



How to Fix Journalism

The journalism industry stands at a crossroads. Whilst there remains exceptional reporting, legacy media faces a crisis of trust, innovation, and relevance. The solution isn't incremental change—it requires building something entirely new from the ground up.

The Challenge Before Us

What's Working

- Dedicated investigative journalists
- Breaking news coverage
- Local community reporting
- In-depth documentary features

What's Broken

- Elite panels masquerading as news
- Manufactured drama and constant teasing
- Platform manipulation by tech billionaires
- Legacy managers protecting revenue over innovation
- Declining public trust across demographics

Current media managers, like those in any legacy industry, prioritise protecting existing revenue streams rather than building products that genuinely serve audiences. This defensive posture has stifled innovation precisely when transformation is most urgently needed.

The Tools Are Already Here

Here's the encouraging truth: everything required to build a revolutionary media house already exists. The technology is mature, the platforms are established, and the audience is waiting. We simply need the courage to assemble these elements in a radically different way.

Change won't emerge from legacy newsrooms. It must come from a new media house —one not yet invented, unburdened by outdated business models and institutional inertia.



Two Fundamental Principles

Trust is the Foundation

We must constantly prove we're telling the truth by exposing our people, finances, systems, and editorial processes to public scrutiny.

Transparency is daunting—critics will deconstruct every decision.

But it's the only path to winning back the audience.

Video-Based Storytelling

Whilst literary journalism has its place, the reality is clear: audiences consume video content on YouTube, TikTok, and social platforms—and they aren't returning to text.

Video conveys authenticity through inflection, nuance, body language, and facial expression. Currently, it's more believable than the written word alone.



Stories, Not Spectacles

The new media house must be **story-driven**. No more insider panel discussions where journalists interview other journalists. No more book promotion tours disguised as news segments. No more fake live shots that waste time and resources.

Stories—whether live or recorded—should be organised, concise, and focused on wrapping up what we know about an issue. Every piece should stand on its own, without endless teasing or cross-promotion to keep viewers hostage.

Mobile-First Production Revolution

Every story should be produced using a mobile phone. These devices are remarkably powerful: cheap, plentiful, and supported by excellent editing and distribution software.

A media house built on mobile production requires **significantly less capital** to sustain itself without any meaningful decline in quality. Professional cameras, broadcast trucks, and satellite uplinks become unnecessary overhead.

This approach democratizes production, enabling reporters anywhere to file professional-quality content immediately.



Radical Process Transparency





Eliminating Unnecessary Infrastructure

No Studios or Offices Required

Everything becomes a set. A kitchen with a few lights. A consistent background for brand recognition. A reporter's own lounge when appropriate.

High-end studios have **never increased trust** or delivered strong return on investment. They're impressive but irrelevant to the audience. Eliminating them reduces overhead dramatically, allowing more resources to flow toward actual journalism.

Authentic Reporting Standards

Real People With Names

Reporting must be done by identifiable humans, not anonymous voices or corporate entities. Audiences connect with people, not brands.

Clear Attribution

When using outside material, we must explicitly attribute it. Too much modern "reporting" simply repackages others' work, breeding distrust.

Original Reporting First

The vast majority of content should come from our own journalists doing primary research, conducting interviews, and witnessing events firsthand.

Lean Operations Powered by AI

The vast majority of staff should be **reporters**—the people creating the actual product. They'd be supported by a small number of news managers and minimal administrative personnel.

Most operational functions—accounting, public relations, human resources, and technical infrastructure—will exist in software. Much of this will be AI-driven, directing headcount and budget toward journalism rather than bureaucracy.

This inverted organisational structure ensures resources flow to content creation, not institutional maintenance.



Building a Global Stringer Network

We need an extensive freelance programme. Using mobile phones and online training modules, we can build a reporting network extending far beyond traditional media centres like New York, Washington, or New Delhi.

These stringers must be **paid fairly** and held to strict ethical standards. Fair compensation isn't charity—it's investing in quality and loyalty. A well-supported stringer network provides coverage breadth that legacy organisations can no longer afford.



The Three-Point Ethics Standard

01

Both Sides Included

Did we make a good-faith effort to include all relevant perspectives? Did we contact those criticised and offer them the opportunity to respond?

02

Direct Reporting

Did we talk to the people involved ourselves, or did we rely on second-hand accounts? Primary sources build credibility.

03

Factual Verification

Did we verify that our reporting is as factual as possible? What steps did we take to confirm information before publishing?

📄 Every story, every time, should include a brief video clip outlining these ethics. Repetition builds understanding. Consistency builds trust.

Digital-First Administration



Remote Collaboration

Administration handled entirely online. Perhaps we gather in person once or twice yearly, but there's no need for permanent physical offices consuming resources.



Embedded Reporters

Journalists should live in the communities they cover. Geographic proximity builds understanding, sources, and credibility that parachute journalism never achieves.

Public Editorial Meetings

Morning and afternoon editorial meetings should be conducted electronically and **broadcast live**. Allow the audience to witness how we decide which stories matter, how we allocate resources, and how we resolve editorial dilemmas.

This makes the editorial process part of the product itself. It demystifies journalism and demonstrates that decisions are made thoughtfully, not capriciously or with hidden agendas. Transparency at this level is unprecedented—and powerful.



Embracing Audience Feedback

Active Engagement

We should welcome criticism, not fear it. An ombudsman creates stories based on audience comments—both the insightful observations and the more unusual perspectives.

This feedback should be video-based. We can obscure surnames for privacy, but faces should be visible. Anonymous comments have destroyed civility online; we should encourage truthfulness, not exploit anonymity.

Curated Commentary

Instead of elite pundits delivering political commentary, we'll air audience opinions curated by the ombudsman.

The ombudsman explains the selection process publicly, ensuring a balanced range of perspectives. This democratises commentary whilst maintaining editorial standards.

AI Anchors for News Delivery



Computer-Generated Delivery

For mini-newscasts, delivery should be clearly computer-generated. This saves money whilst maintaining the crucial distinction between reporter (human) and delivery mechanism (AI).



Audience Choice

Offer audiences their choice of AI avatars: a robot, a professor, a grandmother, or other personas. Let viewers select the presentation style they find most engaging or trustworthy.



Resource Efficiency

This approach eliminates the celebrity anchor model, redirecting those substantial salaries toward reporting and production quality where they create genuine value.

Distribution and Revenue Strategy

Mini-newscasts (under seven minutes) and micro-stories would be distributed to subscribers through platforms like Substack and pushed across social media channels. These same pieces double as podcasts for commuters.

Initially, we'll use existing platforms for income and audience reach. However, the strategy includes eventually **migrating the audience to our proprietary platform**, bypassing the 85% tax that Google and Facebook extract from digital advertising revenue.

Building our own distribution infrastructure takes time, but it's essential for long-term sustainability and editorial independence.



Real-World Focus, Not Political Theatre



Modern news obsesses over politics—specifically, the theatrical aspects of legislative bickering and partisan positioning.

We will cover politics factually but sparingly. Instead of endless analysis of parliamentary debates, we'll report on how policy changes actually affect medical staff and patients in Louisville. Or teachers and students in Birmingham. Or small business owners in Manchester.

This is where policy becomes real. This is what audiences need to understand.

The Trust Advantage

18%

Current Trust in Media

Gallup polling shows historically low confidence in mass media institutions

85%

Platform Revenue Tax

Portion of digital ad revenue extracted by Google and Facebook from publishers

70%

Cost Reduction

Estimated operational savings from mobile production and eliminated infrastructure

This model costs less, covers more, and earns more trust than any legacy outlet. A brave startup can deliver the "truth-teller" the world is currently missing.

The Path Forward

In a perfect world, this media house would be staffed primarily by women, who are statistically more trusted than men as news sources, creating a uniquely differentiated product in the marketplace.

The journalism industry doesn't need minor adjustments. It needs **fundamental reinvention** built on transparency, authenticity, and technology that already exists. The question isn't whether this model can work—it's whether anyone has the courage to build it.

The audience is waiting. The tools are ready. The opportunity is now.

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Inspired by David Hazinski's vision at: [How to Fix Journalism](#)

