

Interviewguide

Introductory presentation:

Interview for a research article about what climate journalists identify as challenges in covering climate issues. Likely to be in English. I will not use your name in the article, but I will refer to your experience (number of years) and the type of media you work for (digital, print, niche media). Therefore, I cannot promise 100% anonymity.

Background:

What is your background? (Education?)

How long have you been working in this field? (What did you do before?)

How often do you write/produce climate journalism? (Optional: What else do you cover? What takes up most of your time?)

Which platforms do you produce for? (Most/least?)

Optionally: How is climate coverage organized at your media outlet? Specialized journalists vs. generalists? Where are they placed? Who do they report to? (Editor?)

Why do you work with climate journalism?

(What is climate journalism?)

Challenges:

How do you typically find your stories? (Optional: Use specific examples)

Is there a difference between writing about climate change and other topics? What are the differences? What is the biggest one?

What challenges do you face in your daily work related to producing climate journalism? (e.g. selecting/finding stories, “selling” them, finding sources, verifying facts, communicating?)

- Are the challenges only related to the issue? Or also external factors such as time, readership numbers, editorial decisions?
- Do you experience other/bigger challenges compared to other topics? (Why/why not?)
- What is the biggest challenge?
- How do you tackle these challenges? / Do you have any suggestions for how they can be solved?
- Are there any challenges that have become bigger or smaller over time? Which ones?

Are there stories you would like to write but cannot? (e.g., due to journalistic norms at your workplace, time pressure, etc.) Can you recall a specific idea you wanted to pursue but didn't? Why?

Is there anything about covering climate that challenges what you've learned as a journalist? / that you have to compromise on?

(For experienced journalists): Have you changed your approach to/how you work with climate journalism over the years?

The Role of Journalism (Ideals):

What is good climate journalism? Why is it good? Is it different from good journalism in general? How?

What is bad climate journalism? Why is it bad? Is it different from bad journalism in general?

What is the most important task/purpose of climate journalism? (To support democratic education, hold those in power accountable, give voice to the voiceless, focus on what readers care about, uncover new stories, communicate information quickly, help people solve problems, suggest solutions/actionable steps). Is it different from other types of journalism?

Do you think about the audience when producing climate journalism? How? Is it more important than in other areas?

Objectivity:

The responsibility of journalism is a major topic in the debate about climate journalism – do you feel you have a special responsibility regarding the climate crisis (e.g., to get people/politicians to act, etc.)? Is it different from other areas? (Why/why not?)

It's not hard to find "bad" news about climate journalism. At the same time, research shows that focusing on the negative ultimately causes people to stop reading, and that one must also remember hope. What are your thoughts on that?

On the other hand, some argue that pointing to solutions is activist. What do you think about that? Where is the line between journalism and activism?

How can one be objective as a climate journalist? (e.g., not expressing opinions, hearing all sides, reflecting science, reflecting the public?) Is objectivity a particular challenge in climate journalism?

Is there anything I haven't asked that I should have?

May I follow up with you if something needs clarification? (And feel free to write or call if you think of anything.)