

‘You Really Have to Have a Thick Skin’: A Cross-cultural Perspective on How Online Harassment Influences Female Journalists | Journalism

By Gina Masullo Chen, Paromita Pain, Victoria Y. Chen, Madlin Mekelburg, Nina Springer, Franziska Troger

August 8, 2018

In-depth interviews with 75 female journalists who work or have worked in Germany, India, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America reveal that they face rampant online gendered harassment that influences how they do their jobs. Many of the women report that if they aim to engage with their audience online – which is a job requirement for many of them – they frequently face sexist comments that criticize, attack, marginalize, stereotype, or threaten them based on their gender or sexuality. Often, criticism of their work is framed as misogynistic attacks and, sometimes, even involves sexual violence. The journalists have developed a variety of strategies for dealing with the abuse, including limiting what they post online, changing what stories they report on, and using technological tools to prevent people from posting offensive words on the journalists’ public social media pages. Results show that this harassment disrupts the routinized practice of reciprocal journalism because it limits how much these women can interact with the audience in mutually beneficial ways without being attacked or undermined sexually. While experiences of harassment were consistent across the countries studied, cultural differences were evident in how much the journalists were expected to engage online. Results are discussed in relation to the hierarchy of influences model that aims to explain how multiple forces influence media content.

Source: [‘You Really Have to Have a Thick Skin’: A Cross-cultural Perspective on How Online Harassment Influences Female Journalists | Journalism](#)