

## Refereed Articles

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### ***Pacific newsroom profiles: Media literacy and education in Fiji, Papua New Guinea***

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Presented at the Journalism Education Association (JEA) conference, Suva, Fiji , 5-9 December 2004. Conference theme: "*Media literacy in the Pacific and Asia* ".

*Abstract:* University education for South Pacific journalists is a relatively recent development. It has existed in Papua New Guinea for a generation; it is barely a decade old at degree level in Fiji, and in Polynesia . While the Papua New Guinean media has largely depended on journalism education to provide the foundation for its professionalism, Fiji has focused on a system of ad hoc short course training funded by international donors. This paper examines how tertiary education has a critical influence on how Pacific journalists in the two major economies and largest media industries in the region practise their profession and perceive their political and social role in a developing society faced with the challenges of globalisation. The findings are drawn from a newsroom staff survey of 13 news organisations in Fiji and Papua New Guinea in 2001. The survey concluded that journalists in Papua New Guinea are more highly educated, have a higher mean experience and age, and have a more critically sophisticated perception of their media role in Pacific societies than in Fiji . Journalists in Fiji are also more influenced by race, cultural and religious factors. Conversely, PNG journalists are poorly paid even when compared with their Fiji colleagues. There are serious questions about the impact that this may have on the autonomy of journalists and the Fourth Estate role of news media in a South Pacific democracy. [full paper](#)

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