

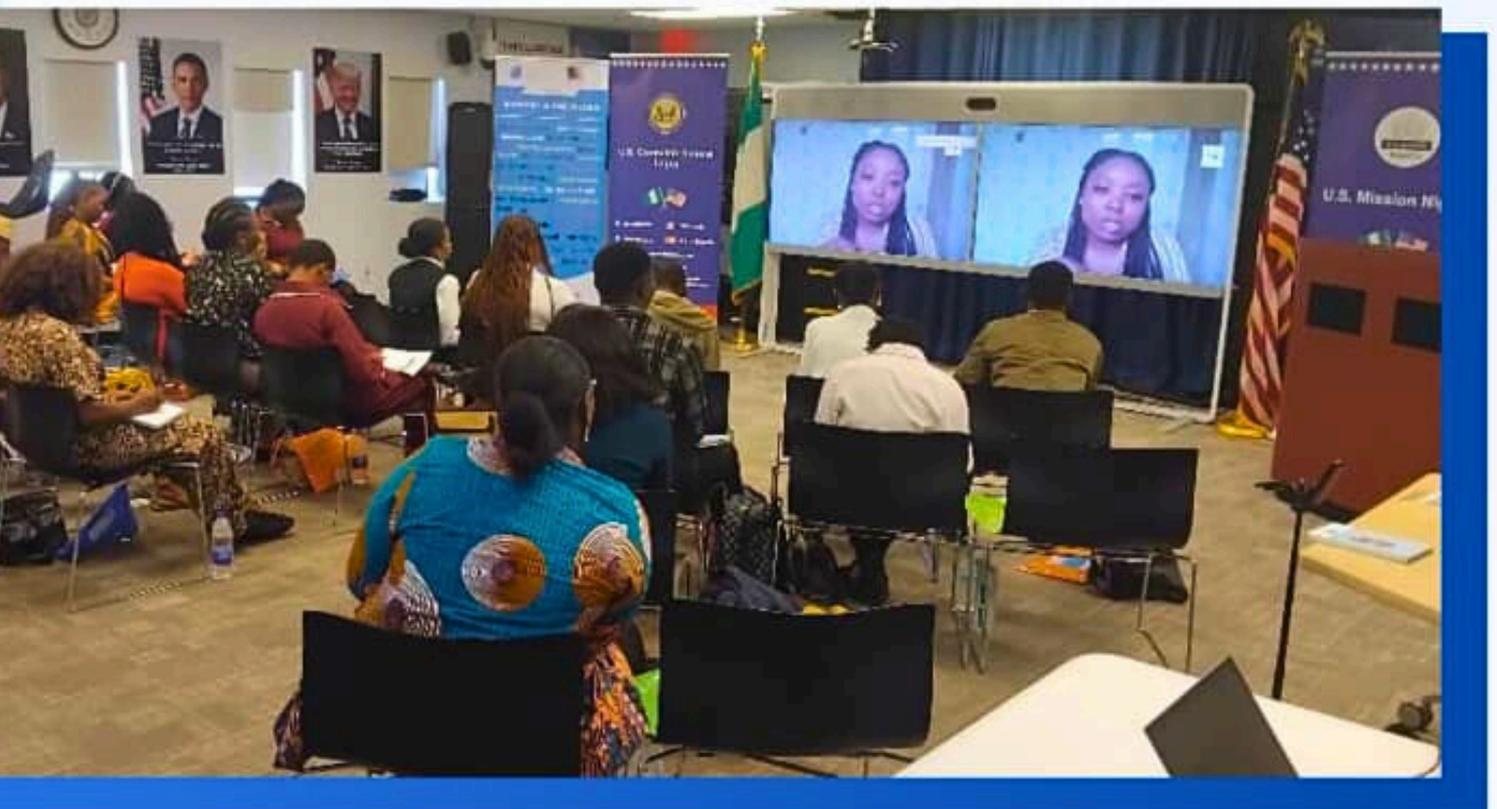


**MEDIA  
CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT  
NETWORK**

• Training • Mentoring • Coaching

# Nigeria Media Career Outlook 2026

Key Trends, Opportunities, Skills & Prospects.





**MEDIA  
CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT  
NETWORK**

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# INTRODUCTION

**AFTER** four editions of our annual capacity development report, we have changed the focus of the publication to cover prospects and opportunities in the new year instead of documenting programmes and activities in the previous year.

The Report will now be an Outlook to highlight what journalists should pay attention to in the new year to enhance their careers and maximise available resources.

In this first edition of the OUTLOOK, we have contributions from accomplished journalists, who, based on their knowledge of the industry and personal experiences, offered insights and suggestions that can guide journalists, broadcasters and other media professionals in their 2026 career journeys.

We thank the contributors for their insightful articles which we are sure will be invaluable for those desirable of making 2026 count in their media careers.

The contributions are diverse, covering the print, broadcast and digital platforms for all categories of journalists.

We also have information on what the focus of media Non-Governmental Organisations and support groups would be focusing on in the new year and their database.

We promise to provide quarterly updates on our website, newsletter and social media during the year.

We remain committed to supporting journalists and other media professionals to achieve their career goals through more training, coaching, mentoring and counselling programmes.

Our best wishes for the new year.

**LEKAN OTUFODUNRIN**  
Executive Director

## The Contributors

**Omotola Aderinsola Adebajo**, News Editor/Manager and Career Mentor with the BBC

**Kunle Adebajo**, editor of the African Academy for Open Source Investigations (AAOSI) at Code for Africa

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**Goodness Chibunna**, News Editor at TheCable

**Shereefdeen Ahmad**, overall winner of the 2025 CJID Alfred Opubor Next-Gen Award

**Kehinde Adegboyega**, Executive Director of the Human Rights Journalists Network Nigeria

**Chioma Ezenwafor**, Founder of Surthrive Media and former News Manager at Nigeria Info, Cool and radio stations

# OUR 2026 CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS

**GREETINGS** and sincere appreciation to everyone who was part of our various programmes and engagements in 2025.

We appreciate our supporters, including the US Consulate in Lagos, Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development and the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism.

We appreciate all the opportunities to be involved in enhancing the career journeys of journalists and other media professionals and promise that we will do much more in the new year.

Be assured that we will ensure more regular postings of

insightful content and resources on our website and social media platforms. We have some books scheduled for publication.

We have a range of need-assessment based physical and virtual career development training and sessions for the new year which every category of Journalists can benefit from.

Two more editions of our Journalism Clinic at the US Consulate office in Lagos would be held before the end of the first quarter of the year.

We are interested in hearing more from journalists who want more personalised engagements, mentoring, coaching and counseling.

We want to collaborate with newsrooms and media groups to support their staff and members in accomplishing their career goals for the new year and beyond.

Once again, welcome to 2026 and do your best to maximise the available opportunities for enhancing your careers in 2026 we will offer and that of many other organisations and institutions.

Be intentional about enhancing your career. Don't leave it to chance and time.

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**LEKAN OTUFODUNRIN**  
Executive Director

**MEDIA CAREER DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (MCDN) is a registered not-for-profit and non-political organisation with the following aims and objectives:**

- To promote excellence in media practice in Nigeria
- To organise media training and provide mentoring support for journalists and media professionals.
- To produce resource materials to enhance media career development.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, share experiences, and find mutual support and guidance for media professionals.
- To engage in advocacy for freedom of the press in Nigeria.
- To protect the interest & welfare of journalists and media professionals

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**LEKAN OTUFODUNRIN**



# Media Career Check-Up 2025

Lessons, Gaps and Growth Paths for  
Nigerian Journalists



# MEDIA CAREER CHECK-UP 2025

## (FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

LAST year, we conducted a Media Career Check-Up as part of our commitment to supporting Nigerian journalists in building purposeful and sustainable careers.

The initiative, launched in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), offered a free opportunity for journalists to step back, evaluate their career paths, and receive personalised feedback.

The check-up process involved completing a comprehensive form designed to capture both achievements and areas needing improvement. Though some participants initially found the process rigorous, the detail provided a strong basis for constructive feedback. The check-up process involved

completing a comprehensive form designed to capture both achievements and areas needing improvement. Though some participants initially found the process rigorous, the detail provided a strong basis for constructive feedback.

The assessment revealed recurring themes: the need for clearer career planning, the importance of professional branding, gaps in training and exposure, and the value of structured mentoring. It also confirmed that while many journalists are passionate and hardworking, they often lack the support systems and resources required to fully thrive in today's dynamic media environment. Below are details of our findings and recommendations which will

be useful for journalists for their 2026 media development plans.

### FINDINGS

From the review of completed forms, CVs, and online presence of participants, as well as their career aspirations, some common themes emerged:

**CV/Professional Profile:** Many journalists had CVs that were not properly formatted, lacked details of achievements, and did not adequately market their skills.

**Career Clarity:** While some journalists had clear career goals, others struggled to articulate short- and long-term aspirations.



## Academic

### Qualifications/Certifications:

Some participants had acquired additional qualifications (some even outside journalism), but others need to acquire higher qualifications and update their skills with new certifications in digital journalism, multimedia, and specialized reporting.

**Digital Footprint:** Across the board, there was a weak online presence. Websites were not updated, LinkedIn profiles were skeletal, and social media activity often did not reflect professional expertise.

**Professional Networking:** Most participants limited their memberships to NUJ, and the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) with little connection to other professional or thematic groups that could provide opportunities, exposure, and resources.

**Adaptation to Emerging Tools:** There was low awareness and limited use of new digital tools — particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI) — which are already reshaping journalism practice globally.

## Mentoring and Support Needs:

Many expressed the need for structured mentoring, peer learning, and guidance to navigate career transitions or move beyond routine reporting.

### Recommendations

Based on the issues observed, MCDN made the following recommendations to participating journalists (and by extension, all Nigerian journalists who may benefit from this report):

**CV Revamp:** Update CVs to highlight achievements, use modern formatting, and reflect relevant skills.

**Define Career Goals:** Clearly state short- and long-term goals to guide decisions and training priorities.

**Pursue Further Training:** Enroll for post-graduate courses and online/offline certifications in digital skills, multimedia reporting, solutions journalism, and thematic beats like health, environment, or justice.

## Join More Professional

**Networks:** Beyond NUJ and NAWOJ join specialized networks (e.g., climate reporting groups, health journalism associations, or global journalism forums).

## Embrace Artificial

**Intelligence:** Take advantage of available AI tools and training to stay competitive in the rapidly evolving media landscape.

**Leverage Mentorship:** Use platforms like MCDN membership to access mentoring, resources, and career counselling.

## Renew Links with Media

**Support Organisations:** Stay connected to media NGOs and training bodies for resources and opportunities.

## Aim to Become Experts, Not

**Just Reporters:** Journalists should deliberately build expertise in their chosen beats, positioning themselves as thought leaders and consultants.

***“Enrol for postgraduate courses and online/offline certifications in digital skills, multimedia reporting, solutions journalism, and thematic beats like health, environment, or justice. “***



**L:** Participants at the fourth Journalism Clinic, held at the US Consulate in Lagos.

**Julie McKay, Public Affairs Officer (Top Right), and Temitayo Famutimi, Communication Specialist (Down Right)**

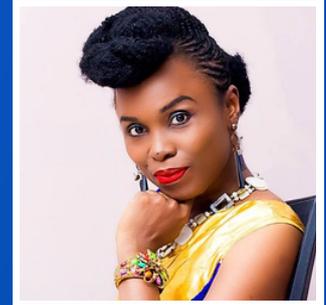
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Executive Director, Human Rights Journalists Network

# Storytelling will get blurrier - Catch Up!

**Nigerian journalists, especially those working for so-called traditional media have to change the way they tell stories. Those interested in getting employed in international media should think global and act local in their current role.**

## OMOTOLA ADEBANJO

WHEN I hear someone introduce themselves as a “broadcast journalist” or a “print journalist”, I cringe and grind my teeth in frustration because this is 2026, and storytelling lines are blurring more than ever before. It’s becoming absolutely essential for the Nigerian journalist, especially those working for so-called traditional media, to catch up – really fast!

Am I advocating that you quit your TV, radio, or print media job? Absolutely not – only that you need to change the way you tell stories. Studies and media followership numbers across the globe have shown us that journalism has evolved from just informing, educating, and entertaining the audience to really listening to what they need and providing it – the audience is king and if you’re not providing the kind of stories they need, in the way they want it, you’re playing a loser’s game.

Should we sacrifice journalism ethics for audience preferences? Absolutely not. However, we need to move from “traditional” storytelling techniques that tend to glorify the reporter, to digitally savvy storytelling techniques that put the spotlight on the subjects of our storytelling and allow the audience to walk in their shoes and see themselves in our stories. That way, the stories resonate more with the audience and they’re happy to share and engage more with the journalist and media.

### What To Do For Radio, Television, Newspapers

What does this mean for you if you work for a radio or TV station as a news reporter? Resist the urge to always do traditional voiced news reports where you always sign off at the end. Experiment with self-authored pieces, video, audio, or picture montages, telling a story in person rather than using a voiceover – piece to camera or PTC, learning to write incredibly short but informative news bars or captions, creative graphics, explanatory texts to match your storytelling. The list is endless.

For print journalists, please understand that writing texts for a physical newspaper is different from writing for online – which is more conversational, with shorter paragraphs, more illustrations and the use of audio or video to embellish your storytelling.

*To achieve your digital storytelling dreams requires skills that you have no choice but to adopt and improve over time. There are so many trainings available to suit your storytelling interests – some free, some paid for.*



However, if your organisation insists on doing things the “traditional” way, consider this your opportunity to build a digital journalism profile for personal expression and growth.

You can produce a particular story in multiple formats. This requires a lot of hard work – so roll up your sleeves and immerse yourself in the deep waters of creative and analytical thinking for compelling storytelling.

### Required Training

To achieve your digital storytelling dreams requires skills that you have no choice but to adopt and improve over time. There are so many trainings available to suit your storytelling interests – some free, some paid for. Your organisation may provide some training as well but developing yourself as a twenty-first-century digital storyteller is your sole responsibility – so get cracking!

## How To Get International Media Employment

Before signing off on this short piece, I'll like to chip in a word or two for journalists who currently work for local media but have their sights on international media employment. That journey begins right where you are – journalism is universal, the basic elements and ethics are the same irrespective of where you work.

So, think global and act local in your current role. It's very tempting, especially when you're underpaid to not want to give your best. You'll be shooting yourself in the foot. Practicing the highest level of journalism excellence right where you are helps you develop a habit of proficiency that you would find very useful in international media employment.

Also, most international media organisations have their own editorial agenda that may not necessarily align with yours, so enjoy the editorial independence you have now and ensure you develop your own editorial voice. That would help you find your footing in especially large international media organisations. You would already have your own editorial identity and be less vulnerable to editorial brainwashing.

### With Regards To Getting Hired, Here Are A Few Tips:

Write very good essays in your applications – go straight to the point about your past achievements as a journalist, no unnecessary embellishments. Your storytelling ability should show in your essays.

If you're asked to write about yourself in say three hundred words, don't write fifty or hundred words. Keep it close to the limit.

In your excitement, don't undersell yourself in your essays or come across as begging for the job – be confident in your skills and your potential to deliver. It's just a job like any other after all!

Make sure you're adding the right working link where necessary. If you're asked to add a link of a report or feature you did recently, do just that. For journalists who work for radio and TV, please don't send a link to your programme presentation in place of a news report – hiring managers find this very annoying.

If asked for your show reel, send a one or two-minute show reel that covers the scope of your journalistic experience. Don't be lazy about this.

As much as possible, do not disclose your last salary – it can be used against you. And, before writing what salary you expect to earn, ask around and make sure you're not asking below par – this can be used against you as well.

If you make it to the interview stage, prepare well. Make sure you have a piece of paper and pen with you. Use that to quickly write down the questions you're asked – it's a way to help you think and also bide time.

Steady your nerves and pause before answering a question. If you need a moment to think about your response to a question – ask for it.

You would likely be asked about the top news stories making the rounds in your country, region, or the world – be ready to make a pitch for any of the top stories at the moment.

When you're asked about your past achievements, be specific – don't ramble, stick to the facts that are relevant to the job you're applying for.

I hope you find these tips useful. Wishing you the very best in 2026!



**Omotola Aderinsola Adebajo started her career with the Nigeria Television Authority in 1998 and currently works as News Editor/Manager and Career Mentor with the BBC. She has also worked in public relations and filmmaking with the renowned Nigerian filmmaker Tunde Kelani.**

# Must-have skills for journalists in 2026 and beyond

Anyone interested in journalism as a livelihood and eager to distinguish themselves in 2026 and beyond, should embrace computer-assisted journalism.

## KUNLE ADEBAJO

COMMERCIAL air travel started in 1914. The first two computers were connected in 1969. The first handheld cellular phone call was made in 1973. The first smartphone was released in 1994. A computer AI model first defeated a world chess champion in 1997 -- and a Go champion less than two decades later. The first tweet was posted in 2006. Facebook opened up to the public in the same year. ChatGPT was first released to the public in 2022.

There have been a lot of life-changing innovations in the past century or thereabout -- and even more so in our lifetime. They have changed how we travel, how we communicate, how we earn, how we mourn, and a hundred other things about our lives. Journalism is not spared. How human beings produce and consume information have changed drastically, and that means what a contemporary journalist typically looks like has also changed. The opportunities and the challenges in the industry look different, and oftentimes, the only way to prevent the tyre of relevance from rolling over you is to stay updated.

Given this background, one could not stress enough the importance of embracing computer-assisted journalism for anyone who is interested in journalism as a livelihood and eager to distinguish themselves. In 2026 and beyond, you should make this your focus.

Specifically, you should familiarise yourself with artificial intelligence and its vast use cases. Many people have hyped the need to learn prompt engineering -- which basically means asking large language models questions that elicit the best results -- but, in my view, it is more crucial to know what AI is great at, what its weaknesses are, what tools are available, and how you can incorporate them into your work. Watch YouTube videos about the latest updates. Use the tools for fun. You can use AI to generate text, images, audio, and video files. You can build a custom agent that mimics and executes tasks for you. You can build a website. Now, you can even code apps by just entering a few prompts.



You may not need these skills in your everyday work, but a journalist who is AI-savvy is a lot more beneficial to most newsrooms than one who isn't. By using AI correctly, you can save time, make your work more efficient and innovative, and reach more audiences.

Another important skill to learn is video production. One of my takeaways from the 2025 Digital News Report is that more and more people prefer to watch their news than read it. And they're not getting these video reports mainly from TV. Instead, they are using social media apps like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and X. So, if you want your reports to get to more people, consider complementing with or transitioning to video.

Again, advances in technology have democratised the video production skill, such that you don't need to enrol for a course to learn it. Apps such as Canva have made it easier by being intuitive to use and offering ready-made templates that can help you bring your content ideas to life.

You need the talent of discernment now more than ever. We are battling misinformation and disinformation on a massive scale. With advancements in generative AI, people can fabricate almost anything easily and make it believable, too, with just a click of a button.

***“...the average journalist, especially if you’re working for a small newsroom, should make an effort to understand audience engagement and social media marketing.”***

One study recently found that about a fifth of videos shown to new YouTube users are entirely generated by AI. The era of “picture or I don’t believe it” is gone. Even if there is supposed video evidence, without supporting metadata, you can’t be too sure.

So as a journalist, you have to double-check the claims you are amplifying on your platform to make sure you are not innocently spreading false information. You have to strengthen your verification skills. Similar to this is being able to find and analyse open-source intelligence.

It’s also important to think of how you can make your stories stand out from the noise and information overload.

We have a finite amount of time but live in a world of “infinite scroll”. So, why should people read your story instead of watching another AI slop about dramatic car romance? How can you make them care? How can you build a loyal audience?

In other words, the average journalist, especially if you’re working for a small newsroom, should make an effort to understand audience engagement and social media marketing.

Finally, as long as we have people in the workforce, interpersonal skills will always be an added advantage, if not crucial to career growth. If you want to advance on the corporate ladder, you need to learn how to manage people and projects. Also, as long as we have people on this planet—and not cyborgs—storytelling and journalism will not go out of fashion. It may just take a different shape. So, the job is not going anywhere. The question is, will you still have what it takes five years from now?



**Kunle Adebajo currently serves as editor of the African Academy for Open Source Investigations (AAOSI) at Code for Africa, and previously headed the investigations desk at HumAngle. He is passionate about innovative journalism and delicious storytelling. He is equally very fond of data and OSINT investigations. 'Kunle is the founder and editor of Chronycles and Punocracy. In his spare time, he volunteers for the Abuja Hub of the Global Shapers Community.**



**Participants at the first Journalism Clinic, held in Lagos at the US Consulate**

# Navigating the next wave of journalism & creative economy

2026 Offers A Dynamic Landscape Where Technology, Trust, And Creativity intersect. Journalists Who Embrace AI As A Collaborator, Master Platformcentric Storytelling, And Champion Transparency Will Not Only Survive But Thrive.

EJIRO UMIKORO

THE year 2026 is shaping up to be a pivotal year for media professionals across broadcasting, digital news platforms, investigative journalism, and the broader creative economy. The convergence of AI-driven tools, platform-first distribution, and a renewed focus on trust and community is reshaping career trajectories and opening fresh avenues for growth.

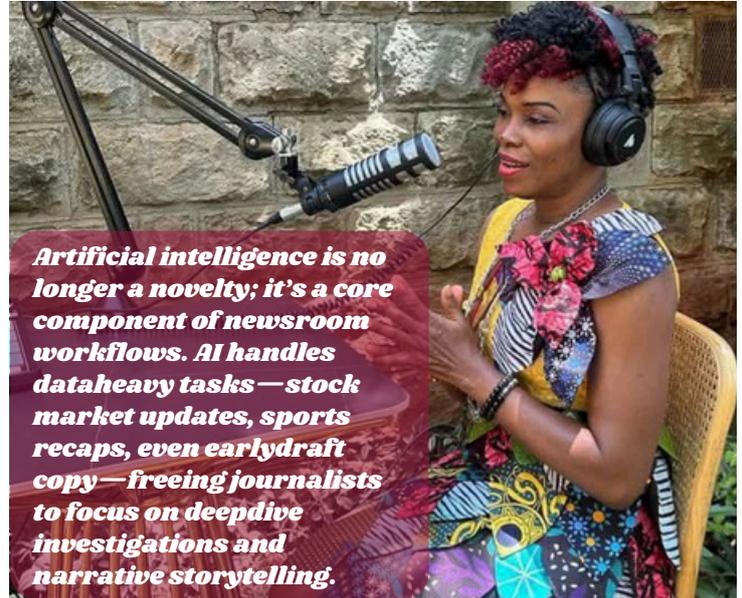
## Platform First Storytelling—Video, Audio, and Immersive Formats

Audiences are fragmenting across TikTok, YouTube Shorts, podcasts, and emerging metaverse spaces. Media companies are hiring multimedia producers, short-form video editors, and AR/VR storytellers to create bite-sized, immersive experiences. The rise of “creator-journalist hybrids” means professionals must be comfortable wearing both the reporter’s hat and the content creator’s badge.

An important career tip for journalists right now is to build a personal brand on at least two platforms (e.g., a Substack newsletter + a TikTok news channel; LinkedIn + Instagram) to showcase versatility. Observe which social platforms audiences in your countries gravitate to or are dominant, and work with them. Also, thinking about global audience reach is crucial.

## Trust as Currency—Transparency, Fact-Checking, and Community Engagement

With “Slop” (AI-generated misinformation) dominating the 2026 lexicon, news organisations are doubling down on trust initiatives. Positions like trust editors, community engagement managers, and verification specialists are expanding. Investigative journalists who can demonstrate methodological transparency and collaborate with audience fact-checking groups will become the most sought-after assets.



**Opportunity:** Non-profit and public service media are growing, offering stable funding for journalists committed to accountability reporting.

## AI-Powered Journalism—From Automation to Augmentation

Artificial intelligence is no longer a novelty; it’s a core component of newsroom workflows. AI handles data-heavy tasks like stock market updates, sports recaps, and even early-draft copy, freeing journalists to focus on deep-dive investigations and narrative storytelling.

This is not to say AI-generated stories are for newsrooms, except the company clearly says its policies use AI, which should be clearly stated.

With AI hallucinations, embedded errors and biases, AI-generated content cannot be trusted. Despite this reality, trends are pointing to a surge in roles such as AI journalism editors, prompt engineers for generative content, and ethics auditors who ensure AI-generated pieces meet editorial standards.

Upskilling in Python, R, and AI prompt design will become as essential as mastering the inverted pyramid.

**Key Takeaway:** Journalists who blend investigative rigour with AI fluency will command premium roles and lead the next generation of newsrooms.

## The Creative Economy — Monetising Journalism Beyond Ads

Subscription models, membership clubs, and creator economy platforms (Patreon, Kofi) are reshaping revenue streams. Journalists are launching paid newsletters, microlearning courses, and branded content pods, blending reporting with entrepreneurial savvy. This trend fuels demand for product managers, growth marketers, and business development leads within newsrooms.

**Action Step:** Acquire basic digital marketing skills (SEO, email automation, analytics dashboards) to diversify income and future-proof your career.

### Skills To Prioritise In 2026

- **Data Literacy:** Python/R for analysis, datavisualization tools (Tableau, Power BI).
- **AI Prompt Engineering:** Crafting effective queries for generative models.
- **Multimedia Production:** Video editing (Premiere Pro, DaVinci Resolve), podcasting (Audacity, Hindenburg).
- **Ethics & Verification:** Factchecking frameworks, blockchain provenance, and media law updates.
- **Audience Development:** Community management, newsletter strategy, platform analytics.
- **Global Assistant/Emerging Roles and Salary Outlook**

Sources: Industry reports, Payscale and Poynter Institute data

### Career Issues To Explore In 2026

**Burnout & Mental Health:** The rapid pace of AI integration and platform churn can strain journalists. Building resilience through mentorship and flexible work arrangements will be critical.

**Regulatory Pressure:** New data privacy laws (e.g., GDPR, style frameworks in emerging markets) will affect audience targeting. Understanding compliance is a valuable differentiator.

**Diversity & Representation:** Media outlets are actively seeking multicultural voices to reflect global audiences. Specialised training in inclusive storytelling can open doors.

**“Media outlets are actively seeking multicultural voices to reflect global audiences. Specialised training in inclusive storytelling can open doors.”**

### Actionable Roadmap For 2026

**Audit Your Skill Set:** Identify gaps (e.g., coding, AI prompts) and enroll in shortterm bootcamps or MOOCs.

**Build a Portfolio:** Publish a mix of investigative pieces, shortform videos, and data visualizations on a personal site.

**Network Strategically:** Join industry forums (ONA, GIJN) and attend hybrid conferences focused on AI ethics and platform journalism.

**Seek Mentorship:** Pair with senior editors or product leads to navigate intrapreneurial projects.

**Stay Agile:** Allocate weekly time for experimentation—try a new tool, test a TikTok trend, or prototype a microlearning module.

In summary, 2026 offers a dynamic landscape where technology, trust, and creativity intersect. Journalists who embrace AI as a collaborator, master platformcentric storytelling, and champion transparency will not only survive but thrive. The next wave of media careers is less about “reporting the news” and more about “building the news experience”—a shift that promises both challenge and immense opportunity.

**Lady Ejiro Umukoro, Founder & President of LightRay! Media, is a Media Maverick & Literary Trailblazer in Nigerian and African media and literature. As a multi-award-winning broadcast specialist, trainer, mentor, investigative journalist, social entrepreneur, and author. Aside from her journalism work, which has earned several recognitions globally, she's also made waves with her bestselling novels "Distortion" and "The Distortion of Hadassah".**

# Prospects in broadcast media and development communications

**Find yourself and discover your niche, keep building capacity and growing. Leverage the digital media to showcase what you know to do and do not ignore Artificial Intelligence (AI). Explore formats and channels for your media expertise and be bold about giving visibility to what you know to do.**

## ADEBISI ADETUNJI

A new year, brings with it an opportunity to reflect on the past year and strategize to achieve better results. As we step into 2026, it is pertinent to know that the ever-evolving modern tech driven media landscape, has given broadcasters a bigger playing field in their careers. The career prospects are massive giving any broadcaster who is invested in building capacity an opportunity to work in varying job roles or stand independently. No more feeling boxed in or stranded.

Therefore, I will like to get you thinking deeply about the following questions in order to position rightly as a practitioner. Where are you in your broadcast media career journey? Are you in your early, middle, management or retirement time zone? Understand that no matter where you are on the spectrum, there is still room for growth and loads of opportunities and options are available to you.

### Skills In Demand That Broadcast Professionals Already Possess

Simply by working in the broadcast media space, you are already equipped with many relevant skills in demand in the modern job market. Some of these include, storytelling, communication skills, creative writing, reporting skills, interviewing skills, production skills (Radio or TV), presentation skills, content design and creation, people's management, team building/work – no production is done alone, there is always a team working together to deliver on broadcast production, emotional intelligence, stakeholder management – as media professionals, we meet different people and manage people from all walks of life.

### Early Media Career

For those in the early media career stage, focus on learning and mastering the art of the profession. Take on tasks assigned with a willingness to do excellently well, and somewhere in between, pay attention to tasks that showcase your strength. Discover yourself and your niche. Identify a mentor doing excellently well in your niche, and you do not have to have access to him or her. Follow their content and programmes via radio, TV or online.

I started out as a content producer on radio but quickly developed skills in not only conceptualisation of content ideas and script writing but went on to acquiring interviewing skills, presentation skills, use of audio software and editing skills, storytelling and audio drama writing and production skills etc.



Versatility became the name of the game in my career as a broadcast media professional. But soon my area of expertise and strength became clear, and I began to build capacity around what I was best at even more. Interestingly, whatever other skills I had acquired began to serve my main niche and gave me an edge over others in terms of career opportunities. I have gone on to acquire more tech-driven skills that I can take to the market.

As an early-career broadcast media professional, you are among the lucky ones, especially in the ever-evolving technologically versatile media landscape in modern times. Loads of opportunities are at your fingertips, so make up your mind not to settle for less but take advantage of technology.

### Mid/Management Media Career

By now, you should have discovered your niche in the space. Personal capacity building and an intentional, continuous learning attitude are your biggest bridges to a more fulfilling career prospect. Be ready to unlearn and relearn.

Apply for fellowships, attend workshops, and enrol in courses. Virtual learning has made learning accessible and easy to participate in, so there is no excuse. These platforms offer opportunities to expand your mindset, network and learn about best industry practices that is relevant to current technologically driven realities.

The only ceiling blocking your career expansion and possibilities is the one you have created in your mind. There is a lot you can still do. I am going to be showing you in a bit, career prospects for anyone in the media, no matter what stage they are in their career journey.

## Management/About to Retire or Retired

Don't go to sleep and lie to yourself that your best years are gone simply because you are about to or are retired. No, they are not! Examples of colleagues who remain relevant having found their niche and narrowing down abound. Bimbo Oloyede, Moji Makanjuola, Cyril Stober, Lekan Otufodunrin. Opportunities abound where your experience and expertise are needed.

## Career Prospects and Job Roles for Broadcast Media Practitioners

**Radio/TV Stations:** Job opportunities are open for broadcasters across increasing number of stations being set up.

**Media Trainer:** Provide consultancy services and facilitate training sessions.

**Development Communication:** Communicators and media professionals are in high demand across various thematic area in the development/NGO space. For example, Communications Officer/Manager, Knowledge Management, Media Relations and more.

**Lecturing:** Tertiary institutions need your hands-on media experience to better prepare Mass Communications, Media Studies, Communications & Language Arts students for the job market in the industry.

## Storytelling for Organizations/Business Branding and Visibility

- Social Media Marketing/ Social Media Manager – storytelling & writing, graphics design
- Copywriting/Article writing
- Podcast – Create a show around programme content you are an expert in. Example – Current affairs, music shows, personality interviews.
- Video/Audio Editing – hands-on skills that are in high demand across organisations and businesses.
- Voice Over Artist – not just for commercial jingles but for animated or video formats, documentaries, features, etc.
- Translation skills – There will always be a need for language translation services. If you have strong knowledge of, and the ability to speak and write in, any Nigerian or foreign language, such as French, you are sitting on a money-making skill.
- MC – Professional host for events – There will always be events to host, so hone this craft and become a professional and unforgettable host that keeps getting referrals.

**“ Communicators and media professionals are in high demand across various thematic areas in the development/NGO space. For example, Communications Officer/Manager, Knowledge Management, Media Relations and more. ”**

Audio Storytelling Scriptwriting and Production consultancies

Industry Examples: Building your personal brand in your identified niche

Bimbo Oloyede, Veteran Broadcaster and News Anchor, she leveraged on her communications and public speaking expertise to become a trainer and Founder/Lead Consultant of the Strictly Speaking Academy.

Adedamola Tinubu, Veteran Broadcaster — After retirement becomes a lecturer continues to mentor media professionals

Kayode Okikiolu, Channels TV embarked on a personal creative journey to break the news down so people can be better informed to engage governance. YouTube Channel, and LinkedIn. This has gone on to give him bigger visibility, opportunities and awards.

Dele Adeyanju – Founder Agbaletu TV on YouTube. This programme broadcast in the Yoruba language started on radio as a regular programme but Dele took his passion and continued to build until it gained a bigger platform. Time will fail me to mention a lot more people.

## Conclusion

Find yourself and discover your niche, keep building capacity and growing. Leverage the digital media to showcase what you know to do and do not ignore Artificial Intelligence (AI). Explore formats and channels for your media expertise and be bold about giving visibility to what you know to do.

**Adebisi Adetunji** is a Media and Development Communications professional with over 20 years' experience working as a Broadcaster, Content design, Storytelling and creative writer, Media Trainer and Social and Behavior change communicator. She is a published author who has written six acclaimed books.

Adebisi is the host of the Media Talks Show, Evolve-Modify-Grow Podcast and Course Creator/Lead Instructor of the E.A.T Academy, Audio Drama Bundle Course & Storytelling Boot Camp Series.

# Mastering the Use of AI

The journalists who succeed in 2026 will be those who understand both the value and the dangers of AI and use it to do more of what makes journalism essential: uncovering truth, holding power accountable, and telling stories that matter to Nigerians.

## TITILOPE FADARE

THE newsroom deadline is 6 p.m. A 120-page government procurement document lands on your desk at 4 p.m. You have two hours to find the story, verify it, and file. Your colleague uses AI to extract key patterns and flag anomalies in minutes, then spends the remaining time calling sources and building context. You are still on page 23. This is not a future scenario. It is already happening in newsrooms.

By 2026, the question will not be whether journalists use AI, but whether they have learned to use it creatively, ethically, and strategically—without losing control of editorial judgment, credibility, and public trust.

## What AI Mastery Actually Looks Like

True AI mastery means editorial judgment remains firmly human. It is understanding that while AI can brainstorm story angles, only a journalist can decide what should be reported in a community in Surulere or what nuance is missing from a flooding incident in Maiduguri. The journalist's irreplaceable role is to inject local context and verify claims on the ground. Your value lies in deciding what to trust, what to challenge, and what to publish.

It also means layered verification becoming a core skill. In an era of deepfakes and misinformation, especially during election cycles, journalists must cross-check claims, interrogate sources, and analyse how viral posts spread across platforms.

Ultimately, ethics becomes a defining career skill. Mastery involves knowing when not to use AI, how to protect sensitive data and sources, and how to disclose AI use appropriately. This shift also places responsibility on newsroom leaders to develop clear AI guidelines and invest in training rather than leaving journalists to navigate these changes alone.

## Skills Journalists Should Be Building Now

The skills required for 2026 are less about software and more about literacy. One of the most foundational is prompt literacy for research. It is the ability to ask precise, informed questions that guide AI toward useful, verifiable information.

This goes beyond typing instructions into a chatbot. It involves framing context, challenging assumptions, and refining prompts to extract key insights, particularly for investigations.

Closely tied to this is verification literacy. As AI becomes more embedded in newsroom workflows,

journalists must be able to spot errors, bias, and gaps in AI-generated outputs. This includes cross-checking claims, interrogating suggested sources, and recognising hallucinations.

Editorial confidence is another critical skill. Journalists must know when to reject AI-generated suggestions and when to use them appropriately.

Another important area is AI-assisted multimedia storytelling. AI can help generate visuals, simple explainer graphics, or data-driven infographics when original images or videos are unavailable, especially for sensitive or underreported stories that still need to be told.

Finally, there is the skill of multilingual and audience-aware reporting. In a country as linguistically diverse as Nigeria, AI can help journalists and newsrooms translate or adapt content for wider audiences, making stories more accessible across language and regional lines.

## The Path Forward

By 2026, AI will be as common in newsrooms as word processors. How can journalists ensure they do not miss out?

Start small. Pick a free, user-friendly tool and use it for non-critical tasks such as summarising research papers or transcribing interviews. As you experiment with more tools, document what worked and what did not. Share these learnings with colleagues and, importantly, join communities where journalists are actively experimenting and learning together.

The journalists who succeed in 2026 will be those who understand both the value and the dangers of AI and use it to do more of what makes journalism essential: uncovering truth, holding power accountable, and telling stories that matter to Nigerians.



**Titilope Fadare** is a Nigerian journalist, editor, and media trainer with over nine years' experience across solutions, multimedia, and development reporting. She is the founder of Generative AI Journalism with Titi, a training initiative focused on helping African journalists use generative AI ethically, creatively, and responsibly in newsroom workflows. Since 2021, she has trained over 500 journalists across Africa on AI, mobile, and multimedia storytelling.

# Embracing digital frontier: 'My journey as a digital journalist'

The Digital Realm Offers Endless Possibilities, From Real-Time Collaboration On Google Docs To Audience Analytics Via Tools Like Google Trends. But Remember, Technology Serves The Story, Not Vice Versa.

## JUSTINA ASISHANA

AS I sit in my house in Minna, Niger state reflecting on the cusp of 2026, I can't help but marvel at how far journalism has evolved since I first picked up a notebook and pen about a decade ago. My name is Justina Asishana, and I've been the Niger State correspondent for The Nation Newspaper for several years now. But more than that, I'm a data and investigative journalist, a fact-checker, and a perpetual student of the digital world. One of my mentors called me an "AI Explorer". Winning awards like the Agriculture Reporter of the Year at the 2025 Nigeria Merit Award and the 2025 African Journalist for Human Rights has been gratifying, but it is the daily grind of harnessing online tools that truly defines my craft today.

In the new year, being a truly digital journalist is not just about adapting, it is about thriving in a landscape where information flows like a river, and we must navigate it with precision, ethics, and innovation.

My entry into digital journalism wasn't planned; it was born out of necessity. Early in my career at New Nigerian, Daily NewsWatch and even The Nation, I covered stories from remote areas where traditional sources were scarce. Phone calls and in-person interviews were my staples, but they were time-consuming and often incomplete. Then came the pandemic in 2020, which forced me online or made me discover the opportunities the online world has to offer. I discovered social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram not just as echo chambers or platforms for fun, but as goldmines for leads and sources. For instance, during my investigative work on agricultural issues in Niger State, I monitored hashtags like #NigerFarmers and #NigeriaAgriculture which gave me insights to the story I was working on.

In 2026, a truly digital journalist must master social media as a two-way street. It's not enough to broadcast; we need to engage. I use X and Facebook to crowdsource information and sifting through responses for verifiable tips.

In going digital, caution is key as misinformation spreads fast, so I do my best to cross-verify every user-generated tip with official sources or data sets. As a WHO-ICFJ Road Safety Reporting Fellow, I learned to use social listening tools to track public sentiment on issues like road accidents, turning raw online chatter into insightful reports. As a Fact-Checker, I have learnt to use digital tools to search for claims and verify faster.



Beyond social media, online research has changed how I gather facts. Gone are the days of dusty archives; now, I dive into digital databases. For data-driven stories, I use platforms like Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics website or global repositories like World Bank Open Data. In one piece on healthcare disparities in rural Niger, I pulled datasets on hospital staffing and visualized them using free tools like Tableau, Flourish or Google Data Studio. These visualizations are not just pretty, they make complex information accessible, helping readers understand complex reports.

But 2026 demands more: embracing AI without losing our humanity. AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok and others assist in brainstorming angles or summarizing lengthy reports, but I always fact-check outputs manually. For transcription, Otter.ai and Transcribe have saved me hours on interviews, especially in noisy environments (I always tell people that I dreaded transcribing interviews but not anymore). In investigative work, tools like Bellingcat's open-source intelligence (OSINT) techniques, analysing geolocated photos or videos from social media have been game-changers. Ethics are paramount; AI can bias results if not handled carefully, so I try to adhere to guidelines ensuring transparency in my methods.

Multimedia storytelling is another pillar of digital journalism because these days, readers crave more than text; they want immersion. I've incorporated short videos, and infographics into my work. Using free apps like Canva for graphics or Anchor for audio.

*continued on page 28*

# Taking training opportunities seriously

Journalists should pay attention to emerging trends that have been shaping training opportunities in recent times. They include: Rise of Thematic Journalism; Emphasis on Accountability and Ethics; Cross-Border Reporting; Digital and AI Literacy; Community Engagement and AI-powered journalism

## IFEDAYO OGUNYEMI

In my over a decade of practising journalism and putting myself out there for media-related opportunities, one reality has become incredibly clear. It is that talent alone is no longer enough. The state of today's media industry that's characterised by changing newsroom economy, shrinking budgets, evolving digital tools and heightened global competition for attention have reshaped what it means to build a sustainable journalism career, particularly one that's built on impact. In this tech-enabled media environment, accessing structured local and international training opportunities has become an essential skill, not an optional skill, that journalists must be good at, just like their reportorial and editorial skills, if not better.

Also, over the past six years that I've committed to I-79 Media Consults, I have engaged with thousands of campus journalists, early-career reporters, freelancers and mid-career professionals across Africa. One recurring pattern stands out from these engagements is that those who deliberately pursue training, fellowships, reporting grants and professional development programmes are far better positioned to survive and, possibly, thrive than those who rely solely on newsroom experience.

Personally, I've had a fair share of these benefits from the dozens of media-related opportunities that I've participated in which have changed my career over the years.

### Why Training Matters More Than Ever

It is no longer news that the Nigerian media space is under pressure, just as the global media is. Many newsrooms are downsizing because advertising revenues are unstable and journalists are increasingly expected to be multi-skilled.

As such, reporters must now write, edit, shoot, verify data, pitch internationally and sometimes self-publish.. At the same time, global media institutions such as foundations, universities, and international newsrooms are opening up more opportunities for journalists from the Global South. However, these opportunities often favour journalists who demonstrate capacity, clarity of focus, ethical grounding and evidence of professional growth.

### Without A Doubt, Training Opportunities Help Journalists:

- 1) Build specialist expertise (climate, gender, health, data, conflict, environment, technology)
- 2) Gain international exposure, networks, data, sources and resources
- 3) Access funding, reporting grants and fellowships
- 4) Strengthen credibility and editorial discipline
- 5) Compete effectively beyond local newsrooms

These aforementioned benefits, among many others, are what have characterised my decade-long career in journalism to date.

At I-79 Media Consults, many participants who started as campus reporters later progressed to national bylines, international collaborations or postgraduate opportunities abroad largely because they intentionally positioned themselves through training and mentorship.

Beyond my social enterprise, many people have transitioned from campus journalism into global exposure because they took media training as an important engagement.



*Culture & Travel Writer, Pelu Awofeso addressing participants at the third Journalism Clinic at the US Consulate, Lagos*

## Understanding The Verities of Media Training Opportunities.

For Nigerian journalists looking toward 2026, it is important to understand that training opportunities are not one-size-fits-all. They generally fall into several categories:

### 1. Short-Term Skill-Based Trainings

These include workshops, bootcamps, conferences and online courses focused on specific skills such as fact-checking, data journalism, investigative reporting, multimedia storytelling or safety training. Many are offered by NGOs, media development organisations or international newsrooms like Dataphyte, CJID, Nigeria Health Watch etc.

### 2. Reporting Grants and Project-Based Fellowships

These support journalists to investigate specific issues such as climate change, public health, governance, gender or development. Journalists who intend to fall into and succeed in this category often have a clear story idea, strong ethical grounding and realistic budgets.

### 3. Long-Term Fellowships and Residencies

Examples include academic-linked fellowships, newsroom placements or policy-media programmes lasting several months. These are competitive and require strong writing samples, references and clarity of career direction.

### 4. Academic and Professional Pathways

These include funded master's programmes, research fellowships and media innovation labs. The intersection of journalism with policy, technology and development studies help to broaden career options beyond traditional newsrooms.

## What These Opportunities Usually Require

From publishing and reviewing hundreds of open calls and applications, mentoring journalists and designing selection processes through and at I-79 Media Consults, certain requirements recur consistently across credible programmes:

**Strong writing samples:** Published works that demonstrate clarity, originality, ethical reporting and depth. Here, your everyday newsreports do not cut it. Features, analysis, investigations, exposes etc. are your best bet, even though some applications don't require them in certain cases.

**Clear motivation:** Applicants who understand why they want the opportunity and how it fits into their career trajectory stand out. Applying for

opportunities that align with your niche helps you to design a clearer motivation.

**Thematic focus:** Generalists tend to struggle more in the media's competitive environment, but opportunities increasingly favour journalists with defined beats. As such, target thematic areas of interests such as climate, gender, health, data, conflict, environment, technology and/or genres such as fact checking, solutions journalism, data journalism etc.

**Consistent commitment to impact:** Many programmes want to see how your work benefits communities, public understanding or policy discourse. A track record of your past deliverables in your newsroom and past programme and record of their impact, however modest, is non-negotiable.

**Professional references:** Editors, project leads or mentors who can vouch for your discipline and integrity.

One of the most common mistakes young Nigerian journalists make is applying indiscriminately. While it may have worked out well for some, successful applicants are selective, strategic and intentional.

## What To Look Out for In 2026

This New Year, journalists should pay attention to emerging trends that have been shaping training opportunities in recent times. They include: Rise of Thematic Journalism; Emphasis on Accountability and Ethics; Cross-Border Reporting; Digital and AI Literacy; Community Engagement and AI-powered journalism.

Nigerian journalists must shift from a survival mindset to a career-building mindset. Training opportunities at the local and international levels are no longer negotiable. They are central to relevance, income diversification, and professional longevity.

At I-79 Media Consults, we have curated a list of 20 media opportunities with deadlines closing in January 2026, and they offer a strong starting point for the New Year. They are accessible [HERE](#).



Ogunyemi, an award-winning journalist, is the founder of I-79 Media Consults and a Chief Correspondent with the Nigerian Tribune. He tweets at @IfedayoOgunyemi

# Podcasting and rebuilding media careers in Africa

**In 2026, African media careers will increasingly be built as portfolios rather than positions. Professionals will combine podcast production, consulting, training, and content operations into sustainable livelihoods. The newsroom may no longer be the centre of gravity, but it remains a strong foundation.**

## TONY ONWUCHEKWA

**I**N 2026, a big question facing African media professionals will not be whether journalism still matters, but where it can still live. Newsrooms are thinner, contracts are shorter, and advertising is unreliable. Yet the demand for credible storytelling, explanation, and context has not disappeared. It has simply moved subtly and decisively into podcasting.

Across Africa, podcasting is less of a trend and more of a survival skill. Not because it is glamorous, but because it works. It fits the realities of the market: low production costs, flexible formats, direct audience relationships, and the ability to operate outside fragile institutional structures. For journalists and media professionals, it has become the most practical bridge between traditional training and modern opportunity.

Podcasting thrives on the very skills African journalists already possess. Reporting becomes narrative audio. Presentation becomes hosting and narration. Editing becomes audio production and format control. News judgment becomes audience curation. Nothing is discarded; everything is repurposed. The shift is not from journalism to “content creation,” but from rigid job titles to portable competence.

Importantly, podcasting in Africa is no longer just about launching personal shows. In 2026, podcasting matures into a service and operations economy. NGOs commission podcasts to document impact. Churches and faith organisations build sermon and teaching networks. Radio stations convert on-air strength into on-demand libraries. Brands, universities, and development organisations use audio for education, advocacy, and internal communication. All of this requires professionals who can manage workflows, design formats, maintain quality, and ensure consistency.

This is where African media professionals hold an advantage. Long before global media began talking about layoffs and creator burnout, African journalists were already adapting to uncertainty. Limited funding, weak monetisation, and unstable institutions forced innovation early. Podcasting simply gave structure to instincts that were already present.

The winners in 2026 will not be those chasing virality or influencer status. They will be operators, podcast managers, audio producers, editors, consultants, and trainers who understand how audio fits into broader media and organisational

systems. They will think beyond episodes and focus on pipelines: production, distribution, repurposing, and audience growth. In short, they will treat podcasting as media infrastructure, not a side hustle.

There is also a deeper cultural value at play. Podcasting aligns with Africa’s oral traditions of conversation, memory, testimony, and teaching. It allows stories to breathe in ways social media does not. It rewards patience, clarity, and trust. In a noisy digital environment, this depth is not a weakness; it is a competitive edge.

For journalists disillusioned by shrinking newsrooms, podcasting offers something rare: continuity. The craft remains intact, even as the container changes. The ethics, discipline, and public-service instinct of journalism do not vanish in audio. They become more personal, more direct, and often more impactful.

In 2026, African media careers will increasingly be built as portfolios rather than positions. Professionals will combine podcast production, consulting, training, and content operations into sustainable livelihoods. The newsroom may no longer be the centre of gravity, but it remains a strong foundation.

Podcasting is not a retreat from journalism in Africa. It is journalism, reorganised for reality. And for media professionals willing to adapt without losing their bearings, it may be the most stable ground available.



**Tony Onwuchekwa is a Nigerian podcast strategist and media consultant helping brands and individuals adapt traditional media skills for the on-demand era. He works across podcast production, management, and training, supporting broadcasters, faith institutions, and independent creators to build sustainable audio operations within Africa’s evolving media landscape.**

# 'What the Newsroom Taught Me and Where It Couldn't Take Me'

Media careers in 2026 and beyond will belong to those who can adapt their skills without losing their values, who can carry journalistic thinking into spaces where clarity, trust, and meaning are needed most

## CHIOMA EZENWAFOR

FOR many journalists, the newsroom is not just a workplace. It is an identity because it shapes how you think, how you see the world, and how you measure your worth. So when conversations about life beyond the newsroom come up, they often trigger fear, guilt, or quiet shame. As if leaving or even considering other options means you have failed journalism.

I know this feeling intimately. I remember sitting in the newsroom late one evening, the adrenaline of a breaking story already gone. The screens were still glowing, but the room felt strangely empty. I had done good work that day, important work, but I also knew that nothing about that effort translated into growth, security, or clarity about the future. That was the first time I admitted to myself that passion alone could no longer carry the weight.

I spent over a decade in journalism. I chased stories, edited under pressure, made judgment calls that mattered, and learned how to tell stories with integrity. Journalism sharpened my instincts and gave me a deep respect for truth. But at some point, I realised that the newsroom had taught me how to create value, but not how to fully own it. That realization didn't come from failure. It came from exhaustion, curiosity, and the growing awareness that the skills I used every day like clarity, context, storytelling, audience intelligence, were being desperately needed outside the newsroom, often by people who didn't understand them nearly as well.

Here is the first truth journalists need to hear, media skills are not newsroom skills. They are life and business skills that the newsroom happens to refine. Across industries, organisations are struggling with communication. They are visible but not understood. Loud but not trusted. Present but not believed. Journalists understand trust. We understand framing. We understand how narratives shape perception and behaviour. That knowledge is rare and it is valuable.

When I transitioned into media and communication strategy, I didn't abandon journalism. I translated it. I moved from reporting stories to helping organisations tell theirs responsibly. From reacting to events to designing narratives. From chasing deadlines to building systems that endure. The same discipline applied just in a different direction.

Today, media professionals are finding space in strategic communications, corporate and brand



storytelling, media training, development communication, advocacy, and consulting. Some build independent practices. Others advise leaders, founders, and institutions during moments that demand clarity and credibility. These paths are not lesser alternatives. They are legitimate extensions of journalistic skill.

What makes this transition hard is not competence. It is mindset. Journalists are trained to stay behind the story, not stand in front of it. We are taught to observe, not to position ourselves as experts. So when it becomes necessary to articulate our value, many struggle. The result is underpricing, overworking, or remaining loyal to systems that no longer sustain us.

Another truth we rarely say aloud is that many journalists are not burnt out because they hate the work. They are burnt out because the work keeps demanding sacrifice without offering growth. The shift forward requires learning a new language. The language of outcomes, not outputs. Outside the newsroom, people are less interested in how well you write and more interested in what your communication achieves. Does it build trust? Protect reputation? Change behaviour? Create alignment? Once journalists understand this, their confidence changes.

Waiting for permission keeps too many media professionals stuck. The industry has evolved faster than its structures. Opportunities are no longer handed down through titles alone. They are claimed

# 'Why media awards matter more than we admit'

**Awards, when they come, if they ever do, simply confirm that the work met a standard of excellence recognised by peers. They do not replace the work. They do not validate one's humanity. And they certainly do not guarantee longevity. What they can do, when grounded in substance, is amplify credibility, open doors, and accelerate professional growth.**

## GODFREY GEORGE

AN ex-lover once told me I was a flirt. It confused me more than I ever admit. I don't have an active social life. I don't attend social gatherings. Church, for me, is on YouTube. I even forget my own birthday.

I remember May 1, 2022, when my mother called me so early in the morning. I was shocked. I think I panicked, and my blood pressure, I am sure, peaked.

I asked her if she was okay and if she needed me to call 911. Before she could say what was wrong, I picked up my other device and was dialling 112 after 911 gave me the "Call Failed" prompt.

"Happy birthday to you..." she sang after a short pause, perhaps to find the right key, or to confuse me even more.

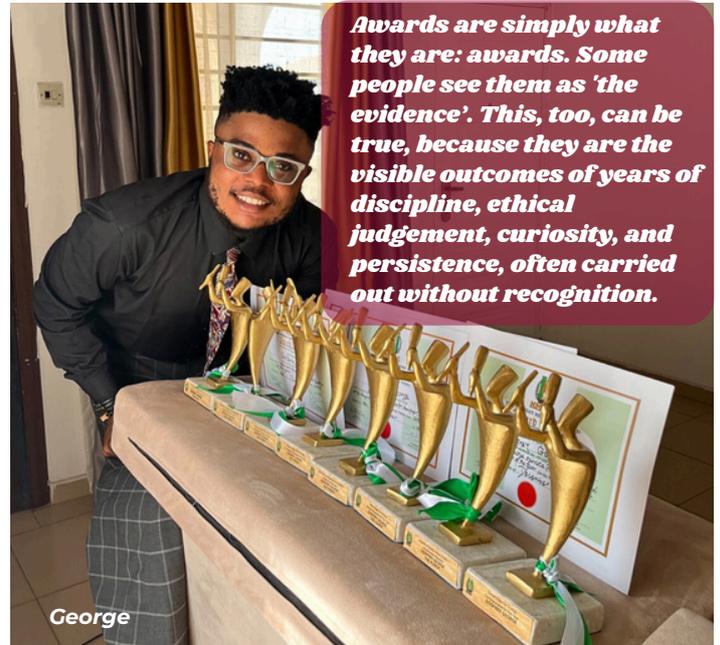
I brought the phone closer to my eyes to be sure of the date, and yes, it was my birthday. May 1. I had forgotten. Again. My mother never forgets. I smiled as I quietly told the emergency operator I had dialled in error and that it was my birthday today. She wished me a happy birthday and hung up, while I continued talking with my mother on my other device.

"Come home soon to see me. I miss you. Try and come around this Christmas so we can spend some time together," she said, taking soft breaths after each stop.

It had been one year since I left to pursue full-time journalism at PUNCH Newspapers, and I hadn't gone home to see her, not because I didn't love her or didn't care, but because I genuinely didn't have the time.

May 1, the previous year, my first actual byline went live on the PUNCH website. It was an interview with Assistant Inspector General of Police, Aishatu Bajaj, who also doubled as Queen of Mambilla. She had shared her story of rising to become one of the few female AIGs in the force and how she would still love to become a policewoman in her next life. It was my first commissioned interview by my editor, Dr Oladimeji Ramon, after my intensive three-week immersion training at the Punch Media Foundation. I left that place more confused than when I went in.

I had asked one of my friends, Percy Ani, if I hadn't made a mistake choosing journalism because, to me, everyone was just 'too serious', and everything looked like it could break if I touched it; too fragile, too delicate. The truth is that journalism is indeed a serious job. It is delicate, and it genuinely matters. You put out one wrong fact, one wrong quote, and a nation can slip into chaos. Lives may be lost. Trust broken.



I was too scared to ask why I would want to put myself in that position.

But I didn't know that I had already caught the fire. Journalism fire.

As Mohbad and Chike, in their popular song Egwu, would put it, "Music (in this case, 'journalism') no need permission to enter your spirit."

It was there that I met my mentors, Juliana Francis (formerly of New Telegraph) and Maureen Popoola (Lecturer at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism). I also met Mrs Ayo-Aderale (formerly HealthWise Editor), Eniola Akinkuotu (then, Abuja Bureau Chief) and Fisayo Soyombo (Founder, Foundation for Investigative Journalism). The fire these guys lit in me kept me awake at night for days. I wanted to do so much amazing work, and my head was burning with ideas.

But after spending several nights in the newsroom, I began to question that baptism. The mosquitoes in that newsroom then knew me by name. I remember hiding a small blanket in my drawer. I lived far away from the office, and I was not brave enough to join my other colleagues who left at night. Moreover, Mr Adeyeye Joseph (then, Managing Director Designate) warned us not to leave late at night, especially since most of us were not Lagos-based. We had been recruited from all over the country - that story is for another day.

"If production finished late, please, stay back if you

can and leave by morning," he warned. In fact, in my third month in the company, there was a strict policy that all 'new guys' should be allowed to leave at 8 pm. A bus was provided by Management to convey us to our closest bus stops. I was new, but most times, I always refused to leave at 8 pm. I always had work to be done.

Let me confess. Sometimes, I would go upstairs and hide, and come down only when the bus had left, so I would be allowed to stay back and finish my job. Those nights birthed mentoring sessions between Mr Gbenga Adeniji and me.

I remember during the June 2021 Twitter (now X) ban, and how the then News Editor, Mr Tunji Abioye (now Editor, The PUNCH) called me in the heat of production, and told me I was ripe to join the news team in writing the lead for that weekend. That man is a godsend. He entrusted me with so much as News Editor, and I learnt so much under him.

That 'Twitter ban production day', we finished production after midnight, and the Editor, Mr Dayo Oketola (now Chief Press Secretary to the Honourable Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission), had wondered how I was going to cope with staying back.

"Do you and your friends want to follow me home?" he asked, kindly. But I had declined on behalf of us all. My friends, Percy Ani, Noah Banjo (now Senior Editor and an African tech powerhouse) and Ms Peju Adenuga (who had come from the Business Desk) were enough company. I remember us talking about the profession and wondering whether we had made the right decision to do it full-time.

"See the time wey these guys close na. Na so we go dey close?" I had wondered in Pidgin English. But that baptism was already too deep; it was like I was initiated into an ancient cult. Like Adam, I had eaten the 'forbidden' fruit. I could now see I was naked. The more I wanted to leave, the more journalism drew me in until I got neck-deep, and leaving was no longer an option.

## Love For Books

I grew up in a home where books mattered. My father bought me a book almost every week. It did not matter what it was. Sometimes it was fiction, sometimes biographies, sometimes books far beyond my age.

What mattered was the habit. Reading became routine, and writing followed naturally. I would scribble thoughts into an exercise book, draw little scenes, and later read them aloud to my father when he returned from work. There was no applause, no audience beyond the living room, just a quiet encouragement that words were worth paying attention to.

***"The more I wanted to leave, the more journalism drew me in until I got neck-deep, and leaving was no longer an option."***

At the time, I did not know this would become my life's work. Journalism was not part of the plan. In secondary school, I flirted with the idea of banking. Later, Law was suggested. Broadcasting also hovered somewhere in the distance.

I eventually studied English, not because I had mapped a career in media, but because it felt honest to who I was becoming. Storytelling, I was learning, was not something I chose. It was something that kept choosing me.

That instinct followed me into journalism. Slowly, quietly, without spectacle. Long before awards entered the conversation, there were long nights rewriting paragraphs, weeks chasing reluctant sources, and months working on stories whose impact I could not immediately measure. There were moments of doubt, exhaustion, and uncertainty. Yet, there was also a steady conviction that doing the work properly mattered, even when no one was watching.

Years later, that quiet commitment would find public recognition in ways I could never have imagined. In 2022, I was nominated twice at the NMMA. Runner-up wins. In 2023, I was also nominated twice or thrice. Also, Runner-up wins. That same year, I was a finalist at the West African Media Excellence Awards (WAMECA) held in Ghana for my work on child pornography and revenge porn.

Then, in 2024, a breakthrough came. I was nominated 11 times across nine categories at the NMMAs. I won three: Aviation, Maritime and Real Estate/Construction. I was runner-up in the rest. There were several others that year, both internally at PUNCH and externally.

In 2025, I won eight awards at the Nigeria Media Merit Awards – Money Market, Real Estate/Construction, Maritime Reporting, Newspaper Features Writer, Telecommunications, Investigative Writing, Energy Reporting, and Culture and Tradition.

This is the highest by any journalist in the awards' 33-year history, alongside a Diamond Awards for Media Excellence win in the judicial reporting category for my story of children languishing in correctional facilities.

The moment was overwhelming and deeply humbling. But beyond the applause, it compelled me to reflect on something more important: the true value of media awards in career development, and what they really represent.

## Awards Are Simply What They Are

One of the most dangerous misconceptions young journalists carry is that awards are the work. They are not. Awards are simply what they are: awards. Some people see them as 'the evidence'. This, too, can be true, because they are the visible outcomes of years of discipline, ethical judgment, curiosity, and persistence, often carried out without recognition.

Most of the stories that eventually won awards for me were never written with trophies in mind. Some took over a year from idea to publication. Others demanded multiple rewrites, difficult editorial conversations, and long periods of silence from sources. Some stories nearly died several times before finding their final shape.

Awards, when they come, if they ever do, simply confirm that the work met a standard of excellence recognised by peers. They do not replace the work. They do not validate one's humanity. And they certainly do not guarantee longevity. What they can do, when grounded in substance, is amplify credibility, open doors, and accelerate professional growth.

## Can Awards Shape A Journalist's Career?

In practical terms, media awards influence careers in several important ways.

First, they strengthen professional credibility. Journalism is built on trust, and awards signal that a journalist's work has passed rigorous scrutiny. This credibility often translates into access to better assignments, deeper sources, and greater editorial autonomy.

Second, awards expand professional networks. Recognition introduces your work to peers, mentors, and decision-makers you may never encounter otherwise. Some of my most meaningful professional relationships began because someone read an award-winning story or encountered my name on a shortlist.

Third, awards enhance negotiating power. Whether applying for fellowships, pitching investigations, or transitioning into new roles, awards provide tangible proof of impact. They shift conversations from potential to performance.

That said, awards only retain value when they are supported by consistent integrity and quality. Recognition that is not anchored in substance fades quickly.

For me, after my NMMA/DAME win this year, it made me more humble in any space I found myself in. I move around with this consciousness that there is, as the Bible puts it, a cloud of witnesses to the work that I have put in. It's such a heavy responsibility.

## Understanding What The Judges Are Really Looking For

Awards are rarely about brilliance alone. They reward clarity, relevance, and impact.

Judges, I want to believe, are drawn to stories that ask necessary questions, expose hidden truths, or illuminate neglected experiences. They value originality, strong sourcing, ethical sensitivity, and narrative coherence. A polished story without depth often performs worse than a less glossy but deeply meaningful report.

Journalists who want to compete seriously must understand the award criteria. Each category has its own language and expectations. What works for you at the NMMA may be different at DAME, and also different at the West African Media Excellence Awards or Wole Soyinka Investigative Journalism Awards. Submitting work without this understanding is a missed opportunity.

It is also important to note that awards reward depth over volume. One carefully reported story with clear impact will almost always outweigh multiple shallow reports. Lastly, I would always tell journalists to read what other journalists write about. Read far and read wide and read wild. Read from CNN. Read from the BBC. Read Aljazeera. Read PUNCH. Read FIJ. Read AFP, Reuters, Semafor. Read The Cable. Read Premium Times. Read The Guardian, The Nation, and Daily Trust. Read Zikoko, The Sun, Nairametrics, New Telegraph, Bella Naija, The NYTimes, Condia, TechNext, The Mirror, Leadership, News Direct, Legit, Media Career Development, TVC Digital, Channels, ICIR, NatureNews, Tribune, TechCabal, and The Sun (UK).

Read biographies, self-help, and fiction. Read LinkedIn articles from thought leaders in journalism, the media, tech, culture, politics, geography and the economy, health, gender, children and climate and power. Read Physics and subscribe to as many newsletters as possible.

Read actual books. Read anything and everything you can find. See what others are doing and how much you can learn from them. The more articles you read, the broader your mind and horizon will be.

## What Awards Do Not Do

Awards do not make anyone invincible. They do not prevent mistakes or shield one from grief. Some of my most celebrated moments arrived during one of the hardest seasons of my life. Recognition did not erase that loss. It simply reminded me that joy and pain can coexist.

Awards should never become an identity. They are milestones, not destinations.

Journalism found me quietly, through books, curiosity, and persistence. Awards followed much later. The order matters. Let the work come first. Everything else will find its place.

## The Discipline Behind Award-winning Works

Awards may be presented in a single night, but they are earned over the years. Behind every plaque is discipline.

This discipline appears in ordinary moments: choosing to fact-check one more time when tired, killing a weak angle and starting again, sitting patiently through difficult edits, and knowing when to push back or listen. It also involves emotional discipline.

Journalism exposes reporters to trauma, injustice, and human suffering. Some of my most recognised stories were also the most emotionally demanding. Carrying these stories responsibly, without exploiting pain or centring oneself, requires maturity and restraint. Awards tend to follow journalists who respect the weight of the work.

I remember working on a story about mentally ill pregnant women who are raped, impregnated and abandoned. During my field work, I was bitten by one of the women I was observing at a popular junction in Lagos. I was injured, and I bled. You needed to see how quickly I rushed to the hospital as I phoned my editor, Madam Tessy Igomu, who asked me to be calm and get tested first. I googled every and anything on the matter. I even had a colleague tell me that, in seven days, I may become mentally ill. Mr? Mentally ill ke? So, I was so conscious that I took some days off, so if I started exhibiting the symptoms, no one would be there to see me. It is funny now to me, but I tell you it was not funny then. It's even interesting to note that the work didn't even get a nomination in the category I put it for at the NMMA. Another, on randy fathers who impregnate their daughters, did and won in that category.

## Collaboration And Institutional Support Matter

No journalist wins alone. Every award sits on a foundation of collaboration and institutional support.

Editors who believe in story ideas early, colleagues who offer feedback or quiet encouragement, and institutions that allow journalists the time and space to think all play critical roles. Strong newsrooms create environments where excellence is possible. They allow journalists to fail safely, revise deeply, and pursue stories with rigour.

At PUNCH, I am grateful for the gift of a large family. Everyone is willing to help. The story idea on Day Care was first mentioned to me by a confidential secretary at the company, Aunty Eburn. I was on leave at the time. So, when I got another source reecho that same thought, I knew I should pursue it.

It won me an NMMA. I have had ad executives pitch me story ideas. Even a driver had mentioned a story I could pursue. And the editors are wonderful. Special thanks to Mr Olusola Fabiyi (Former Editor, Weekend Titles). He is a father indeed. Mr Dayo Oketola (Pioneer Editor, Weekend Titles), Gbenga Adeniji, Mr Lekan Otufodunrin, Biodun Sonowo (Former Chairman, Editorial Board), Mr Obafemi Obadare (Chairman, Editorial Board), Juliana Francis, Sharon Osaji, Victoria Edeme-Nwahiri, Mrs Maureen Popoola, Sarah Ayeku (Senior Investigative Reporter), Esther Omopariola, Dr Oladimeji Ramon (my first desk editor) and my colleague and bosom friend, Mr Victor Ayeni. They were always willing to help.

For young journalists, choosing where to work matters. Seek spaces that value mentorship, ethical clarity, and editorial depth.

Pursuing awards deliberately is not wrong. What matters is how it is done.

Build a body of work you respect, even if it attracts no immediate attention. Focus on beats that genuinely interest you. Depth comes more naturally when curiosity is sincere. Read widely beyond journalism. Context sharpens reporting.

Document your work carefully. Keep clean copies of published stories and notes on impact. When award season comes, preparation reduces anxiety.

Above all, protect your integrity. Never compromise. facts, sources, or ethics for recognition. Awards gained at the expense of truth eventually become burdens.



George, the most awarded journalist in the history of the Nigerian Media Merit Awards (NMMA), is a multimedia investigative journalist. A Fellow of the African Centre for Development Journalism and Digital Public Infrastructure (MFWA-Co-Develop), he reports on police abuse, governance failures, climate change, technology, the environment, women's and children's digital violations, and human rights.

# What it takes to break into journalism

**Journalism in 2026 will reward preparation, humility and adaptability. If you are willing to learn the craft, respect the profession and stay focused on public-interest storytelling, there is still room for you — even if the path in is less predictable than it used to be**

## GOODNESS CHIBUNNA

If you are a graduate hoping to build a career in journalism in 2026, the first thing to understand is that the industry is not closed — but it has changed. Newsrooms still need journalists, but they are far more selective about who they invest in and why. What editors look for today is less about certificates and more about judgment, curiosity and usefulness.

There is no longer a single-entry route into journalism. Some people still come in through internships or junior reporting roles, but many now enter through digital desks, research roles, fact-checking teams, social media, video, audio or audience engagement. What matters is not the job title, but how close you are to real editorial work and how quickly you learn how news is produced. Once you get a foot in the door, progression depends on how much value you bring to the table.

You should also know that most newsrooms no longer have the capacity to train people from scratch. Editors expect entry-level journalists to already understand the basics: how to write clearly, how to verify information, how deadlines work, and why accuracy matters more than speed. If you are waiting to be taught everything after you are hired, you are already behind. Freelancing, blogging, campus journalism or volunteering with credible platforms can count as experience if your work shows discipline and good judgment.

In today's newsroom, being a fast learner matters more than trying to be an instant expert. Newsrooms are stretched, and young journalists are often expected to grow into complex beats like politics, courts, economy, climate or security. You don't need to know everything, but you must be curious about how systems work. Reading budgets, court rulings, policy documents and data reports will take you further than chasing trends on social media. The journalists who stand out are those who can explain complex issues simply without distorting the facts.

Ethics and judgment are more important now than ever. With misinformation, AI-generated content and political pressure everywhere, editors pay close attention to how young journalists think. Can you verify claims? Can you separate personal opinions from reporting? Can you resist pressure to post unverified claims online?

Many young journalists lose opportunities not because they lack talent, but because they lack restraint. In journalism, trust is slow to build and very easy to lose.

You should also be honest with yourself about the realities of the job. Entry-level journalism is not glamorous. Pay is often modest, hours can be long, and recognition comes slowly. What editors notice, however, is consistency — showing up, meeting deadlines, accepting feedback and improving over time. Talent might get you noticed, but reliability keeps you employed.

From the perspective of someone managing reporters, the young journalists who last are not necessarily the loudest or most confident. They are the ones who ask intelligent questions, take responsibility seriously, and understand that publishing is a public trust.

Journalism in 2026 rewards preparation, humility and adaptability. If you are willing to learn the craft, respect the profession and stay focused on public-interest storytelling, there is still room for you — even if the path in is less predictable than it used to be.



**Goodness Chibunna is the News Editor at TheCable, where she oversees news reporting and ensures accurate and objective coverage. She is known for clear and insightful reporting on politics and governance. Beyond her work, she mentors young journalists, helping them develop strong skills and a commitment to ethical, high-quality journalism.**

# Prospects for Campus Journalists

With the right information and a strong commitment to learning, 2026 offers everything you need to become the campus journalist you aspire to be.

## SHEREEFDEEN AHMAD

FOR years, campus journalism has served as a wellspring, producing outstanding journalists in the Nigerian media landscape. It has expanded beyond the limits of a mere extracurricular activity, now presenting itself as a source of livelihood.

The Nigerian media career outlook for 2026 suggests that the gap between good student journalists and professional journalists remains very narrow. With the right training and opportunities, campus journalists are proving that their skills can compete with mainstream standards, as some even freelance for international publications.

First, as a campus journalist, note that every media opportunity open to Nigerian journalists is also available to you, except those explicitly requiring a degree or certification. But how do you reach the stage of rubbing shoulders with professional media practitioners? It starts by utilizing opportunities designed specifically for student journalists.

### CJID Next-Gen/Campus Reporter Opportunities

Just as in previous years, 2026 holds valuable prospects for campus journalists. The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) continues to reiterate its commitment to supporting student journalists through its Next-Gen/Campus Reporter internship. From focusing on data-driven investigative reporting to emerging trends in AI journalism, CJID's training and support remain a gateway to top-tier professional journalism. The organisation, through Campus Reporter, also accepts pitches on a rolling basis to help campus journalists produce outstanding stories.

As a campus journalist, building a portfolio of good stories early in the year will position you for success in 2026. For instance, the CJID Alfred Opubor Next-Gen Award celebrates outstanding campus journalists in Nigeria who have produced incredible stories throughout the year. In its 2025 edition, the winner received N500,000, while the first and second runners-up received N300,000 and N200,000, respectively. The Youth Digest Journalism Awards, organised by Youth Digest, equally celebrate student journalists across the country. All these opportunities await campus journalists in 2026.



*Shereefdeen Ahmad and other Campus Journalists at CJID's 2025 Media and Development Conference*

### Dataphyte Academy and The Next Advocates

More recently, the Dataphyte Foundation, through its Dataphyte Academy project, has launched several initiatives geared towards the capacity building of campus journalists. 2026 will be no different.

As digital storytelling, data-driven narratives, and AI stand at the centre of modern journalism, Dataphyte Academy remains a hub that bridges these gaps by equipping student journalists with the necessary skills to thrive in this competitive industry.

The Liberalist Centre has also launched The Next Advocates, a project dedicated to exposing student journalists to pro-freedom journalism. This is a rare kind of journalism in Nigeria (and in Africa at large) that advocates for individual liberty, limited government and free markets. Beyond the custom of writing news reports and feature stories, campus journalists must now incorporate digital skills into their reporting by mastering tools like Canva, Datawrapper, and Google Earth. Use Datawrapper to turn complex figures into engaging charts for a student union expenditure report, while Google Earth to visualize changes in campus infrastructure or environmental issues over time.

As a student journalist, consider your campus media outlet a startup and treat its activities with the utmost seriousness and commitment. That is where you grow freely. That is where you are corrected with a smile. And that is where you acquire the right writing and journalism skills to make yourself eligible for opportunities meant for professional journalists.

My own journey stands as a testament to the strength of commitment. With five years of journalism experience, and two and a half years dedicated exclusively to campus journalism, I realise how commitment and consistency shape competency.

My first fully-funded professional media opportunity came in 2023 with the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) under its Promoting Democratic Governance Reporting Project, which involved a three-day intensive physical training. Trust me, only five per cent of what was taught throughout the sessions was alien to me—all thanks to my commitment to the activities of my press outlet on campus.

As you look forward to navigating the media landscape in 2026, stay glued to platforms like the Media Career Development Network, where media opportunities and journalism tips are published.

With the right information and a strong commitment to learning, 2026 offers everything you need to become the campus journalist you aspire to be.



Shereefdeen Ahmad is an award-winning journalist based in Nigeria with a keen interest in sports, health, pro-freedom, education, fact-checking, and investigations. He was crowned the overall winner of the 2025 CJID Alfred Opubor Next-Gen Award and the 2024 Journalist of the Year at the Youth Digest Journalism Awards, while also winning in other categories. Shereefdeen was among the three candidates selected across Nigeria to participate in the Africa Is Not A Country Exchange Program to Denmark, an initiative organised by YouthHubAfrica in partnership with World Best News (WBN).



**Participants and facilitators at the second Journalism Clinic, held in Lagos at the US Consulate.**

# Media Training and Funding Trends in Nigeria for 2026

**KEHINDE ADEGBOYEGA**

As we settle into the first quarter of 2026, the Nigerian media landscape finds itself at a historic crossroads. The "digital fatigue" of the early 2020s has been replaced by a high-stakes race for technological relevance and financial resilience. With the 2027 General Elections looming on the horizon, the focus for newsrooms this year has shifted from mere "digital transformation" to the more urgent goals of AI integration and sovereign sustainability.

For journalists and media executives looking to navigate this year, the opportunities for growth are increasingly found in two distinct buckets: the mastery of *"Synthetic Information"* and the rise of *"Multilateral Public Interest Funding"*

## 1. The Skillset Shift: Beyond Basic Reporting

In 2026, the definition of "media training" has expanded. According to recent industry reports from the Reuters Institute and Businessday NG, the most critical digital skill this year is no longer just social media management but **prompt engineering**.

**The AI Mandate:** Nigerian newsrooms are no longer just "using" AI; they are building with it. Training programmes in 2026 are focusing on how journalists can use Generative AI for news summarisation, personalised content delivery, and automated fact-checking. Organisations like the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) are leading workshops on ethical AI, ensuring that the use of these tools doesn't compromise the cultural context of Nigerian reporting.

**Digital Provenance and Safety:** With deepfakes becoming more sophisticated ahead of the 2027 polls, training in "Digital Provenance"—the ability to verify the origin and history of media—has become a survival skill.

**Specialised Beats:** There is a surge in funding for niche reporting. For instance, the Eva Tan Conservation Reporting Fellowship and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) are offering specialised tracks in environmental journalism and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) reporting.

## 2. The Funding Landscape

**New Players and Hybrid Models:** The financial narrative for 2026 is marked by the entry of major international players into the Nigerian market.

**The Entry of IFPIM:** Perhaps the most significant development this year is the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM) officially beginning its grant-making cycle in Nigeria. This multilateral fund aims to inject flexible financing into independent outlets to counter rising operating costs and the disruption caused by Big Tech.

**The Creator Wave:** In a bid to reach Gen Z, many media houses are utilising grants to hire and train "staff creators." This hybrid model—where journalists are trained to behave like influencers on platforms like TikTok and Instagram—is proving to be a successful strategy for both audience growth and attracting digital-first advertisers.

## 3. The "Election Prep" Factor

Historically, pre-election years in Nigeria see a spike in funding, and 2026 is no exception. International donors, including the U.S. Consulate and the European Union, have already signalled interest in funding political journalism workshops. These grants are specifically targeted at:

**Voter Education:** Funding for multimedia content that simplifies the electoral process.

**Misinformation Management:** Collaborative grants for "Fact-Check Hubs" to monitor hate speech and ethnic incitement on digital platforms.

## The Bottom Line for 2026

For media practitioners, the message of 2026 is clearly to **adapt or disappear**.

Funding is no longer a "charity" but an "investment" in innovation.

As we look toward the rest of the year, the outlets that will thrive are those that view technology not as a threat but as the very tool that will help them tell the Nigerian story with more precision and impact than ever before.

**Kehinde Adegboyega, Executive Director of the Human Rights Journalists Network Nigeria, leads initiatives that advance press freedom, digital rights, and civic accountability in Nigeria. He is the Founder and Festival Director of the Africa International Human Rights Film and also serves as Co-Chair of the Legal and Digital Rights Working Group of the Internet Society Nigeria Chapter.**

## “Embracing digital frontier: My journey as a digital journalist”

For The Nation, I have produced video explainers on my reports and shared on social media. This not only boosts engagement but reaches audiences beyond print. In the New Year, I plan to experiment with interactive stories using tools like Flourish or Knight Lab's StoryMap, where readers can explore data points themselves.

Of course, challenges abound. Digital divides persist in places like Nigeria, where internet access is spotty in rural areas. I have faced power outages mid-research, reminding me to back up work on cloud services like Google Drive. Cybersecurity is a constant threat. As an investigative journalist, misinformation wars rage online, so fact-checking tools are indispensable.

Looking ahead to 2026, being truly digital means continuous learning. I intend to deepen my skills in data journalism through online courses on platforms like Coursera or Google. I am also thinking that exploring Virtual Reality might be next especially around immersive stories on environmental, health and agricultural issues.

But at its core, digital journalism amplifies voices, holds power accountable, and fosters solutions. My experience has shown me that online tools are not replacements for shoe-leather reporting, rather, they are enhancers.

In this New Year, I urge fellow journalists: dive in. Start small by building an online presence and learn one tool at a time. Take time to master a tool enough that you can teach someone on it. The digital realm offers endless possibilities, from real-time collaboration on Google Docs to audience analytics via tools like Google Trends. But remember, technology serves the story, not vice versa.

**Justina Asishana is an award-winning Nigerian investigative and data journalist with The Nation Newspaper. She reports on health, governance, conflict, and human-interest issues, using data and solutions-focused storytelling to amplify marginalized voices and promote transparency, accountability, and social change.**

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## “What the Newsroom Taught Me and Where It Couldn't Take Me”



by those who can define their relevance clearly. If you are a journalist reading this and feeling restless, tired, or quietly unsure, know that you are not broken, and you are not behind. Your skills are still valid. Your experience still matters. You may simply need to give yourself permission to reimagine where and how your voice is used. The newsroom is one path not the destination.

Media careers in 2026 and beyond will belong to those who can adapt their skills without losing their values, who can carry journalistic thinking into spaces where clarity, trust, and meaning are needed most. And if you find yourself standing at that crossroads, uncertain but hopeful, that is not failure. That is growth knocking.

**Chioma Ezenwafor is currently the Founder of Surthrive Media, a strategic communications and media consulting firm based in Port Harcourt. She is a Media and Communication Strategist with over a decade of experience advising media, business, and civic organisations across journalism, content strategy, and media leadership. A former News Manager at Nigeria Info, Cool and radio stations and award-winning journalist, she works at the intersection of media strategy, innovation, and audience trust.**

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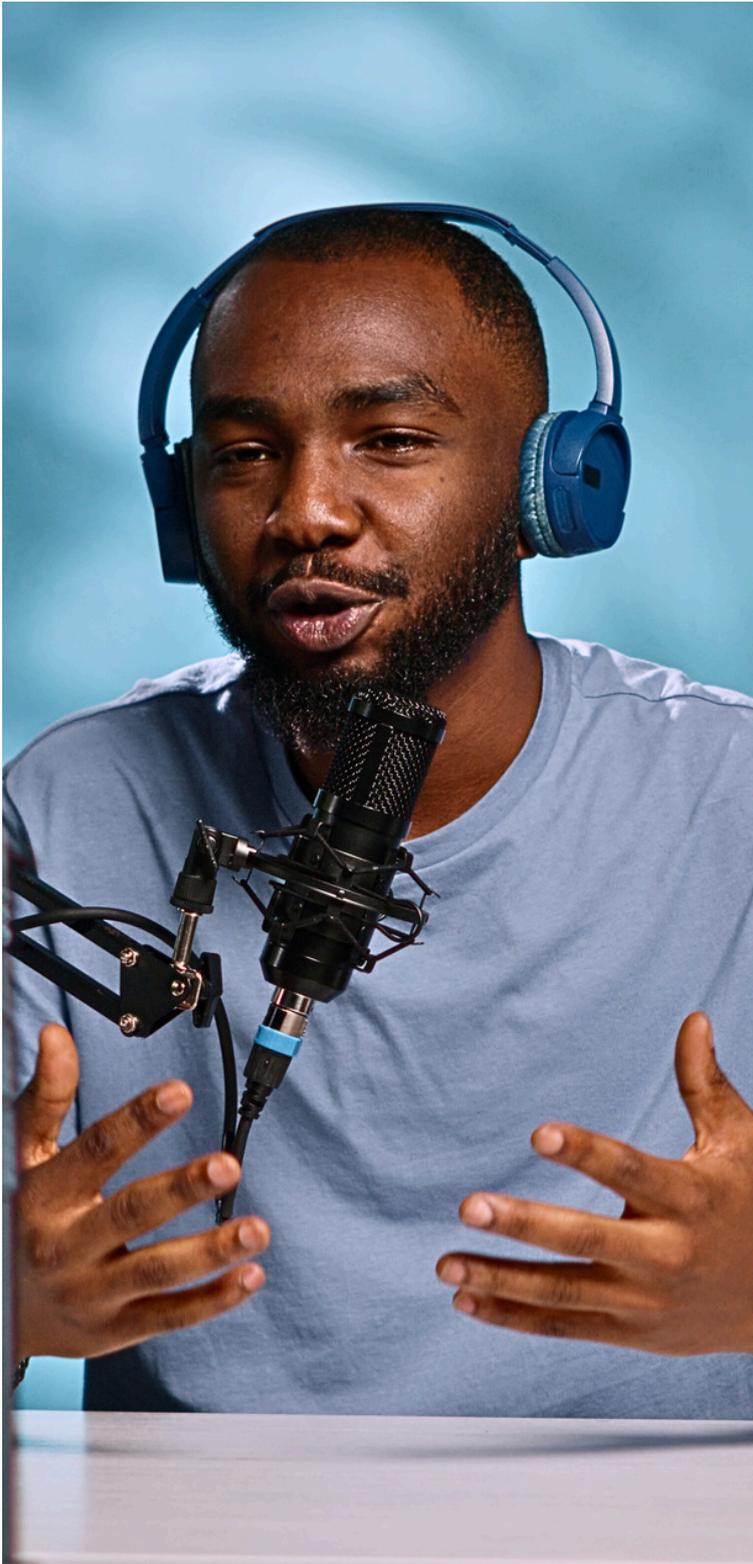
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## Training



With a team of highly experienced journalists and other media professionals in our local and international network, we organise various training programmes on career, skills development, management and others.

## Mentoring



To help journalists and other media professionals achieve their career goals and aspirations despite the various challenges on the job, we provide structured mentoring and counselling support for interested journalists.

## Coaching



Beyond regular training, we offer coaching for all categories of journalists, especially students and new employees to sharpen their skills in any area of interest in the profession.

## Reports & Research



We offer regularly updated industry reports on our website and research media issues regarding media careers, training, industry and other relevant topics to offer insights on how journalists and other media professionals can enhance their skills and fulfil career experiences.

## Networking



Through our diverse membership, partners and contacts, we offer networking opportunities during and beyond our programmes. We provide opportunities for engagements, interactions and experience sharing.

## Counseling



We counsel all categories of journalists on how to achieve their career goals and aspirations through various channels.

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