

Public Abstract

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Title:THE EVIDENCE AND IMPACT OF ROLE CONFLICT ON COPY EDITORS WHO WORK AT COMPANIES THAT PRODUCE NEWSPAPERS AND WEBSITES

The newspaper industry has faced colossal shifts over the past several decades because of the Information Age and changing needs of readership. Copy editors have been among the most affected as the newsroom seeks to adapt. These editors have had an increasing number of responsibilities divided among fewer people.

This study predicted that copy editors have experienced role conflict, which would manifest itself as job satisfaction and responsibility conflict. A questionnaire was developed in Qualtrics and sent out through the American Copy Editors Society as well as directly to managing editors and copy editors.

Analysis found that most copy editors' responsibilities conflict at least part of the time – not only against deadline, but against one another. The number of tasks copy editors have is a predictor for the frequency of responsibility conflict. Social media, website management, and page proofs are three of the tasks copy editors might have that are moderately correlated with the frequency of role conflict. It might be best to have one person focus on those types of tasks, which would allow all of the other editors take on tasks that require longer, in-depth tasks, rather than have all the editors be perpetually distracted.

Analysis also found that the alignment of copy editors' values with those of the company were more highly correlated than any other satisfaction variable, including salary, shifts, and co-workers. Therefore, it might be beneficial to work to communicate why and how the company's values developed into its current standards.