

Online Newspaper Conventions

Broadsheet Online Conventions

- Home page filled with headlines, with hard news stories towards the top of the page.
- Same traditional masthead (The Guardian uses a different masthead style to its print counterpart).
- Most home pages use a four-column layout, which fills the home page with news.
- Most typography is serif.
- Equal amounts of headlines/standfirsts and images.
- More extensive use of colour (compared to print counterparts).
- Opinion, sports and lifestyle pieces appear on the home page.
- There is some use of sans-serif fonts.



Tabloid Online Conventions

- Soft news (lifestyle, 'showbiz' and human interest) stories feature predominantly towards the top of the home pages.
- Fonts are sans-serif
- Saturated use of colour (especially red).
- Photography dominates the home pages
- The language and register is more informal.
- Red tops.
- Unlike the print counterparts, a large number of headlines are offered, connoting 'newsiness'.
- Most headlines are not capitalised (unlike print counterparts).
- The homepage layout is less photograph, image and headline dominated than the print front page.
- Some hard news stories are covered on the home page.

Ideologies and Viewpoints (Examples)

Ideology	How it might influence the media language used
Sexism/Patriarch	Emphasises sexual objectification, or stress on women's appearances. Reinforces sexist stereotypes.
Feminism	Supports women's rights and gender equality.
Racism	Connotes racial stereotypes or Whiteness as normal and race as a problem.
Multiculturalism	Promotes inclusivity and multicultural viewpoints.
Ethnocentrism	Connotes distrust or hatred of foreigners e.g. headlines connoting immigration as a problem.
Internationalism	Connotes care for and responsibility towards other countries and peoples.
Consumerism	Markets consumerist views to its audiences (e.g. lifestyle advice, celebrity endorsed products, sales, skylines, connotations of glamour or entertainment).
Individualism	Emphasises the individual people over the group or the society.
Democracy	Emphasises the importance of politicians and political issues. Emphasising the importance of the voice of the people/majority.
Belief in welfare	Expressed by representations of welfare state issues, such as benefits, education or the NHS, or of 'ordinary people' needing or offering collective help.

Funding

Newspapers have a wide range of funding sources (see funding of set texts).

Influence of contexts

The rise of the internet as an economic context gives both problems and opportunities.

Opportunities:

- Online audiences can be global and bigger
- Online circulation is cheaper to fund

Problems:

- Online advertising gives less revenue
- Online audiences seldom pay for online content.



The social and cultural context of audiences expecting online products to be free in an important factor.

The cultural context of the prestige given to print journalism over online means that all newspapers have maintained print editions, despite the adverse cost=benefit ratio of lower circulation.

The political context of the desire to preserve journalism in the face of economic pressure had led to debates about whether the state should subsidise news or be made to pay for news.



The role of regulation in news

The press in Britain is self-regulating. Newspapers both print and online may join either IPSO or IMPRESS. Other newspapers prefer to self-regulate.

The libel law provides additional legal constraint. Journalists argue that Britain has become particularly heavy with libel laws – journalists have to *prove* that what they allege is true to win cases.

Online news is not regulated at all, unless newspapers choose to sign up to a regulator.

UK libel law does still apply to online news and social media, however, even if a post has been deleted.

Influence of context

Freedom of press has always been seen as crucial to democracy, which is why newspapers and magazines are not regulated by a body set up by the government. Anyone must be free to set up a newspaper and publish what they want without interference from the government or the authorities. This means that the press is the most opinionated medium of all the 'old' media.

Newspapers can campaign against political issues and journalists are expected to be highly critical of those in power.

In the past tabloids have offered brash, no-nonsense styles that addressed the passions of their target audience. This has been faced with concern about issues such as privacy and cheque-book journalism. The government threatened to create a regulating body, but the press created a regulator instead named PCC. This regulating body was found to be useless during the Leveson Inquiry. The inquiry looked into the press found that politicians of all parties had 'developed too close a relationship with the press in a way that has not been in the public interest', and that politicians' relationships with newspaper owners, managers and editors were not clear and open. This suggests that newspaper ownership does give a certain degree of political leverage.

As a result of the Leveson Inquiry, a new print newspaper regulator was brought into place named IPSO – which regulates most print newspapers. IPSO can levy substantial fines to newspapers which break codes of conduct.



Contexts

Contexts refer to the wider environments that a media product is produced and set in. Below are current contextual points about the UK as it is today.

Social Context

- Women have equal rights- though there are still disparities between men and women's professional roles and pay.
- The UK is ethnically and racially, multicultural country – especially cities.
- Equality is expected – though immigration is still an inflammatory topic due to Brexit.
- LGBTQT rights and awareness has risen – especially discussions related to gender.

Cultural Context

- Media products are the most popular forms of art.
- The film industry is still dominated by American products.
- The diversity of cultural products (media/art/music) is increasing due to globalisation and the internet.
- Intertextual references are becoming more and more popular in media products.
- Religion is becoming less prominent within UK households.
- The notions of "Family" are no longer nuclear.
- Consuming goods (consumerism) is still a favourite pass-time.
- Celebrity culture is still popular (reinforced with social media).

Political Context

- The Conservative party are in a coalition with the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party – an Irish party).
- A coalition occurs when no one party reaches a majority vote during an election, and the highest % party needs to unite with another to make a majority.
- The Conservative party paid billions to the DUP to form the unity.
- The vote for the UK to leave the EU (European Union) was almost 3 years ago – and has still not been enacted.
- Brexit was called for by the previous Prime Minister – David Cameron. Cameron called for the vote feeling confident that it would not be voted for – which it did. He then resigned.
- The Brexit vote was Leave 52% - Remain 48%. This has caused tensions between the population of the UK.
- Both Jeremy Corbyn (current Labour/left wing leader) and Theresa May (current Conservative/right wing leader) are not very popular amongst their followers.
- The UK is a democracy.

Economic Context

- The UK is not known for its exports of products – relies mainly on imported goods.
- The UK makes most of its revenue within London – specifically due to our financial expertise.
- The UK relies on consumers spending money in shops in order for money to be circulated.
- The UK is a capitalist country.

Production, Distribution and Circulation

Print news:

Production – newspaper journalists, editors and printers.

Distribution – Organisations that send newspapers to newsagents have some control over which publications get distributed, but no control over content.

Circulation – Newsagents and other retailers sell the newspapers.

Producers control the news content.

Online news:

Production – More amateurs whose news may be distributed on social media + Traditional journalists.

Distribution & Exhibition – all on website and social media platforms.

News has a short shelf life and is highly risky for daily failure. News exclusives no longer sell as often and online news has put a strain on the news cycle. Soft news is becoming more relied on.

News in the online era is still controlled by powerful news organisations which have successfully defended their oligarchy, meaning that mainstream media still control news.

The growing importance of social media in the distribution and circulation of news means that the social media companies are now crucial gatekeepers. Social media claim to be "platforms" rather than "publishers" meaning they lack editorial control. This leads to clickbait and fake news, as well as authentic citizen journalism.

Influence of contexts

The economic context of print and online journalism is that all such journalism is driven by profit. Advertisers and moved from print journalism to online (most spent on Facebook and Google).

This is starving journalism of funds, leading to a decline in expensive journalism such as international news and investigative reporting. Cheaper alternatives (opinion, celebrity, public relations events, lifestyle and sport) are rising.

Marketing departments are much more powerful in all newspapers as profits decline.

Ownership and Control of News

We can see from the table below that three owners control more than 80% of print circulation, so ownership is concentrated. Newspapers are not usually profitable, but are seen as a means of gaining political and social influence – thus are more likely than other owned by rich individuals rather than conglomerates.

Newspaper groups	National daily titles owned	Daily circulation (average per issues) August 2018 in millions
News International	Sun, The Times	1.9
DMGT	Daily Mail	1.3
Reach PLC	Daily Express, Daily Star, Daily Mirror	1.3
Telegraph Group	Daily Telegraph	0.37
Johnston Press	I	0.24
Nikkei	Financial Times	0.18
Guardian Media Group	Guardian	0.13

Influence of contexts

Concentration of ownership is limited by regulators such as the Competition and Markets Authority which exists to prevent anti-competitive business monopolies. This is a political and economic context: the government has set up this agency as free markets require competition to work effectively.

Media plurality is a live political issue in Britain today; e.g. Labour Party policy is to try to increase the number of newspaper owners and help create more diverse voices.

The political context of the role of press freedom in the running of democracy gives opportunities by also places limits on the control exercised by owners of newspapers. Newspapers are permitted to be opinionated and politically-biased, but newspaper editors invariably insist in public that the owner never interferes with the content of the newspaper.

For example, Rupert Murdoch owns much of News International (The Times, Sunday Times, Sun). He has strong opinions about the European Union, yet his newspapers took different positions in the Brexit referendum.

The Impact of technological change on news

Printing underwent a technological revolution in the 80s which enabled newspapers to remain profitable with smaller print runs and more extensive use of photography and colours. It also led to accelerated hybridisation of newspaper genres.

Digitally convergent platforms (social media/websites) have various impacts:

- Interactivity
- Growth of citizen journalism
- Rapid speeding up of news cycle – leading to prioritising soft news (as it is more frequent)
- Offers competition for news producers
- Lack of online regulation and editorial ownership leads to problems.
- How the funding of news production may have to be revolutionised in order for news to survive.

Influence of contexts

The social and cultural context of the authority of an established newspaper has enabled The Guardian and Daily Mail to extend their brand name online. Convergence has allowed for synergy between the online and print counterparts; the print editions bring the authoritative brand; the online editions bring immediacy and interactivity.

How audiences are categorised by news industries

Age / Gender / Class / Region.

Class:

- A – Upper-middle-class (high professionals)
- B – Middle-middle-class (lower-paid professionals)
- C1 – lower-middle-class (clerical workers)
- C2 – Skilled manual workers
- D – Semi-skilled manual workers
- E – Unskilled manual workers (and unemployed)

A,B,C1 (Middle) = 54% of UK population
C2, D, E (Working) = 46% of UK population

Influence of contexts

Class has become a much less significant predictive factor in how people behave (social/cultural context), including which brands they buy. This means that as well as targeting audience's by class, they are more likely to target using psychographic categories (based on psychological traits, taste and lifestyle – the sort of things Facebook is useful for analysing).

Examples of psychographics
Reformers / Explorers / Mainstreamers / Strugglers / Aspirers / Resigned / Succeeders

How news targets and addressed the audiences

The content of the newspapers will reflect the social make-up of their audience.

The *Guardian* attempts to engage and address its upmarket, younger audiences by extensive coverage of high culture that is largely missing from the *Daily Mail* as well as popular culture that is covered by the tabloids.

Influence of contexts

- Consumerism** – audiences are no longer loyal and feel as if the newspapers should cater to them.
- Feminism** – newspapers cannot patronise women readers.
- Multiculturalism** – newspapers can no longer reflect only White society and must increase their range of representation.
- Sexuality** – diverse representations needed.

Genre

The Daily Mail is a Populis Mass/Mainstream **Mid-Market** Newspaper.

Conventions:

- Mix of hard and soft news. Soft news is preferred; though hard news is used when/if popular.
- Mix of formal/informal language used – informal depending on topic & attitude towards the story. More opinionated.
- Mix of images and text.
- Use of splash headlines when the edition features a popular story.
- Advertisements/incentives can feature on the front page.
- Offers a “common sense” version of reality.

The above conventions can be influenced/changed by the contexts surrounding the newspaper (economic/political/social/cultural).

Industry (Economic & political Contexts)

Ownership (Economic)

The Daily Mail had, until 2018, a tradition of strongly expressed views reflecting those of its editor, Paul Dacre and its columnists. However, Paul Dacre was suddenly replaced in Sept 2018, which could suggest that his forthright political assertions (BREXIT) may have been harming the brand and worrying the owners (DMGT).

Owned by a **Public Owned Company** (PLC) named DMGT.

- Has a group of **shareholders**
- Runs on a **proprietor model** (Business owner) who directly influences the chain of command down from himself > Chief Editors/Gatekeepers > Journalists.
- Sole **focus is on sales**/revenue to secure share prices.
- **Prefers popular press** (soft news) as the audience will prefer said news and purchase the paper.

Funding

- Reliance on featuring **advertisements** (companies pay for their adverts to feature on the newspaper) newspaper given out free to boost the number of people seeing the advertisements.
- Advertisers prefer **volume** of news stories over quality. Hence why there is a **high volume** of news stories featured within the newspaper **AND** the online website.

Political Affiliation

Supports the **Conservative party** who are currently in power. HOWEVER, **Theresa May is not very popular atm** due to BREXIT and her poor negotiations/deals. Right-wing ideologies consist of:

- Individual responsibility.
- Cuts money from public services (stereotypically)
- Has been linked to austerity.
- Defence of our country is paramount.
- Has a tendency to focus on the monetary & financial aspects of events/stories, rather than the human aspects.
- Is argued to have fixed views on issues such as crime, drugs, migration etc.
- Opposed to the left-wing (Labour) party/ideologies.
- Mainly campaigned to “leave” the EU (BREXIT) which was brought about by David Cameron (the previous PM)

Regulation

- Regulated by **IPSO** (Independent Press Standards Organisation) which was founded after the Levenson Enquiry which looked at the close relationship between the press and the government (NEWS CORP / CONSERVATIVES MAINLY).
- IPSO can demand that the Daily Mail make amendments to false information as a result of complaints by the public.

Audience

Men – 48%
 Women – 52%
 15-34 – 10%
 35-54 – 15%
 55+ - 75%
 AB – 27%
 C1C2 – 56%
 DE – 17%
 London – 26%
 Midlands – 19%
 South & South East – 15%
 North West – 12%

Different sections within the newspaper that appeal to this type of audience E.G. ‘Inspire’, ‘the Verdict’, ‘Good Health’, ‘Money Mail’, ‘Travel Mail’ and ‘Femail’. Specific financial section that relates to the target audience.

Genre

The Guardian is a campaigning liberal **Broadsheet** Newspaper.

Conventions:

- Mix of hard and soft news. Soft news very rarely featured on front page. Hard / high quality press preferred.
- Language tends to primarily be formal and sophisticated.
- One main image featured on the front page.
- Small columns of text. The actual articles (columns of text) are known as ‘copy’.
- More than one story advertised on the front page.
- Offers a more questioning construction of reality.

The above conventions can be influenced/changed by the contexts surrounding the newspaper (economic/political/social/cultural).

Industry (Economic & political Contexts)

Ownership (Economic)

Contrasting The Daily Mail, The Guardian adopts a more collegiate style whereby editorials and columnists express a wide variety of opinions ranging from left of the Conservative party to the left of the Labour party.

Owned by a **Private Owned Company** (LTD) named Scott Trust.

- Does not have a group of shareholders.
- The proprietor does not dictate down the hierarchy of gatekeepers.
- Values freedom of press, high quality journalism.

Funding

- Runs on a **supporter strategy** – relying on subscriptions and donations from loyal readers. (Currently has 800k supporters)
- Also relies on advertisements though not as heavily nor influenced as strongly by them.
- High cover price - £2 Weekdays & £2.90 Saturday.
- Events – runs courses on journalism or literature, meetings and conferences.
- Sales – sells holidays and books linked to its reviews and travel sections.

Political Affiliation

Supports the **Labour party** who are not currently in power. HOWEVER, Jeremy Corbyn is not a very popular leader of the Labour party. Left-wing, liberal ideologies:

- Welfare for those in need
- Spends money on public services (stereotypically)
- Equality
- Worker’s rights
- Open minded
- Debate rather than violence
- Compassionate for foreign problems (though previous PMs such as Tony Blair have used war for financial gain).
- Opposed to right-wing ideologies
- Mainly campaigned to “remain” - BREXIT

Regulation

- Decided **against being regulated by IPSO** and is self-regulated/governed.

Audience

Men – 51%
 Women – 49%
 15-34 – 27%
 35-54 – 30%
 55+ - 41%
 AB – 62%
 C1C2 – 31% (22% C1, 9% C2)
 DE – 7%
 London – 40%
 Midlands – 17%
 South & South East – 12%
 North West – 11%

Different sections within the newspaper that appeal to this type of audience E.G. ‘Media’, ‘Education’, ‘Society’ and a magazine on ‘Life and Culture’. Specific financial section that relates to the target audience.