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# Is it possible to protect journalists sources in the digital age?, survey asks

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# Is it possible to protect journalists sources in the digital age?, survey asks

## **Abstract**

Titled UNESCO Internet Study: Privacy and Journalists' Sources, this major global research project requires the direct input of editors, journalists, publishers, media organisations and associations, policy experts, media lawyers, press freedom activists and NGOs, and public interest bloggers.

## **Keywords**

survey, age, digital, sources, asks, journalists, possible, protect

## **Disciplines**

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## "Is it possible to protect journalists' sources in the digital age?", survey asks

This is one of the key research questions underpinning a survey launched by the World Editors Forum today, as part of a global UNESCO-commissioned study into journalists' source protection.



#SourcesStudy

Titled UNESCO Internet Study: Privacy and Journalists' Sources, this major global research project requires the direct input of editors, journalists, publishers, media organisations and associations, policy experts, media lawyers, press freedom activists and NGOs, and public interest bloggers.

If you fit this profile, you can make an important contribution by **completing our online survey** in the first instance. In the next phase of the research, we will be conducting

long-form (qualitative) interviews with sources we have identified as valuable to our examination of these critical issues in contemporary investigative journalism.

The study is being led by WAN-IFRA/World Editors Forum Research Fellow **Julie Posetti** and, so far, it has identified and mapped over 120 countries which had some sort of legal protection for journalists' sources in 2007. The research team is now in the process of updating the data on these countries in order to identify changes in the intervening seven years, and establish new benchmarks for 2014.

### Our research has five key objectives:

1. Map legal protections for journalists' sources globally (What laws exist globally to support journalists' ethical obligation to protect their sources from unmasking?)
2. Assess the effectiveness of these protections in the digital media context of 2014
3. Identify international case studies that demonstrate issues/problems/best practice
4. Establish the potential consequences of this shifting landscape for acts of investigative journalism
5. Make recommendations to UNESCO.

### Our main research questions are:

1. Is it possible to keep journalists' sources confidential in the digital age?
2. What laws exist globally to support journalists' ethical obligation to protect their sources from unmasking?
3. To whom do these laws apply? (Bloggers, tweeters, whistleblowers who 'go direct'?)
4. How are legal and institutional protections being adapted to digital realities?
5. What are the potential consequences of this shifting landscape for acts of investigative journalism?
6. How should we respond (as states, as journalists/editors/publishers, as legal experts, as civil society organisations etc)?

### This research is being undertaken in the context of new digital realities

These can be summarised as:

1. Mass surveillance (as highlighted by The Guardian's Janine Gibson in our Trends in



### WAN-IFRA SEARCH



### DIGITAL MEDIA



### EDITORIAL



The **World Editors Forum** is the organisation within the World Association of Newspapers devoted to newspaper editors worldwide. The Editors Weblog ([www.editorsweblog.org](http://www.editorsweblog.org)), launched in January 2004, is a WEF initiative designed to facilitate the diffusion of information relevant to newspapers and their editors.

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