



Why Art Journalism Is Important in Connecting Traditional Art and Entertainment with The Media

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Abstract

Due to an increase in pop culture consumption and social media use, traditional art forms such as classical music, pottery, and painting are not covered enough in modern journalism. Today traditional art forms, such as classical music, sculpture, and painting, are still seen in a very linear way, even though there are opportunities for this medium to be represented in media. Art journalism would not only help music to be utilized in various ways but also enhance society by exposing more people to art. Art journalists act as an amplifier for many artists by giving them a platform to promote their work and also allowing them to draw connections with each other. Additionally, art journalism promotes cultural appreciation because it often covers cultural events, music, and artwork with artistic aspects. Furthermore, providing these artists with an outlet to popularize their work allows people to discover certain cultures that they might not have otherwise. In all, given that classical forms of art are declining in popularity and the younger generation is becoming increasingly less exposed to traditional art, art journalism can be an effective way to maintain traditions and ensure that art forms such as classical music do not die out completely. The purpose of this research is to study how a decline in art journalism and journalism overall will impact our society and today's youth, as well as study the statistical trends of artistic journalism. The research design will consist of quantitative research on the exact statistics of arts journalism and qualitative research concerning the effects of these factors and will be used to present the argument that art journalism is necessary for our society. The findings from quotes, graphs, and charts will be analyzed to do so, and summarized in the conclusion.

Keywords: Art journalism Art, Artists, Art and entertainment Media

Purpose/Objective

Art journalism is the practice of reporting, discussing, and presenting many forms of art. These forms include, but are not limited to, classical music, theater, fine art, and film. Due to the many categories under general art, there are also many categories of art journalism: for example, a website promoting photography, a news article written on an ancient sculpture, and interviewing a famous musician are all forms of art journalism.

Today journalism as a whole has become less prominent over the past few years due to a shift towards social media and pop culture. Today's newspapers or media only cover a fraction of what they used to, and arts journalism is no different. Statistics state that since 2004, newspaper circulation in the U.S. has dropped by a staggering 57% and is still on the decline (Rivera and Koke-Filimaua, 2023). For art journalism, an already niche category of journalism, its coverage thus representation is limited while there is so much opportunity as a resource to enhance the art world.

There is a need for art journalism to become more mainstream for several reasons. Firstly, arts journalism gives a platform to artists and draws connections between communities (Stoilas, 2018). Furthermore, it promotes cultural appreciation by connecting the people to cultural aspects of art. Art journalists have the ability to shed new light on different cultures, making them a "cultural mediator" of some sort. A cultural mediator builds bridges between pieces of art and the audience through different strategies such as guided tours or creative workshops. They also explore the social themes evoked by the artwork. Cultural mediation offers an all-inclusive approach to art, one that invites all members of the cultural field to participate in discussions and ideas related to artwork (Morin, 2021). Cultural mediation is important to create a society that is all-inclusive to art, diversifying art as a whole.

Finally, studies show that today's youth are less exposed to traditional art than their predecessors, most likely because they connect with the culture and history of art through social media instead. "I believe this generation doesn't care about traditional art because simply put, this generation does not care about past artwork and the cultures associated with them as much as their social media feed would indicate" (Powe, 2022). As the younger generation becomes more inclined to pop culture and digital social media, they lose connection with more classical forms of art. Over time, this leads to a society where art is no longer important and eventually forgotten. It is important that traditional art remains a part of society because art has the power to sway opinions and remember historical experiences.

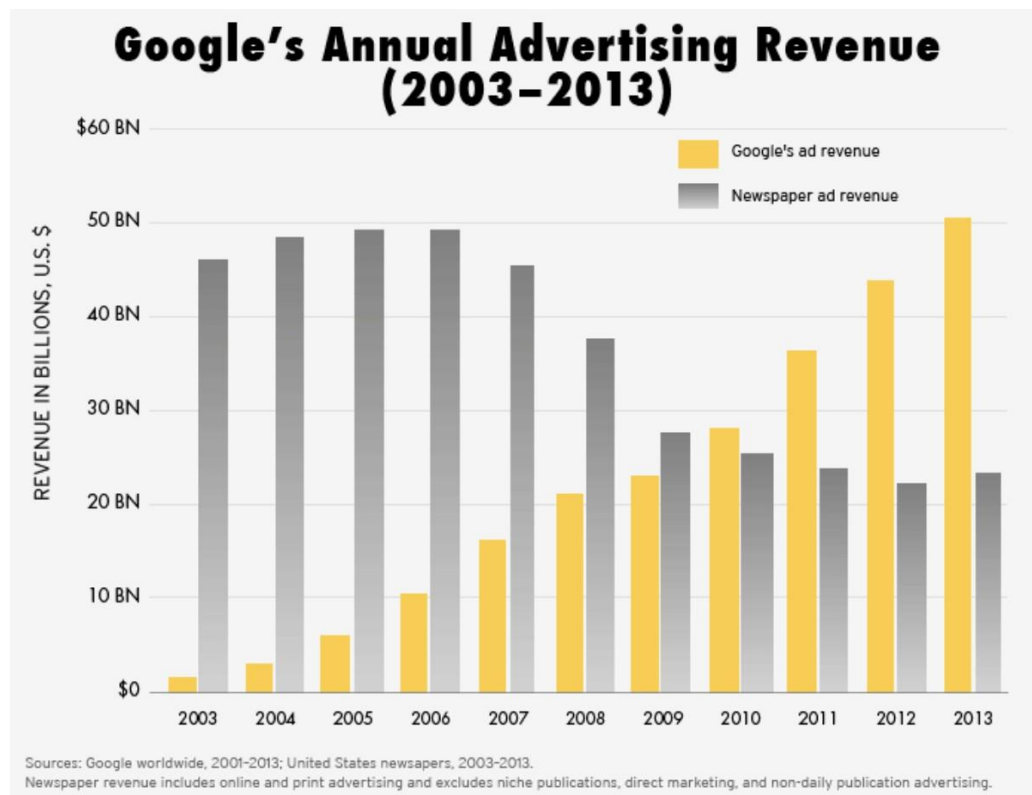
Methodology

Research on journalism typically requires a qualitative approach, usually by interviewing the journalists themselves. However, this paper will go into detail about how art journalism is declining, leading to loss of appreciation for art at large, sense of community, and cultural appreciation. As a result, both qualitative research regarding the effects of these factors and quantitative research on the exact statistics of arts journalism and its relevance will be used to present an argument. In addition, each of the three sub-arguments presented in the abstract will be expanded upon and supported with evidence in the form of quotes, statistics, and graphs.

Findings

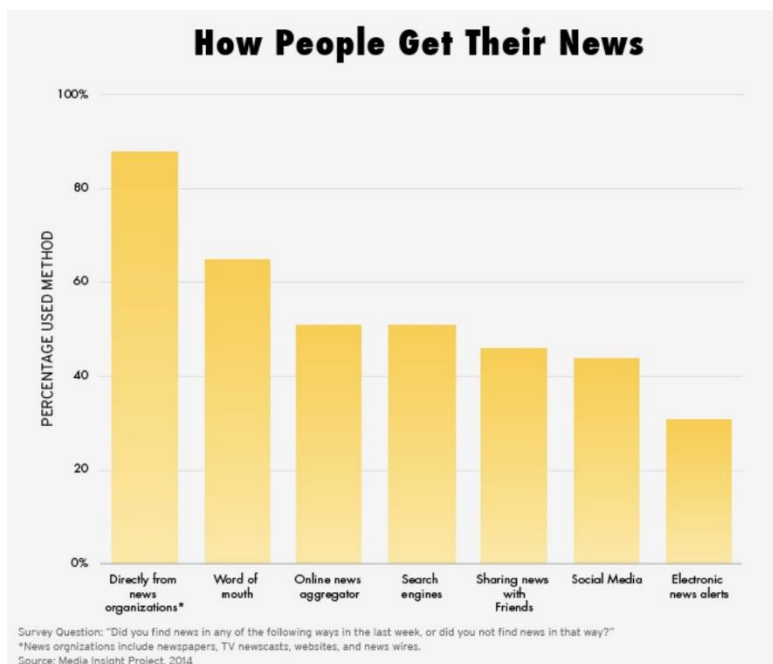
Within the past decade, there has been a noticeable shift towards pop culture and digital social media. According to the Times, “In 2022, pop culture is doing the most... everything is suddenly bigger, brighter, louder, raunchier. Designers are hawking hot-pink suits, belt-length skirts, and logo-plastered handbags. After a boom in scripted programming, trashy reality TV is surging, in a resurgence fueled by self-consciously trashy shows like *Selling Sunset* and *FBoy Island*. The most salient new sound in recent years is hyperpop, a dizzyingly hooky, wildly referential microgenre that has been described by one of Spotify’s influential “data alchemists” as “ebullient electro-maximalism” (Berman, 2022). But with an increase of flashy TV shows comes a decrease in traditional art forms. Traditional art has been on a decline, with research showing that “the proportion of working-class actors, musicians and writers has shrunk by half since the 1970s” (Tapper, 2022). Taken together, the share of non-traditional art coverage in media increases at the cost of traditional art coverage. In 1960, traditional arts still dominated, by 1970 this majority tips towards non-traditional art, and by 2010 only one-third of all articles cover traditional art (Heikkilä, Hazir, and Purhonen, 2020). Therefore, given the modern trends shifting towards pop culture, it is only inevitable that traditional art is on the decline.

Not only is there a decline in traditional art, but there has been a decline in journalism as well. According to the Pew Research Center, the print newspaper industry has experienced a dramatic decline over the past two decades. Since 2004, weekday newspaper circulation in the United States has plummeted by 57%. Furthermore, between 2008 and 2019, the number of newsroom employees in the newspaper industry dropped by 51% (Rivera and Koke-Filimaua, 2023).

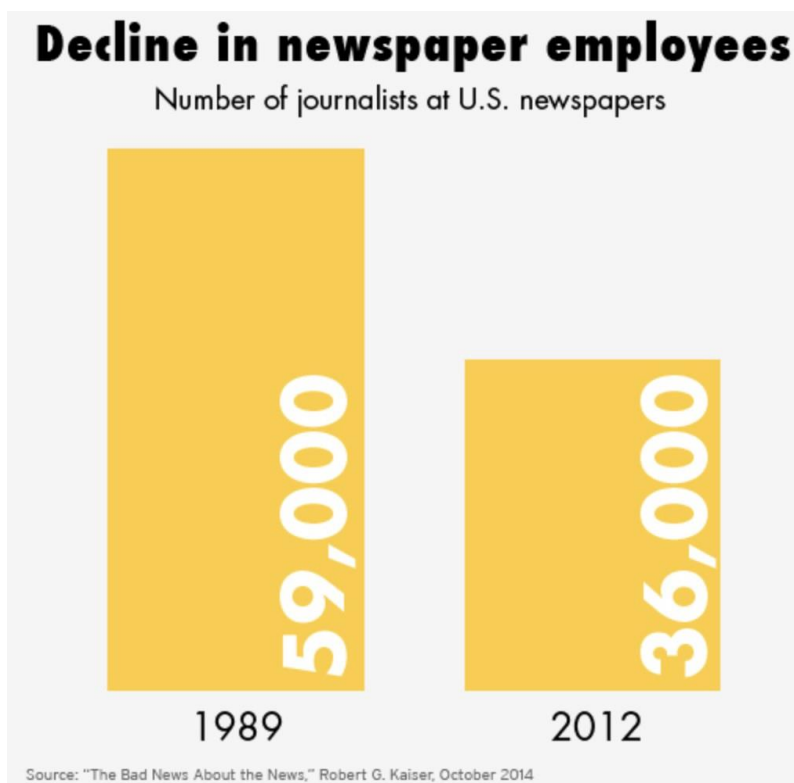


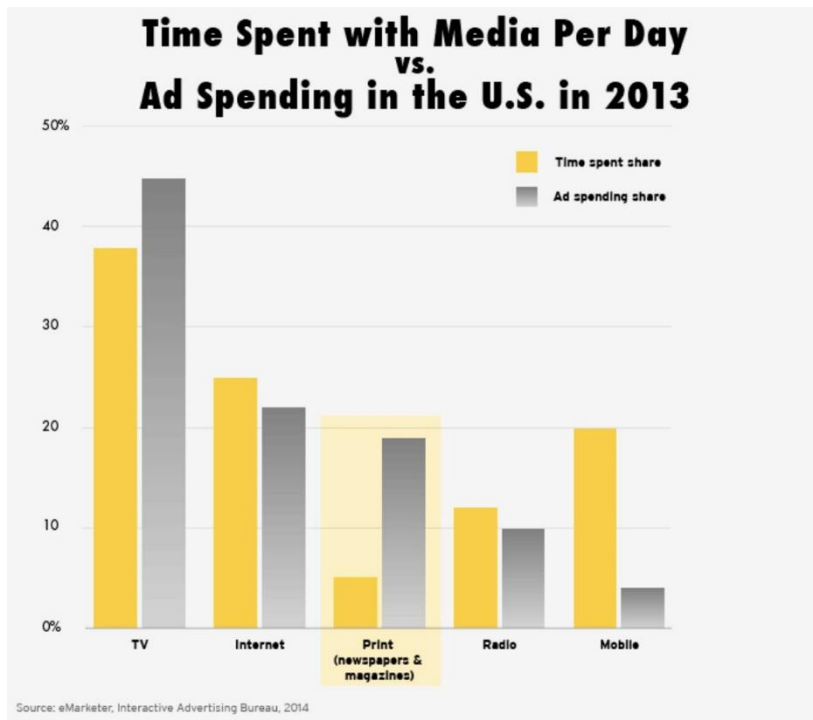
Newspaper revenue decreases as online advertising increases (Dews and Bull, 2014).

The number of U.S. journalists dropped 39% since 1989 (Dews and Bull, 2014).



Americans are relying less and less on news organizations (Dews and Bull, 2014).





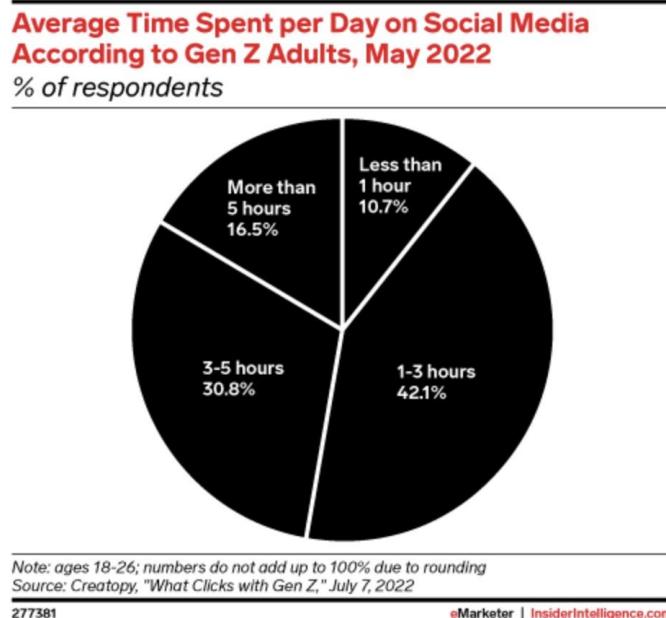
Ad revenue spent on Print media far outweighs the amount of time readers spend there and is continuing to drop (Dews and Bull, 2014).

These numbers show us a few things: First, that newspaper revenue is decreasing as online advertising increases. And in today's world where everything is online, it only makes sense that people are leaving behind more "traditional" aspects of journalism as the numbers show that there is an increase of people using online sources for news. The second graph shows that the number of journalists in the United States dropped 39% since 1989, further showing that journalism as a field is decreasing in size, which in turn leads to decreased art coverage. Next, the third graph shows that Americans are relying less and less on news organizations.

Furthermore, Waldman's graph from his article, "Our local-news situation is even worse than we think" shows that the number of newspaper newsroom employees dropped 57%, Reporters per 100,000 population dropped 62%, and reporters per 100\$ in state and local government spending dropped 67%. Less funding for news and newspapers will lead to a decrease in budget for media coverage, and according to Elizabeth Spadaccini, "When newsroom budgets shrink, arts and culture reporters are often the first to go" (Spadaccini).



(Waldman, 2022).



(Lebow, 2022)

Moreover, about 9 out of 10 Gen Z individuals spend more than an hour on social media each day, and nearly half spend more than 3 hours with the platforms, according to this Creatopy survey.

This graph shows that people in the US spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes with social media each, making the average Gen Z adult a far heavier user than older generations, further indicating an increase in social media usage. And as technology continues to develop, it is only inevitable that people start shifting towards digital journalism and social media, as “it is a very important step for modernization” and “also removes the cost of printing and distributing” (Orkan, 2014).

With the combination of declining journalism and traditional art and an increase in social media usage, art journalism may cease to exist and lose its place within media completely. There are three main reasons why it is important to maintain art journalism, and we will now cover this in the qualitative analysis section below.

First, art journalism “give a platform to artists and draw connections between communities” (Stoilas, 2018). Again, as classical arts are declining in popularity, it is important for art journalists to act as the bridge between artists and their audience to support artists to maintain art as a career; otherwise, artists will cease to exist. One might argue that social media does the same. It’s true that an artist could easily promote their work and increase their audience by creating an Instagram account or attempting to go viral on TikTok. However, combining social media with classical art takes away from what classical art means in the first place. As

mentioned earlier, art is a way to preserve history, express emotions, and to garner respect for the creator. Social media, with all of its flashy marketing techniques, would take away these aspects of traditional art. Furthermore, there is less room for critique and review on the art because the people viewing these pages would be regular people who don’t have degrees in art. In art journalism, however, there would be entire columns dedicated to critique and expert advice because the people writing these papers are more knowledgeable than the average social media user. Art domain is special and it is not easy to interpret some art works. A journalist has a role to help the public understand art interpretation easier and simpler” (Syamsiyah, Muktiyo, Hastjarjo, & Pawito). For the average person, art may be difficult to interpret. Furthermore, “when an artist receives coverage in a respected news outlet, it lends credibility to their work and it can be helpful for new artists to establish themselves in the industry. Covering an artist’s work in a media outlet is also helpful for networking; because artists typically visit these pages, they are more likely to discover other artists and reach out to them for collaboration or offer opportunities. Therefore, it can be argued that art journalism is the best way to cover classical art.

Second, “In the arts field, cultural mediators take on a role that can complement the idea of the mediating journalist. A cultural mediator builds bridges between pieces of art and the audience through different strategies such as guided tours or creative workshops. They also explore the social themes evoked by the artwork. Cultural mediation offers an all-inclusive approach to art, one that invites all members of the cultural field to participate in discussions and ideas related to artwork” (Morin, 2021). When art journalists cover cultural pieces, they expose these pieces to people that would otherwise never hear about these cultures, promoting cultural appreciation and diversity. According to Max Wyman, “Physical health is a necessity for life, but culture, the arts, our expressive heritage, are reasons for living,

catalysts of our imaginations and prompters of our dreams” (Wyman, 2004, p. 10). In other words, art enriches our lives and should be more strongly implemented into our society. Arts journalism can even be seen as a sector of cultural journalism which is more broad. Both arts journalists and cultural journalists take on the role of “journalists for change” by evoking different perspectives that may differ from mainstream news. In the words of Van Nierop, art journalism “helps audiences to understand the world we live in better and to broaden our horizons” (Wasserman, 2023).

Third, art journalism simply promotes art. There is research showing that today’s generation is less exposed to traditional art. Pov Nisa, 19, who teaches Khmer metallophone at Cambodian Living Arts, states that young people aren’t interested in traditional arts “because it doesn’t have a high profile. Television shows only modern art, so that’s all young Cambodians know about.” (Samphorthvicheka and Channa, 2011). Part of the reason traditional arts do not have a “high profile” is because, like Pov Nisa said, they are being covered less, and therefore being exposed to less people. With the decline in art journalism and journalism as a whole, this trend will only continue meaning in the near future, traditional arts may lose their place in media completely.

Given that arts journalism is an already niche category of journalism, a decline in journalism and traditional arts in general will lead to even more underrepresentation of classical arts in media. “When newsroom budgets shrink, arts and culture reporters are often the first to go. Gone are the stories about the theater troupe or the big show coming to town, the books local people are writing or the latest movie to draw lines of fans (Spadaccini, 2019).” Just like how people preserve artifacts and read history books to learn about the past, traditional art is crucial to understanding aspects of our history through the artist that lived through them. “Because the act of creation is essentially intangible until an artistic product or activity results, it is generally difficult to assign a value to it. However, the products of the imagination hold a symbolic value that is central to both individual and collective identities...In the words of Max Wyman, ‘Simply put, physical health is a necessity for life, but culture, the arts, our expressive heritage, are reasons for living, catalysts of our imaginations and prompters of our dreams’ (Jeannotte, 2021). It is important to keep traditional art an aspect of today’s society because it offers a look into a culture’s history, values, and beliefs and it cannot be recreated.

Conclusion

Art journalism is losing relevance within the journalism community, leading to less coverage in the media and therefore less exposure with today’s generation. Because classical art itself is losing relevance, it is up to art journalists to get artists’ work into the media to present itself to many people. In a world of fast fashion, pop culture, and mainstream music, it is important to preserve traditional art forms such as classical music and theater. By keeping traditional art mainstream, arts journalism does a few things: First, it acts as a bridge between artists and their audience. Second, it sheds a new light on different cultures and traditions around the world, promoting cultural appreciation. Lastly, it promotes a decline in traditional values as the youth become detached from classical art,

which is disastrous as art holds the power of evoking emotions, influencing opinions and preserving history. By covering the arts on mainstream outlets, art journalists can contribute to a society where classical art maintains its influence over power over people and continuously plays the role it was meant to play.

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