

THE GLOBAL MEDIA TREND HUNTERS

Five trends to help navigate media relations in 2023

1 Publishers are restructuring newsrooms in anticipation of an impending recession

The likelihood of an economic contraction in 2023 is causing media companies to reevaluate their business models and look for areas for savings. [INSIDER](#) announced they were overhauling their subscription strategy, moving more reporters' work in front of the paywall. [CNN](#) announced a round of layoffs and is currently reviewing its news division's business lines/programming. CEO Chris Licht cited, "the worsening macroeconomic environment as one reason for the cuts." In addition to [big tech layoffs](#), media companies at all sizes are cutting costs via hiring freezes and layoffs.

THE TAKEAWAY

- 1 Cultivating multiple contacts in key newsrooms will help ensure a connection despite reporter departures or layoffs.**
- 2 Take even greater care when vetting reporters. Understand their beat, interests, reporting priorities and the outlet's agenda.**
- 3 With fewer reporters, there is a greater need for targeted approaches that align your story with the journalist's and outlet's news priorities.**
- 4 Consider a data-driven approach to identify trending story angles that will resonate with editors AND the media outlet's algorithms.**

Q1 GUIDE

News moves fast and at an unpredictable pace. So does life in the newsroom and how reporters work. This has significant implications for your media relations strategies. FleishmanHillard's team of expert media trend hunters around the world are relentlessly tracking these trends through daily interaction with reporters and editors. As we emerge from a tumultuous 2022 to a new year facing a global economic slowdown, shifting dynamics between workers and companies, and waning pandemic interest, we have insights to help you navigate the newsroom this year.

2 Americans increasingly discover news on social networks

More and more, social networks are where audiences are encountering news for the first time, rather than directly from a news organization's website or broadcast channels. Ten percent of Americans get their news from social media, and the top social media platforms for news discovery are Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and TikTok ([Pew Research](#)). TikTok (+4%, 33% of users) and Instagram (+2%, 29% of users) are the only social networks that are growing as news sources for Americans; YouTube and Twitch remained consistent from 2021, while Snapchat and LinkedIn saw a slight decline ([Pew Research](#)).

THE TAKEAWAY

- 1 **Social surround-sound is essential to get news in front of your target audiences. Earned media strategies should include social amplification to drive reach and engagement where audiences travel.**
- 2 **Influencers are now another “news source” and have powerful opinion-shaping capabilities. Consider utilizing influencers (micro to mega) to reach your audiences.**

TREND HUNTER SPOTLIGHT

Matthew Hunter is an editor and former journalist with 25 years' experience in the field, ranging from small-town newspapers to global media brands. His areas of expertise include technology, finance and business.



Matthew Hunter
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3 Data journalism is becoming more popular and less siloed

Data journalism is not a new thing — one could argue that [Florence Nightingale](#) pioneered the discipline by successfully using compelling graphics to show the London press how crowded military barracks spread disease in the 1860s. But modern data journalism arguably began with Nate Silver's remarkably accurate forecast of the 2008 presidential election.

Data journalism is heavily reliant on enticing, often counterintuitive data sets, and sits at the intersection of science, technology, statistics, politics, economics and demographics. What often sets these stories apart is that they tend to be heavily visual, using charts or graphs to sell the narrative. Many data journalists are younger, [claim to be self-taught](#), and often started their careers on personal blogs or video platforms. The pandemic further increased interest in the field according to a [datajournalism.com 2021 survey](#) showing that one-fourth of current data journalists became interested in the field due to COVID-19 or its effects.

Among readers, the appetite for data-driven stories is partially driven by the U.S. political cycle, but data is driving other [kinds of stories](#) as well, and the field remains thematically open to a wide variety of data sets. It can also be a vehicle for “snackable” content, making a large point with relatively little accompanying copy.

THE TAKEAWAY

- 1 **Data journalism is a format for storytelling that involves substantially different resources than regular stories to pitch successfully — stories in this genre generally rely heavily on charts or graphs to drive much of the narrative.**
- 2 **Data journalists prize access to raw data and the ability to draw their own conclusions. Proceed with caution in an earned media capacity if there is potential for reporters to reach contrary conclusion from the data. To that end, consider piloting it as an owned story where there is total control over the narrative.**

4 Twitter remains important for U.S. journalists, despite public outcry over changes

While Elon Musk's purchase and management of Twitter has made splashy headlines, [and some reporters discuss moving to Mastodon](#), reporters are not completely abandoning the platform. Sixty-nine percent of U.S. reporters use Twitter for their job (e.g., promote stories, connect with audiences, find sources, etc.), followed by Facebook (52%), Instagram (19%) and LinkedIn (17%) ([Pew Research](#)). However, when asked the most common way to communicate with sources, journalists use email, phone, text messages and videoconference the most. Social media tied for fifth place alongside in-person interview ([Pew Research](#)).

THE TAKEAWAY

- 1 Twitter remains a reliable platform to research journalists and learn nuances about their personality, tone, and interests as well as "listening" to their public conversations with other reporters. Consider listening in on other platforms where they have conversations to compare.
- 2 However, we anticipate Twitter's internal issues are creating space for other platforms, like Mastodon and Discord, where reporters can congregate should they decide to flee Twitter. Watch this space for updates!

WHO ARE THE TREND HUNTERS?

FleishmanHillard's Global Media Trend Hunters is a dedicated work group of media experts who have developed deep insights into the shifting ecosystem of today's newsroom. The team regularly conducts training courses, insight sessions, and custom research for account teams and clients. For more information, please contact Tony Ho Loke, Global Media Trend Hunter Lead, at tony.holoke@fleishman.com.

5 The alternative media space continues to grow

Although platforms like Medium and Substack have served as alternatives to traditional news sources for years, there has been significant growth in the alternative media space for right-wing audiences with Gab, Rumble, Parler, and Truth Social. In 2022, news surrounding alternatives to establishment media [companies](#) continued to make headlines. Plus, Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter furthered interest in alternative media platforms like Mastodon and Post News. Alternative social media consumers largely [remain](#) on traditional media platforms (73%). We expect interest in alternative media to grow, new companies to enter the space and audiences to continue self-segmenting by platform.

THE TAKEAWAY

- 1 While alternative media garnered renewed interest in 2022, we recommend keeping a pulse on the platforms as the trend unfolds and leveraging audience data to inform media strategies beyond traditional media platforms.
- 2 Consider leveraging influencers or sponsored content as an alternative to reach audiences on these platforms.
- 3 We anticipate new platforms to emerge, so proceed with caution and consider brand safety guidelines before engaging with new platforms.