offered by University of Melbourne and University of Queensland in 1921. Today, 29 universities in Australia offer journalism programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Extensive media research in Australia and the United States (US) have focused on industry expectations and demands of journalism graduates. Australian studies of mainstream media employers reveal a generally conservative attitude about the

skills and qualities they demand in journalists (Callaghan & McManus 2010). Josephi (2004) interviewed employers from four international newspapers and found a preference for graduates with a strong news sense, critical thinking, confidence, curiosity and writing ability. The study concluded that these attributes can only be partly taught. Nankervis (2005, p. 111) substantiated these findings in her analysis of Australian broadcast employers and concluded that ‘there appears to be little concern at any of the networks for recruits to have skills related to new technology such as desktop video editing, reporter-orientated cameras or bulletin software’.

Meanwhile, calls for closer industry alignment are counterbalanced by concerns that this could favour mainstream media at a time when fewer graduates are finding work in the industry. Research indicates that around a third of graduates will find jobs in the mainstream media, and some educators question whether universities exaggerate the job prospects for journalism graduates (Cullen & Callaghan 2010). Alysén (2008) suggests that educators have a responsibility to train undergraduates in the traditional ‘Fourth Estate’ model of journalism while directing them to a variety of traditional and non-traditional placements, including corporate journalism. Similarly, Mensing (2010) calls for a move away from industry-driven education to a more community-orientated approach that takes advantage of new technology and citizen participation. In summary, the changing media job market is forcing educators to reconsider the function and content of a journalism degree in the twenty-first century.

These findings are largely mirrored in earlier studies from the US and the United Kingdom (UK). For example, in the US, employers have consistently indicated a preference for writing and reporting skills over computer skills (Birge 2004; Dickson & Brandon 2000; Huang et al. 2006). Fahmy (2008) asked online journalists in the US to rank the importance of 25 specific skills and found that the ability to learn, edit, report, spell and research rated in the top five. Also, in the US, a 2010 study found that employers still demanded traditional news skills, but also articulated an additional desire for graduates possessing conceptual knowledge in the application of multimedia (Brown & Collins 2010).

Moving towards a Convergent Journalism Curriculum

Universities in the US have been exploring issues around the changing media industry and its impact on journalism education since the mid-1990s. A 2005 study reported that 60 per cent of the US journalism schools were preparing students to work across multimedia platforms (Castaneda et al. 2005), and an online multimedia survey (Lin 2012) documented curriculum innovation in convergent journalism education across the US.

The US journalism schools have integrated convergent journalism in varying degrees, from one or two subjects to a full-scale overhaul of journalism programmes (Lowrey et al. 2005). In 2002, Indiana’s Ball State University adopted

convergent journalism into their programme with a view of where the industry would be in 5–10 years. At the same time, the University of Southern California adopted a converged curriculum only to drop it a year later (Birge 2006). Another study found little consensus among the US journalism educators about how a journalism curriculum should look beyond agreement on teaching the fundamentals of reporting and writing (Blom & Davenport 2012).

Birge (2006) interviewed employers who were worried that multimedia courses were displacing other skills like writing and researching. These concerns were also echoed by Bhuiyan (2010), Loo (2010) and Usher (2009). Several studies have emphasized that basic reporting skills remain paramount to employers (Pierce & Miller 2007). Similarly, Aumente (2007) stressed that innovation should be guided by careful experimentation to avoid courses being driven by new media ‘fads’ rather than industry demand. Other concerns cited include a lack of resources and insufficient expertise among journalism educators (Stewart 2007) and competing demands for teaching resources (Auman & Lillie 2008).

Despite these concerns, most educators and employers are tentatively supportive of moves towards a more converged curriculum. Huang et al. (2006) found consensus among educators and news professionals on the need to address media convergence in university courses while continuing to emphasize traditional journalism skills and critical thinking. Jarvis (2007) views convergent journalism as a way of enhancing students’ storytelling ability. It also presents new opportunities for educators to develop graduates’ proficiency in writing, editing and publishing (Hodgson & Wong 2011), and to equip students with skills in an entrepreneurial-driven industry (Hunter & Nel 2011).

Australian research into convergent curriculum innovation has been lighter on the ground. The 2008 *State of News Print Media* report found that 63 per cent of journalism courses offered dedicated online or convergent journalism courses (Martin 2008, p. 15). A qualitative survey of free-to-air news networks found that news managers valued ‘news hungry’ journalists over technologically driven ones (Nankervis 2005). This preference was echoed in a 2011 study which surveyed third-year students, working television journalists and senior managers and found ‘pre-digital’ skills like news sense, critical thinking and ethical sensitivity were consistently rated as more important across the three groups of participants (Nankervis 2011).

Researchers have looked at how the global financial crisis has reshaped the media industry and argued that journalism education needs to reflect a shift away from mainstream journalism to freelancing and entrepreneurial journalism (Outing 2009; Quinn 2010). Callaghan (2010) explores these changes in her overview of an experimental convergent subject at Edith Cowan University (Callaghan 2009). Koutsoukos and Biggins (2010) discuss the challenges of redesigning the curriculum in line with industry changes at the University of Newcastle and Duffield (2011) describes the processes involved in implementing a convergent media subject at Queensland University of Technology.

A number of studies have examined how undergraduates use digital technology, such as mobile phones, the Internet and social media, and suggested ways that these tools can be integrated into journalism curricula (Bethell 2010; Hirst & Treadwell 2011; Hubbard et al. 2011; Koutsoukos & Biggins 2010; Rollins 2010; Schwartz 2008). Specific case studies look at the implementation of skills in blogging (Chung et al. 2007) and podcasting (Huntsberger & Stavitsky 2006) or the introduction of convergent concepts in a newsroom setting (Lewis 2009). The consensus seems to be that convergent skills have their place in journalism curricula but they should be pegged to industry demands and adopted without compromising basic journalism competencies.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) model curricula for journalism education argues for a much stronger educational structure but 'with a balance between the practical and the academic'. While convergence multimedia skills are encouraged, journalism education in universities should also aim to provide students with a broad knowledge base and well-developed research and analytical skills (UNESCO 2007, pp. 7–8).

Finally, Marron (2014, p. 124) noted that a report from the Poynter Institute on *The Core Skills for the Future of Journalism* showed there was 'a wide divergence between professionals and educators in their thinking on the importance of core journalism skills, especially those skills that are essential for mastering new methods of gathering and delivering news and information'. The professionals (journalists and editors) did not rate the importance of multimedia skills as highly as educators, students or independent journalists. It must be noted that this article did not seek the views of journalism educators. The next stage in this research could be a mirror survey of educators to find if universities aim to fulfil the expectations of newsrooms and if they view their function and goals as similar or noticeably different.

Survey Results of News Editors in Perth

This survey focused on journalism courses taught at the five universities based in Perth: Edith Cowan University, Curtin University, Murdoch University, Notre Dame and the UWA. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 11 news editors in their respective newsrooms located in Perth. The interviewees (Table 1) were selected on the basis that they are the ones who hire journalism graduates to work in their respective media organizations. A questionnaire of 25 questions about industry needs and tertiary journalism programmes was administered during the interviews, all of which were recorded and transcribed. The interviewees represent a cross-section of media outlets in Perth, with the editors working for at least one of the following platforms: television, radio, print and online.

For purposes of brevity, and because of answer overlaps, this article focuses on just 10 questions that deal primarily with the content of programmes, whether universities are the best place to train journalists and on the relationship between industry and the academy. It does not dwell on the question of programme

Table 1. List of Interviewees

Broadcast	Position	Organization
David Stacey	Director of News	Channel 9, Perth
Howard Gretton	Director of News	Channel 7, Perth
Adrian Beattie	News Director	Channel 10, Perth
Rod Tiley	News Director	6PR & 96FM
Kim Jordan	News Editor	ABC, Perth
Print	Position	Organization
Bob Cronin	Group Editor-in-Chief	<i>The West Australian</i>
Brett McCarthy	Editor	<i>The West Australian</i>
Anthony DeCeglie	News Editor	<i>The Sunday Times</i>
Greg Thompson	Editor-in-Chief	Community Newspapers Group. (There are 17 Metropolitan community newspapers in Perth)
Matt Zis	News Editor	Community Newspaper Group
Online	Position	Organization
Allen Newton	Editor-in-Chief	WAtoday.com.au

accreditation, or of the best balance between theory and practice in programme design. The main thrust of the survey was to discover whether university-based journalism programmes in Perth provide graduates with the skill set prospective employers were seeking.

Responses to the questions were graded using Likert's scale (1–5) from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Tables 2–5 provide an overview of how the news editors view university-based journalism programmes in Perth.

Of all the questions in the survey, this was the one that had the greatest potential to generate debate. This is because there is often a tense, even acrimonious,

Table 2. Do You Think Universities are the Best Place to Teach Journalism?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(0)
Neutral	(2)
Agree	(5)
Strongly agree	(4)

Table 3. How would You Describe Your Relationship with Journalism Educators?

Non-existent	(0)
Distant	(3)
Improving	(4)
Cooperative	(4)

Table 4. Has Journalism Education Improved in the Last 10–15 Years?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(0)
Neutral	(0)
Agree	(2)
Strongly agree	(9)

Table 5. Do You Think There are Too Many Journalism Courses?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(2)
Neutral	(4)
Agree	(3)
Strongly agree	(2)

relationship between university-based journalism programmes and Australia's major media companies who are the employers of choice for many journalism graduates (Bacon 2004; McLean 2010). This reached a peak in June 2012 with the publication of several critical opinion pieces in *The Australian* newspaper on the relevance of tertiary journalism courses. The editorials were published in *The Australian* in response to widespread academic support of the Finkelstein report into media regulation (Stewart 2012; Windschuttle 2012). Stewart (2012) argued that journalism academics are out of touch with the realities of the newsroom and are indoctrinating students with a 'jaundiced' view of the industry. Again, these accusations were met with strident rebuttals from the academy (Price 2012; Simons 2012), highlighting tensions over whether journalism education should reproduce or challenge existing industry norms.

In drafting the questionnaire, it was believed that there was likely to be a divide between respondents who had university degrees and those who had grown up through the school of hard knocks—the full cadet programme. Three of the 11 editors in Perth had tertiary degrees, while the rest started their journalism careers as cadets. Yet, the responses did not contain the range of views we had anticipated, with most editors acknowledging that universities had an important role to play in the training of journalists, suggesting that a partnership between university and industry might be the best approach. One such editor said:

I think that universities do play an important role, particularly now. Whether that means we end up with the best journalists, I'm not really sure. You know, you may get as good a result out of a kid who comes to us at 17 straight from school, and we train them from there as happened in the dim dark past.

This support for in-house training appeared consistently in responses, even among those who supported university-based training. Although one respondent suggested that this should not be at the cost of a university education, which

helped individuals to mature before being exposed to the realities of life in a newsroom, where they would be expected to tackle stories that ‘could be damaging to a young person’.

A number of editors suggested that the training of journalists should be a partnership between the universities and industry, rather than the existing model in which the initial training is conducted within the academy and then, successful applicants for traineeships fine-tune their skills in the newsroom. At least three editors expressed a preference for a working model whereby you could do a cadetship and study at the same time. In one editor’s view:

I know the world has moved on, but my belief is that the best place to train future journalists is within the industry with universities in some sort of partnership. I think if you could work out some sort of a cadetship/apprenticeship system embedded within the journalism course—that’s a real way forward.

Discussions about journalism standards frequently turned to the belief that the quality of individual programmes was directly linked to the quality of the lecturers and tutors. Programmes that could boast input from working journalists, or had recently appointed industry practitioners to teaching positions, were lauded, whereas those that were seen to be staffed by people with no, little or dated industry experience were given the thumbs down. Those that employed staff with recent industry experience were seen as being abreast of industry’s needs, whereas those that did not have high-profile industry practitioners were regarded as too theory based. A number of respondents who linked the strength of programmes with the industry experience of teaching staff also recognized that the quality of individual journalism programmes varied over time.

But not everyone was convinced. One editor saw the role of the university as helping students to acquire a broad education rather than a particular focus on journalism. Another stated that:

Universities can train bright young minds to be inquisitive to understand their world and their environment, that’s what university I think is there for. But to teach them to be ‘on the road journalists’—I’m not sure that universities have to play that role as many graduates look back on their first 12 months in the newsroom and go gee—I learned a lot in that role and it was very different to what I envisaged it to be.

There is still the occasional view among some news editors that many academics would struggle to be employed by a news organization:

I wouldn’t get a job at a university because I don’t even have a first degree. I left about two thirds of the way through, but you know with all humility, I’d probably be a better journalism teacher than a lot of the people who’ve got doctorates or masters degrees and are teaching now.

Overall, there was agreement that universities play a role in the education and training of future journalists and a journalism degree was seen as an important

step in the journey to employment and a career in the industry. One editor summed it up by saying: ‘The person with the journalism degree usually has a better chance of getting the job, not necessarily because we’re giving them preference but because they have a body of work usually behind them.’

Despite an often tenuous relationship between the academy and employers, as discussed earlier, the evidence from these face-to-face interviews suggests a generally healthy, cooperative working relationship. However, this statement needs to be qualified because the relationship tends to exist at a personal level, with individual lecturers and industry representatives forging and maintaining links. These relationships also tend to be geographically situated, with staff from individual media organizations tending to work more closely with staff from a nearby institution, rather than those from further away, including other states. Such relationships were based on a number of factors, including previous work relationships, friendships and individual initiative. Often, the relationship was an historic one—based upon a request from the university to establish a formal internship arrangement or an invitation from a media organization to host interns. These relationships (both personal and institutional) are important from another perspective. But generally speaking, the attitude towards journalism education—and the role of universities—is at least encouraging, if not entirely positive.

The majority of editors clearly believed that the quality of university-based journalism education in Perth had improved in recent years (without stressing an exact timeline), especially in the area of digital technology and social media. A constant theme among the editors was that universities provide the initial training, which is then value-added by the employers.

Generally, the feeling among the editors was that there were probably too many tertiary journalism courses, especially as the five universities in Perth (Edith Cowan, Murdoch, Curtin, Notre Dame and UWA) teach the subject with varying numbers of units, courses and awards. The editors, for the most part, could understand why journalism was a popular course in terms of acquiring important writing and communication skills, but they indicated that graduates should be told that it was a highly competitive industry with a diminishing employment market.

I think here in Perth, we’re probably a bit crowded to tell you the truth, I’d like to see three of the universities doing it, and I think at the moment we’re at least four if not five. I guess to some extent it’s a bit like medicine—you can have too many universities doing the programs with limited opportunities. Don’t forget in the media, we’re not adding journalist jobs in this business, we’re cutting them down. So, the opportunities that are being offered to these kids are becoming fewer and far between.

Editors’ Views on the Content of Tertiary Journalism Courses (Tables 6–10)

The majority of editors felt that they could not talk knowledgeably about the quality of the tertiary journalism programmes in Perth. This was surprising since

Table 6. Should there be a Greater Focus on the Convergent Aspects of Journalism?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(0)
Neutral	(0)
Agree	(2)
Strongly agree	(9)

Table 7. Do You Think Journalism Graduates are Well Trained in Technology?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(0)
Neutral	(0)
Agree	(1)
Strongly agree	(10)

Table 8. Should Journalism Education Programmes Teach Shorthand?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(4)
Neutral	(1)
Agree	(4)
Strongly agree	(2)

Table 9. Should Journalism Programmes Include an Introduction to Public Relations?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(0)
Neutral	(2)
Agree	(7)
Strongly agree	(2)

Table 10. Would You Prefer to See Journalism Graduates Develop Generalist Skills?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(2)
Neutral	(2)
Agree	(7)
Strongly agree	(0)

the editors, for the most part, had earlier stated, as seen in Table 4, that the journalism programmes in Perth were better now than 10–15 years ago. However, the editors were willing to talk about individual programmes they had been associated with (either as students themselves, as part-time lecturers and sessional tutors, or having employed graduates from that/or those institutions).

The majority of editors agreed on two areas of weakness: (a) spelling, grammar and syntax; and (b) the development of general knowledge. Both were linked to the apparent ambivalence of would-be journalists to read newspapers or magazines (either in hard copy or online), watch television or listen to radio news bulletins. A number of respondents said this was particularly noticeable among applicants for traineeships, who performed woefully in the current affairs quizzes that are an essential weeding tool in cadet recruitment. And even if they managed to get through this part of the recruitment process, they would often fail when asked to comment on stories published or broadcast by that and other organizations in the few days leading up to the interview. While the gripes about grammar, spelling and syntax were widespread among the majority of editors, some of them conceded that this should not be attributed to the journalism programmes, but rather to failings in the broader education system.

While the majority of editors clearly felt that more time could be devoted to the development of writing skills, their responses to the breakdown between news and feature writing was divided. Responses to this question tended to depend on the media organization and the background of the respondent. Those working for news-based organizations tended to indicate that they would like more news gathering and writing skills, while those working for magazines favoured more emphasis on feature writing.

Another area of concern was an inability among journalism graduates to detect what was newsworthy and how to dig deeper to uncover the real story. One editor said:

The other thing that can be a weakness is not really knowing how to go about getting stories or where to look for stories or chasing stories if they're handed to them. Now, we know they aren't going to suddenly walk in and say I'm going to get a Walkley award winning story. But I think their 'news sense' can be underdeveloped in some of the students that we see coming out of university.

The editors said they were aware of the introduction of 'convergent' and 'online' courses as a response to the changes taking place within journalism, and the development of computer labs to accommodate these changes. Most, however, were unable to talk about the content of new subjects, or outcomes such as the development of websites, programme-specific blogs or radio and television programmes. They supported the need for graduates to be multi-skilled, with the majority supporting the need for them to be able to work across various media platforms.

There was overwhelming agreement that the journalism graduates they employ had acquired competent digital technology skills. One editor echoed a common sentiment when he said:

I certainly think since I was at university in the late 80s, that the practical side of things has improved dramatically. I see the students now really know how to handle a camera, they really know their technical things, especially the modern technologies that have

developed. They come out pretty good and, in fact, probably better than some of the practising journalists that are out there now.

There was a divided response on the use of shorthand and it reflected, in part, a mini-referendum on the value of shorthand to journalists in the new technological age. Interestingly, the division was not between those who had been required to study shorthand during their cadetships and those who had not. A number of those who knew shorthand said they rarely used it and questioned its value in a modern newsroom. This editor reflected a common response:

We train graduates in shorthand, but I do wonder beyond that how useful it is as a skill. We also use it as a benchmark in part of our obligations to new journalists to train them, and we like to see how enthusiastic they are and how keenly they embrace it. So I wouldn't say it's something that a university needs to incorporate.

This question was potentially problematic, given the traditional negative attitudes of journalists to public relations (PR) and marketing. However, the responses were quite surprising, with a significant number of respondents indicating support for the suggestion that students be offered an introduction to at least one PR subject. Drilling down into the responses, the reason for this was not because many graduates would ultimately find jobs in PR or marketing, but rather one of self-interest: if you teach them PR, they will know when they are being manipulated by someone who is in PR, or working for a member of parliament. According to one editor: 'I suppose an introduction to PR would be helpful, or an understanding of it. If you understand what it's about, it can't hurt, because they're bombarded with it once they get here.'

There was a preference on the part of the editors to opt for generalist rather than specialist skills, although they were open to employ someone with a politics or science degree if they had talent and showed a genuine interest and passion for the job. While there were a variety of responses, the following two responses summarized the general tone and content of this debate.

We want them to be pretty good all-rounders. What I would like to see the universities do is encourage their students to broaden their knowledge. But at the same time, they should not forget about the basics—story telling, writing, grammar, spelling, accuracy. I do see a weakness in basic skills.

Well generalist but also specialist. I think specialist skills would be writing and honing those audio and video editing skills, but I think writing is important, I think you can't teach someone how to actually go out and do the business.

Factors that Influence Employment Prospects

A journalism degree appears to offer candidates for traineeships an advantage when it comes to applying for positions, notwithstanding the criticisms identified

Table 11. Does Your Organization Employ More Graduates with a Journalism Degree?

Strongly disagree	(0)
Disagree	(1)
Neutral	(1)
Agree	(2)
Strongly agree	(7)

in Table 11. However, respondents differed as to the nature of the qualifications they preferred. While some indicated a preference for a full three-year qualification, others pointed to the advantages offered by a degree in another discipline and the add-on of a graduate diploma or a master's degree. All agreed that a tertiary journalism qualification provided the building blocks employers were looking for, although many were not willing to conclude that all graduates they saw were job-ready.

A tertiary qualification appeared to be only one of the boxes that applicants had to be able to tick if they were to proceed to the interview stage. Interestingly, only three of the respondents had a tertiary qualification, while the other eight editors started as cadets. The editors did not necessarily distinguish between graduates on the basis of their grades. They were interested in the subjects studied—and therefore, the potential skill set the successful candidate would bring to the newsroom—and the individual's portfolio, but they were also looking for the 'x factor' that would set the candidate who was passionate about pursuing a career in journalism apart from someone who was simply interested in such a career. Perhaps, for this reason, the respondents reserved the right of employers to employ people without university-based qualifications. That is, they retained the right to preserve the old cadetship model under which a passion for journalism was the element that saw candidates succeed. Significantly, the editors also supported the retention of this model and the need for flexibility when choosing between candidates.

While the majority of successful applicants tended to have journalism degrees, prospective employers said that they were always on the lookout for people who can offer something different. Examples cited by some editors included a trainee with a degree in medicine who added a professional dimension to a health round and another with a PhD in mathematics who added to the newsroom's capacity to interpret statistics, budgets and opinion poll results. Also, science graduates and people with degrees in business or finance, all of them were seen as bringing special forensic skills to the workplace.

Implications and Challenges for Journalism Educators

While the scope of this research is delimited to interviews with editors in Western Australia, it does offer some useful insights. Despite a limited knowledge of the

tertiary journalism programmes among the news editors, and the fact that there is a significant variation in the range or quality of programmes on offer, the editors agreed that there was a key role for universities in providing both an educational background and skills-based training for graduates contemplating a career in journalism and early career journalists. There was full agreement on two areas of weakness: spelling, grammar and syntax; and the development of general knowledge. Other areas of concern included a poor sense of what is news and newsworthy, news writing skills, lack of initiative and an inability to generate story ideas. These findings are largely mirrored in previous Australian studies with mainstream media employers (Alysen 2007; Callaghan & McManus 2010; Mensing 2010; Nankervis 2011). There was full support for an introductory unit on PR so that students can deal with the pervasive and persuasive nature of PR in the workplace. This was a new idea not mentioned in any previous studies. It was generally agreed that while individual universities have good working relationships with industry, these were often individual and not institutional relationships.

The editors, for the most part, encouraged universities to work more closely with industry, with a belief that industry could have broader input into programme design and revitalization. There were, however, two notable differences among the editors. First, there was division among them about whether university-based degrees should be generalist in nature or journalistic; and second, whether they should be theory oriented or practical in nature.

The views expressed by news editors in this survey challenge journalism educators in Western Australia (and throughout Australia) to revisit and review their journalism courses and their contacts (or lack of them) with local and state media organizations. On a national level, it has been proposed that the Journalism Education Association of Australia (JEAA) should establish a working party. This would include senior industry people, journalism educators and representatives of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) to produce a comprehensive strategy for cooperation and interaction between the academy and industry across the life cycle of journalism careers, including initial training and ongoing career development. Also, a resource website that outlines the diversity of tertiary journalism courses on offer throughout Australia would help editors to understand what topics are taught at individual universities. The website would encourage feedback from editors on evolving industry needs and developments.

Finally, as stated earlier, this article did not attempt to seek the views of editors and educators in other parts of Australia. The next stage in this research will involve a mirror survey of news editors throughout Australia to see how their responses compare with the views of editors in Western Australia. Also, there will be a mirror survey for educators to discover if universities aim to fulfil the expectations of newsrooms, and if they view their function and goals as similar or noticeably different.

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