

INSIDE!

**DETECTIVES
CROSS-
EXAMINE
BARRIERS**

PROFESSORS SHARMA & WEITKAMP INTERROGATE WORLD OF JOURNALISM

WE ASKED SCIENCE JOURNALISTS ABOUT THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE AND BARRIERS THEY FACED.



EMMA WEITKAMP - Professor in Science Communication, UWE (UK)

WE SAW THE BROADER PICTURE OF THE INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE IN INDIA AND THE UK. THIS COMIC HIGHLIGHTS SOME CORE ISSUES OUR COLLABORATION DISCOVERED AGAIN AND AGAIN.



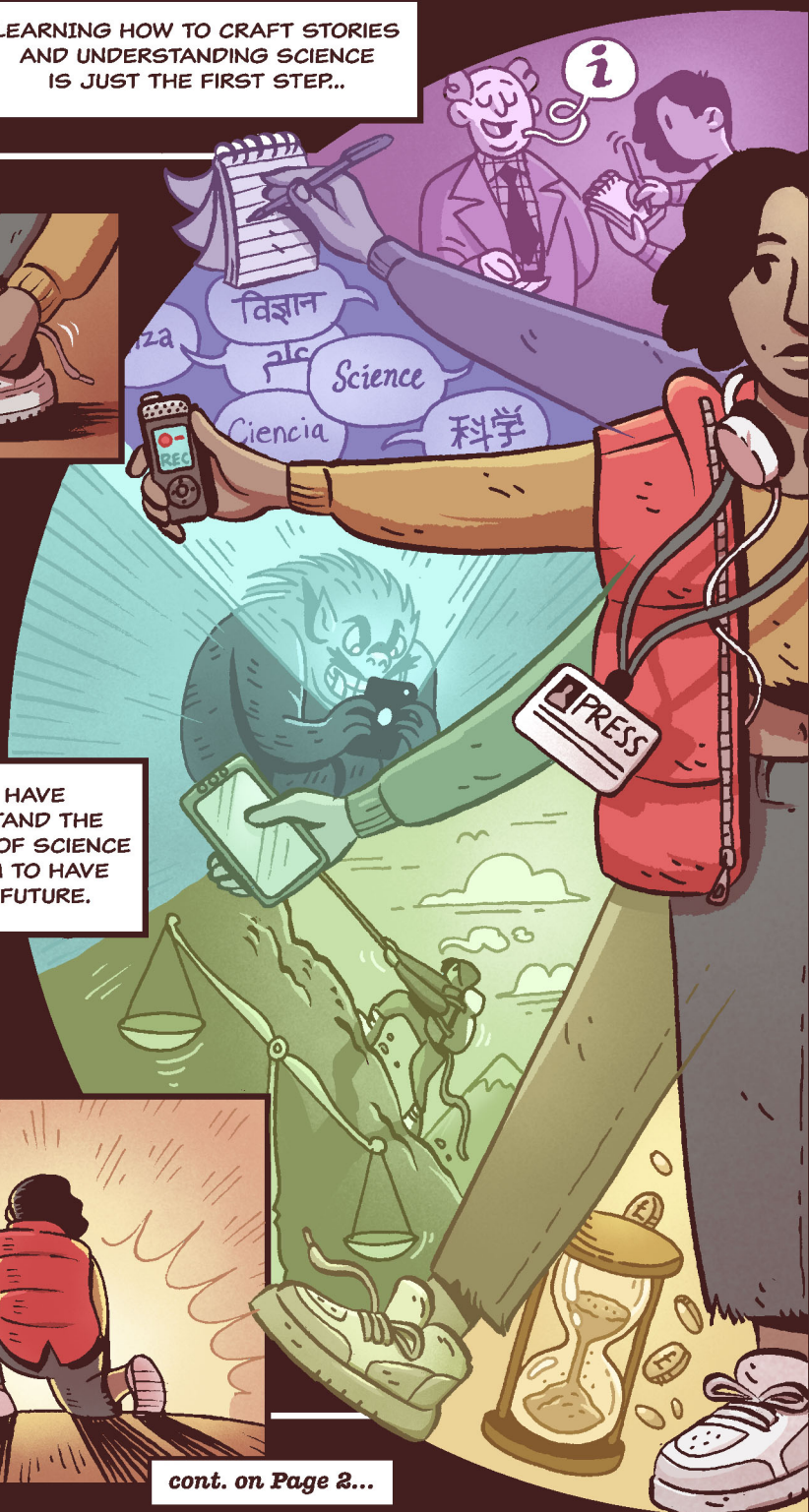
SHALINI SHARMA - Associate Professor of Humanities & Social Science, IISER Pune (India)

COULD YOU HACK IT?

LEARNING HOW TO CRAFT STORIES
AND UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE
IS JUST THE FIRST STEP...



BUT YOU HAVE
TO UNDERSTAND THE
CHALLENGES OF SCIENCE
JOURNALISM TO HAVE
A BRIGHT FUTURE.



**REALITY OF
BECOMING
A SCIENCE
JOURNALIST...
UNCOVERED!**

By **RIK WORTH** (story)
JORDAN COLLVER (art)
OWEN WATTS (colours)

cont. on Page 2...

HOW DO YOU BECOME A SCIENCE JOURNALIST? CAREER TRAJECTORIES DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED. THERE ARE OBSTACLES BEYOND TALENT. YOU MIGHT HAVE BIG DREAMS, BUT YOU HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO START.



IT'S A BALANCING ACT. A STAFF JOB MIGHT BE STABLE BUT MAY BE POORLY PAID, WHILE FREELANCING IS UNSTABLE BUT ALLOWS FOR MORE FREEDOM.

THE ALLURE OF MAKING MONEY IN PUBLIC RELATIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS WILL ALWAYS BE THERE, BUT ENTAILS A MOVE AWAY FROM JOURNALISM.



NEW DISCOVERIES, SAME OLD FACES

Getting commentary on stories is good practice, but too often that commentary comes from established, recognisable, media-savvy figures or the heads of research labs.



Be aware that commentators may not be the authors or researchers, or even have the specialist knowledge on the subject they are asked about.

PLACEMENTS ARE A GREAT WAY TO GET EXPERIENCE, BUT NOT EVERYONE CAN AFFORD TO DO THEM -- ESPECIALLY IF UNPAID.



THESE BARRIERS AREN'T JUST BAD FOR INDIVIDUALS. THEY'RE BAD FOR THE INDUSTRY. THEY LIMIT THE RANGE OF EXPERIENCE OF JOURNALISTS AND REDUCE THE TYPES OF STORIES THAT GET TOLD.

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LOST IN TRANSLATION

It's the job of science journalists to 'translate' academic research into stories for the public.



Imagine how much harder that is if the researcher, or your audience, doesn't use the same language as you. Many countries use multiple languages locally and scientists like to travel!

CASTE OUT ASSUMPTIONS!

EMBEDDED BIAS SHRINKS SCIENTIFIC SCOPE

How science journalism is done and who gets to do it varies from culture to culture.



Some biases are unique to their home cultures. "CASTE BLINDNESS" in India, for example, prevents gatekeepers from seeing how violence to people and their environment is shaped by caste dynamics.

DIGITAL SKILLS LIKE S.E.O., WEB WRITING AND UNDERSTANDING AI COULD GIVE YOU AN ADVANTAGE.

AND TECHNICAL SKILLS IN VIDEO AND AUDIO LET YOU EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY.

BUT DEVELOPING THESE SKILLS TAKES TIME... AND MONEY.

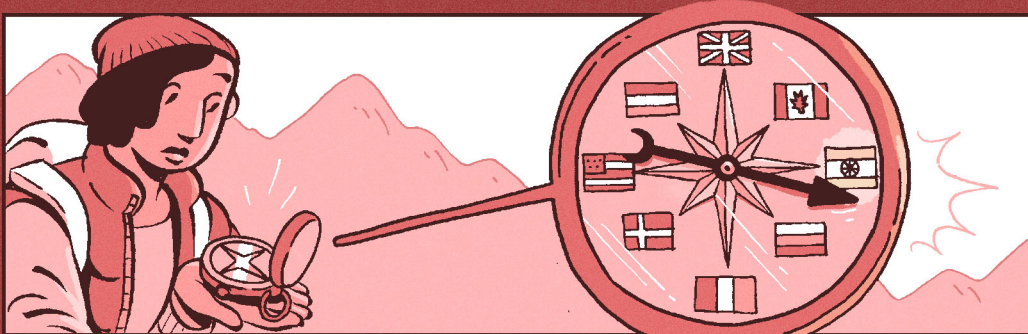
THERE ARE FAVOURED TOPICS IN THE WORLD OF SCIENCE JOURNALISM. EXCITING, MAINSTREAM, EVEN SENSATIONALIST STORIES CAN BE EASIER TO SELL BECAUSE EDITORS KNOW THEY'LL GET READERS.



AT THE SAME TIME, GOOD JOURNALISTS CONNECT WITH COMMUNITIES TO FIND AND SURFACE STORIES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM - DIVERSIFYING THE RANGE OF STORIES THAT REACH THE PUBLIC.



TO MAKE THE ISSUE MORE COMPLEX...



...Western authors are published and cited more.

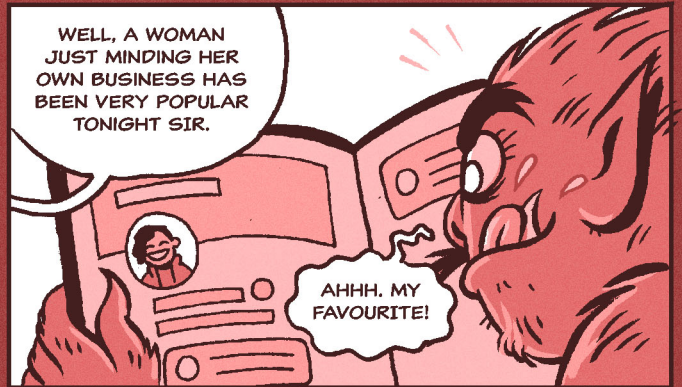
This bias means it's difficult for authors and work from non-Western countries to get proper recognition.

THE TROLL E-PROBLEM!

While the internet and social media is a great resource for finding stories, making contacts and looking for work, women in journalism have a difficult choice...



Avoid social media and risk losing these advantages...



Or have an online presence and face trolls, objectification and abuse.

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IT MAY SEEM LIKE THE OBSTACLES IN SCIENCE JOURNALISM ARE INSURMOUNTABLE.



HOWEVER, YOUNG JOURNALISTS ARE SMARTER AND MORE MEDIA SAVVY THAN EVER, USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO FIND THEIR WAY.



CHANGING LANDSCAPES ALWAYS CREATE

INSTABILITY.



BUT...



THROUGH COLLABORATION -- BETWEEN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS, PUBLISHERS, SCIENTISTS, JOURNALISTS AND THE PUBLIC...

...WE CAN IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND AND TURN THESE CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES.

