

Capturing Truth; Imaging Retailer Releases Feature Documentary on the Vital Role of Photojournalism in Today's Society.

In partnership with Sony and Wex Photo Video

- *83% of those aged 16-24 now consume news online, with 71% of those people using social media as their source. (Ofcom, 2024)*
- *Some major newspapers saw a decline of circulation up to 15-17% YOY. (Press Gazette, 2024)*
- *As of August 2023, people have generated almost 15.5 billion AI-generated images. (Ofcom, 2024)*

[3rd April] With the pursuit of quicker, more efficient ways to access information, The industry has seen a huge shift in media consumption; with this comes the decline in work for those in the photojournalistic field. With an average of 2 hours and 24 minutes of the day spent on Instagram (Ofcom, 2024), the way we view news and imagery has changed dramatically over the last 5 years.

The pursuit of a career in content creation and image-making has seen an estimated 45 million professional creators, and 162 million amateur creators across the platforms. This number has quadrupled since 2019 and is expected to double again by 2027. (Forbes, 2022)

As a result, Wex Photo Video and Sony have created a feature documentary discussing the way news has altered and what that means to the general public; a discussion on what impact imagery has had on the world, and where we would be without it. Wex will be premiering the film in the UK in mid-2024.

The research, collated by the UK's biggest photographic retailer Wex Photo Video, shows how influential the individual creator and media consumer can be. As such, there has been dramatic changes across the news gathering industry over the last few years. The journalist we have spoken to have seen the average salary in 2024 culminating in around £38,306.00 per annum, compared to previous salaries ranging upwards of £150,000. To simplify, the average journalist now receives £50-£200 per image post-trip; £1,000 - £3,000 for an assignment; and competes with hundreds of others documenting the same story. You are expected to cover your own expenses. Previously, the assignments would come in more often and pay upwards of £10,000 - £15,000 for sensitive stories; expenses were covered in full, with healthy commission on top. Your competition could be as low as 5 other photojournalists. (Glassdoor, 2024 and various journalists, 2024)

Those consuming news - scrolling through countless social media feeds inundated with polished images – are people experiencing a profound sense of image fatigue. The sources they are using are often unproven and unregulated; it's almost impossible to separate images made by AI from those captured in conflict. As such, the world has grown weary of what they see and read.

Don McCullin, conflict journalist, casts doubts on whether you could build a successful career today. In a recent interview with Creative Review, **McCullin** said:

‘War reporters today have to operate with no insurance, no coverage, no backing. I admire them for their spirit. But the ball game has totally changed. If you get great pictures – and risk your life to get them – where are they going? Are you going to get enough money to cover your original costs and expenses?’

Within the film, we hear from several world-renowned journalist on where they see the industry moving to. We also hear from those in the industry whether there is merit in image-led journalism; can these images really inspire and provoke change?

Peter Dench, Photojournalist for the Sunday Times said:

'They [Images] can be evidence.'

'The industry has changed, and changed quite significantly. Around 2005, 95% of my income was from editorial commission. Now, less than 5% is from editorial commission. I remember when 12 pages in the Sunday Times was the holy grail, the goal. Now, 4 pages is a triumph.'

Ian Berry, Photojournalist for LIFE magazine and Drum said:

'In the old days, if I wanted to do a story on Africa, I'd go along to Parimatch and they'd say:

'Sure. We'll put up a couple of thousand and have a look when you come back.'

If you go to them now, they'll say:

'Yeh. That sounds interesting, let's have a look when you get back.'

But they don't want to put up any money.'

In an era where information overload often obscures truth and authenticity, photojournalism stands as a beacon of clarity and conscience. Its power lies not just in documenting events but in illuminating the human experience, fostering empathy, and inciting action. Yet, the livelihood of photojournalists and the very existence of this invaluable medium are under threat. As we navigate a rapidly changing media landscape, we must recognise the urgency of preserving and supporting photojournalism.

Tiffany Tangen, Head of Content at Wex Photo Video, and Director of the film said:

'Imagery connects the public to issues that are otherwise inaccessible or incomprehensible; often these images are used to document history and collect evidence.

The industry is on its knees. With declining funding, it's more difficult than ever to pursue a career in photojournalism. The rise of AI has meant truth is perceived inversely, and with social media consumption being at an all-time high, it's easy to see where the issues lie.'

- ENDS -

For more information, please contact wex@smarts.agency

Notes to editors

About Wex Photo Video:

Established in 1997, Wex Photo Video (previously called Wex Photographic and Warehouse Express) is celebrating 25 years of assisting more than a million photographers and videographers achieve their goals. Wex's dedication to service, expertise and customer satisfaction is underpinned by competitive prices and the largest range of any UK photo and video retailer, with more than 25,000 products.

The www.wexphotovideo.com website is complemented by a specialist Customer Contact team, eleven UK stores (including the London flagship on Commercial Road, Whitechapel), extensive online content and exclusive events and exhibitions. Customers can contact Wex Photo Video seven days a week by phone, email, live chat, social media or in person.

This focus on customer success has made Wex Photo Video the UK's largest online photographic specialist and winner of many accolades, including 'Retailer of the Year' as voted for by readers of Digital Photo/Practical Photography magazines for the past six years, plus numerous other service and content awards for over 15 years.

Imagery of the store can be found and downloaded from this link here.

Website: www.wexphotovideo.com

Twitter: [@wextweets](https://twitter.com/wextweets)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wexphotovideo>

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