

Professor finds increased job burnout among TV journalists

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(Medical Xpress)—The media landscape has changed drastically in recent years, but despite increased hiring and revenue, those changes often result in increased and premature burnout among those working in the field.

Scott Reinardy, associate professor of journalism at the University of Kansas, has authored a study in which he surveyed hundreds of TV journalists about the changes in the business and found that more than 20 percent of [respondents](#) are showing classic signs of job burnout.

A 2012 study showed that TV news staffs had increased by 4 percent, revenue was up, and stations were producing more content than ever before, often as much as 5 1/2 hours per day.

"I wanted to see how all of that played into burnout," Reinardy said. "Were the journalists getting the organizational support they needed to produce that extra content? That's why I wanted to look at what that downward pressure would do to people working in TV news."

Reinardy surveyed nearly 900 working TV journalists about their job satisfaction, changing work requirements, perceived organizational support and whether they intended to remain in the business. Through questions that addressed exhaustion, [cynicism](#) and professional efficacy, the survey found that 22 percent of respondents showed signs of burnout in their work. As he suspected, respondents who reported higher levels of exhaustion also reported lower levels of organizational support, while

those who reported higher levels of professional efficacy—or satisfaction in their jobs—reported higher levels of organizational support.

The study has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Media Business Studies*, and Reinardy will present it at the International Communication Association conference in June in London.

Eighty-one percent of respondents said they work differently "than a few years ago." Many reported that they have increased social media responsibilities, are expected to produce content for multiple platforms and have more frequent deadlines.

"It's not just daily deadlines anymore, or hourly deadlines," Reinardy said. "It's every minute almost."

Reinardy said one respondent, a morning show host, was required to tweet three times per half hour, even while doing her show. Being expected to do more in the same amount of time was a common response among those surveyed. The stress and cynicism that showed up prominently as classic signs of burnout are taking a toll as well. Of the 22 percent showing such signs, 80 percent responded "yes" or "I don't know" when asked whether they intended to leave the business.

"Many said, 'I can't do this much longer,'" Reinardy said. "You're probably going to see the TV business get younger, a little more inexperienced and, as a result, there will be a loss of institutional knowledge, which doesn't bode well for community journalism at any level."

Reinardy has previously conducted research in newspapers to measure [job satisfaction](#), burnout, how "layoff survivors" cope and how print journalists view their work. While TV news has largely done a better job

of adapting to the changing [media landscape](#), the survey shows that in some cases changing job responsibilities and perceived lack of organizational support can be cause for concern.

"It gives a perspective of what's happening at ground zero," Reinardy said of the study. "All these things look positive, more revenue, more content and so on. But I think the boom comes at a price. And that price is personnel. Unfortunately too many organizations see their personnel as expendable."

Provided by University of Kansas

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