

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-69282-4 - So you want to be a Journalist? Unplugged: Second Edition

Bruce Grundy, Martin Hirst, Janine Little, Mark Hayes and Greg Treadwell

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SO YOU WANT TO BE A JOURNALIST? UNPLUGGED

So You Want to Be a Journalist? Unplugged is a fully revised and updated introduction to the world of journalism. This new edition of Bruce Grundy's guide for journalists takes us through new media's impact on the structure and practice of journalism today, with its 24-hour news cycle of multi-platform and interactive media audiences.

So You Want to Be a Journalist? Unplugged contains step-by-step instructions on writing for the news media as well as practical advice and suggestions on all facets of reporting. Core skills involved in finding information, interviewing, writing news and feature material, research and investigation, basic subbing, layout and design are covered, along with the timeless essentials of grammar, the law, and practical tips on ethical and professional behaviour.

New to the second edition:

- online journalism incorporated throughout the text
- vignettes and case studies that bring the text to life
- examples from Australian, New Zealand and international media
- extended section on journalism and ethics
- extensively updated research section, to help students recognise quality internet research
- extensive companion website, at www.cambridge.edu.au/academic/journalist, including further writing practice for the budding journalist.

Bruce Grundy was a journalist for over 40 years and has taught practical and theory courses in television, radio and print journalism.

Martin Hirst is Associate Professor and Journalism Curriculum Leader in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University. A former radio and television journalist, he has worked for the ABC and SBS as a senior correspondent, and spent three years in the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Canberra.

Janine Little is Senior Lecturer in Journalism at Deakin University. She has worked as a newspaper reporter in Australia and the United Kingdom, and has won awards for her regional newspaper reporting in Australia.

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Greg Treadwell is Senior Lecturer in Journalism at Auckland University of Technology. His research focuses on the transition to new media and the teaching of online journalism.

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SECOND EDITION

**BRUCE GRUNDY // MARTIN HIRST
JANINE LITTLE // MARK HAYES // GREG TREADWELL**



**CAMBRIDGE
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The first edition of *So you want to be a Journalist?* was written by Bruce Grundy.
Martin Hirst, Janine Little, Mark Hayes and Greg Treadwell are responsible for
the updates in this second edition.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION


So You Want to Be a Journalist? Unplugged is an unashamedly ‘old-school’ journalism textbook for a number of reasons. Importantly, we wanted to honour the spirit and retain the voice of Bruce’s first edition, published in 2007. His wealth of knowledge and years of experience on the frontlines of news and in the news classroom make him a formidable forebear.

Perhaps of equal importance to the brief we had was our belief – echoing Bruce – that the ‘basics’ of good reporting and writing of news are the foundation for both an education and a career in journalism. Furthermore – again like Bruce – we are lifelong believers in the historic and ongoing role of the news media in our democratic life and processes. Without good journalism there is no good news.

We are not, however, rosy-eyed optimists or backward-looking golden ageists. Despite our collective 130 years-plus in journalism and perhaps almost as long as journalism educators, we remain attuned to the changing world around us. Wanna-be reporters and those studying journalism out of interest must also be across the vital public discussions about the future of news and the news industry. A good journalist – or even a critical news consumer – needs a situational awareness of the news process. We enter this discussion in the last section of the book by asking readers to consider the meaning of ‘professionalism’ in today’s fractured news environment in which news professionals are competing with a wide and growing range of amateur voices. User-generated news-like content and ‘citizen journalism’ are crowding the stage. How should we all react?

So You Want to Be a Journalist? Unplugged starts with the basics, just as Bruce would have done. But in this edition, the order has been altered and some new material has been introduced. For example, hardly anyone had heard of Twitter six years ago, so we have included beginners’ tips on using social media. We begin with reporting and research because we consider that these aspects of journalism come before writing. The writing chapters have also been ‘moved around’. We start with the inverted pyramid – a decidedly ‘old-school’ concept – as the cornerstone of all journalistic writing. We hope the sections on writing for broadcast and online outlets are up to date enough to be going on with. This is followed by a chapter on longer-form writing – writing for the avid reader as opposed to the news ‘grazer’.

Our intention was to make this book a useful tool in an early-year journalism classroom when the fundamentals of news-gathering and writing are best taught. It is meant to provide an overview – a summary of everything you need to know – and enough detail to ensure that after one or two semesters students will be competent and confident in their news selection, news-gathering and news-production skills across all media platforms. At that point, they will be ready for more advanced learning in multimedia journalism, or able to take a specialist path.

Much of what has been redacted from this edition is available in an updated format on the companion website, along with a number of new and rewritten exercises. The  indicates that there is related material on the companion website, at www.cambridge.edu.au/academic/journalist.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As this is the second edition of *So You Want to Be a Journalist*, I do not intend to revisit what I said in the first edition. I am as grateful now to those I acknowledged in that edition as ever. But I know they would not expect to be named again. So I will acknowledge them generically.

I am grateful to the friends whose work inspired me and set a great example for me to aspire to, to the colleagues I worked with as a journalist and teacher from whom I also learned so much, to the students whose guts, tenacity, ability, intellect and hard work left me in awe of their talents and feeling so fortunate that I should have had the chance to work with them, and of course to those who supported our efforts at the University of Queensland to produce such amazing publications as *The Weekend Independent* and *The Independent Monthly*. It is an extraordinary reality that stories we produced more than a decade ago are still reverberating through state and federal political circles in this country to this day. And we have not yet, all these years later, heard the end of them – hard to believe, but true. I am very proud of that outcome and of the young people who worked with me on those stories. It is one of the reasons why a career in journalism is one to be pursued. I hope the two editions of this book encourage others to follow such a path.

I must again acknowledge Cambridge University Press for ‘keeping the faith’ and deciding to publish a second edition of this title. As I said in my first edition remarks, it is a pleasure to work with such professional and considerate people. In particular, I must mention Bridget Ell. It was Bridget’s enthusiasm, her determination and her most persuasive support for this project that convinced me to go ahead with it.

And, of course, I acknowledge the work and contribution of the co-authors of this book. It is self-evident that the world of media has changed quite drastically in the few short years that have elapsed since the first edition. Thus it was necessary to either update the book or let it rest in peace. I am pleased that others felt it important to continue what I started back in 2007. So I thank them for that, and for the effort they have put into writing the material to update the book, and trust they have found that effort worthwhile.

Finally, may I simply say to all those who may read this book and decide to take up a career in journalism that I can only hope you have as enjoyable, as extraordinary and as fortunate a life through such a career as I have had.

Bruce Grundy

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A general collective thanks to all our collaborators who contributed time and effort to this project. Bridget Ell has the patience of a saint. Thanks to the production team and Cambridge University Press – the hidden gems of book publishing.

Dr Mark Hayes acknowledges the challenges and feedback he has received from the many journalism students he has taught at five Australian universities, the University of the South Pacific and Divine Word University (PNG) cumulatively over more than 20 years as a media and journalism educator, and the inspiration he has received from the work of many brilliant and courageous journalists, some killed for their work, who are dedicated to speaking truth to power through journalism.

Associate Professor Martin Hirst thanks Mark, Janine and Greg for their sterling efforts and his students for their daily reminder that you are never too old to learn. For the love of the bird lady and her constant ministrations, Dr Hirst is truly grateful. Her help in overcoming the moments of angst that inevitably accompany a project such as this was, as always, invaluable.

Dr Janine Little thanks her students at Deakin University and her colleagues in journalism, John Mullen, Peter Jeppesen, Des Houghton and Peter Owen, and those in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin – especially in Geelong – and also Bruce Grundy, who was her tutor at the University of Queensland in the early 1980s.

Greg Treadwell wants to thank his students, without whom he could never have grown as a teacher, and his current and former colleagues at AUT University, without whom he would not have grown as an academic. He also wants to acknowledge all those who refuse to accept suppression of free speech and those who have had theirs denied. Mostly, he wants to thank his wife, Fleur Toogood.