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ABSTRACT

The EDJNet survey was launched on July 4, 2019, and closed three months later, on October 4. It consisted of 48 questions divided into 6 sections: Skills and team; Working with data; Cross-border collaboration; Ethics; Distribution and Impact; EDJNet. The responses were anonymous. The EDJNet survey gathered information from 50 respondents: 23 are representatives of 16 media partners; 21 work for external media outlets; 6 are freelancers.

Tracking the countries of origin of the respondents, we can see that they are quite well distributed among 16 EU countries and 1 non-Eu country (that is, Ukraine). The sum of the respondents from Italy, Spain and France represent almost half of the total (23 out of 50).

EDJNet Survey

50 respondents from 17 countries

Over 60% of the media organisations involved deal with data on a regular basis and cover multiple topics with a data-driven approach. While around 30% deal with EU affairs on a regular basis, and notably 70% of them are EDJNet partners. It is also worth highlighting that 90% of the respondents believe that European affairs are something more than “news reports about the activities of the main EU institutions”. Anyway, the majority of the respondents acknowledge
focusing on nationally/locally relevant stories and 76% claim to have a local or national audience -- and this might interfere with their coverage of EU affairs or pan-European topics.

The respondents were asked to indicate or assess which services, tools, incentives were more likely to improve their reporting on all things Europe. The survey included actual services and tools provided by EDJNet, as well as ideal alternatives.

The most favorite solution for 60% of the respondents would be structured data that come both with a pan-european and a local angle, and, especially among EDJNet partners, data suggestions on possible trails to explore. Indeed, it is something the EDJNet has provided since it was set up. Similarly, more than one-third of the respondents indicate that the provision of translation services as well as a devoted syndication editor are good incentives to syndication as well -- and they are actually in place.

Among the EDJNet tools, the Stats Monitor gains 60% of positive rates. This service offers ready-made and constantly updated visualizations of the Eurostat data; also, it analyses the new data in order to spot interesting trends and outliers, so as to help journalists to find newsworthy material in them. Indeed, Stats Monitor can perfectly meet the need for ‘structured data with both a pan-European and a local angle’, especially if more NUTS2 and NUTS3 maps are developed. The Data Search Engine is either positively rated among the respondents and indicated as a good incentive to adaptation of pan-european stories. The survey suggests that it would be worth investing in understanding what a renovated Data Search Engine should look like.
INTRODUCTION

The survey was thought to adjust and improve EDJNet’s offer to media partners and potential media partners in terms of type of services and content provided, thematic focus and format to produce, co-produce, reuse and disseminate. It is also meant to serve as a basis for developing a sustainable business plan for EDJNet. Several sources were used to design the questions, such as the Global Data Journalism Survey ran by Dr. Bahareh Heravi and Mirko Lorenz who were open to share useful insights during the preparation of the EDJNet survey; the ICFJ’s survey “The state of technology in global newsrooms”; and two SAGE papers, namely: “Data-driven reporting: An on-going (r)evolution? An analysis of projects nominated for the Data Journalism Awards 2013–2016” and “Transnational networks as drivers of Europeanisation”. A first draft of the survey was presented and distributed during the first EDJNet consortium meeting in August 2018. Building on the input provided by the partners, a second draft was designed; external media partners such as the European Journalism Centre (EJC), Brigitte Alfter from Data Harvest and the Ethical Journalism Network provided further feedback. The final draft consists of 48 questions divided into 6 sections: Skills and team; Working with data; Cross-border collaboration; Ethics; Distribution and Impact; EDJNet. The responses were anonymous; only a few professional details were required for statistical purposes. The survey was created in WordPress, launched on July 4 and closed on October 4, 2019.

Multiple channels were used to disseminate the survey. As the main target were the EDJNet partners, an invitation was first sent to all the representatives of the network, followed by individual reminders and a regular reference to the survey in the internal newsletters. Meanwhile, the survey was launched and pinned on Twitter gaining over 13,000 impressions. All EDJNet internal or external media partners were invited to promote the survey online: the Global Investigative Journalism Network included it in their newsletter as well as data expert Giuseppe Sollazzo; the EJC and Deutsche Welle Innovation spread it on Twitter; Civio forwarded it to selected data journalists lists. A link to the survey was regularly included in the EDJNet external newsletter, and a separate invitation was sent to 54 subscribed data journalists via MailChimp. Finally, the survey was promoted on several Facebook and Linkedin’s data groups.

The EDJNet survey gathered information from 50 respondents: 23 work for media organisations that are part of the network; 21 for external media organisations; 6 are freelancers. 70% of the total respondents filled in the survey as an individual journalist; 61% of EDJNet partners filled it in on behalf of their media organisation. The bulk of the respondents (54%) work for small newsrooms of less than 9 people; 28% of them for medium-large newsrooms of less than 100 people; 18% of them for big newsrooms of more than 100 people.
WORKING (AND STRUGGLING) WITH DATA

40% of the newsrooms enquired have a dedicated data team; 28% do not have one, but regularly publish data-driven stories. Of course big media organisations are likely to have a dedicated data team (67%), but it happens (41%) that small newsrooms are entirely devoted to data journalism. Irrespective of the newsrooms’ size, the data teams are small (1-3) on average. Only in one case there are more than ten data journalists employed.

How frequently does your newsroom deal with data?

Q10

24% of the respondents have received formal education in ‘journalism’ while 46% have acquired some knowledge in data-related areas (such as statistics, data visualization, data analysis or coding); 22% of the respondents have no formal education in journalism.

The respondents’ skills are mostly used for fact-checking (50%), usually in combination with graphics animation or social media management. Only 14% of them deal with news production only; most deploy at least some data visualization skills.
60% of the respondents are interested in improving basic data skills, namely finding data, data analysis or data visualization; 40% are interested in programming or coding and 26% in analysing audience engagement.

72% of the respondents keep up-to-date about the development of data journalism through newsletters or social media; 48% through meetups and events; 44% through Medium blogs; 32% through innovation blogs.

Almost all the respondents rely on publicly available data, notably national statistics offices (86%) or Eurostat (74%). 58% of the respondents have accessed data via scraping; 40% via FOIA and 28% via surveys or polls.

76% of the respondents use open source software. When asked to list their most used tools, several options come out:

Q16

Notably, Excel is used by 30% of the respondents.

60% of the respondents acknowledge that the main hurdle in implementing data journalism is time constraints, followed by a lack of adequate knowledge (50%) and a lack of accessible
datasets (42%). The coherence with the editorial line or the relevance for the audience are an issue for less than one third of the respondents.

28% of the respondents turn to developers or internal technicians in order to fix problems with data; 24% to online tutorials; a lower share turns to social networks communities (14%).

62% of the media organisations where the respondents work deal with data on a regular basis and cover multiple topics with a data-driven approach.

**Topics covered with a data-driven approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European affairs</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights and equality</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice and security</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62% of the respondents focus on nationally or locally relevant stories while 34% on European or international stories. 76% of them claim to have a local or national audience.

According to 72% of the respondents, the services which are more likely to foster data journalism in their newsrooms are either training or a data-store where to find and showcase data. 56% of the respondents do not have a GitHub account and, among them, just one fifth is planning to have one.
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, YOU KNOW?

62% of the respondents believe that European affairs are “Economic, political and cultural affairs of different European countries, compared and contrasted in the way in which they deal with the same issues”. 30% of them deal with them on a regular basis, the others once in a week or less.

How frequently does your newsroom cover European affairs?

28% of the respondents strongly believe that data journalism has allowed them to better cover European affairs; 32% of them partly agree; 34% of them are neutral and 4% disagree. Asked to explain why, 28% of the respondents say that data-journalism stimulates cross-European comparisons; 22% of them that it simplifies explanation of complex topics; 12% of them that it helps to find new topics to write about; 10% of them that it engages the readers.

In practice, collaboration between the data team and the Europe desk never (46%) or occasionally (34%) arises; only 10% of the respondents say that they share a common agenda. According to 44% of the respondents, the situation would improve if there was a coordinator with skills on both sides while 30% of them would opt for a newsletter focused on data stories about EU; 18% of the respondents have no opinion about it.
As regards their opinion about content syndication on European affairs, the respondents are markedly divided: 26% says that it depends on the salience of specific issues; 20% believes that it boosts the quality of data analysis or data visualization; 18% that it is time or money saving; 16% that it helps with mutual visibility; 12% that it is tricky to put into practice. All in all, it can be said that 54% of the respondents have a positive attitude towards content syndication on European affairs, while 46% have negative or no opinion about it.

Half of the respondents have no syndication agreements with other media platforms and 32% of them would not be interested in them. 46% of the respondents have already in place some syndication agreements.

58% of the respondents would be interested in reusing “structured data that come both with a pan-European and a local angle”; 30% of them would be keen on either dynamic datasets or interactive dataviz. A financial contribution would be a convenient incentive to the adaptation of a pan-European story for 40% of the respondents, followed by the access to a data search engine (26%) and “a service that gives data and suggestions on possible trails to explore” (16%). As for cross-border syndication, respondents do not identify a single incentive: 24% of them would opt for a syndication officer; 22% of them for an alert system on new available content; 20% of them for a translation service; 20% of them would rather a European digital marketplace.

**Which type of content would foster the coverage of EU affairs?**

![Bar chart showing preferences for types of content](chart.png)
Incentives to adapt a pan-European story

- **Financial support**
  - EDJNET: 7
  - NON EDJNET: 13

- **Data Search Engine**
  - EDJNET: 3
  - NON EDJNET: 10

- **Trails to explore**
  - EDJNET: 6
  - NON EDJNET: 7

- **Hands-on training**
  - EDJNET: 1
  - NON EDJNET: 10

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Incentives to syndication

- **A syndication editor**
  - EDJNET: 7
  - NON EDJNET: 13

- **Alerts on available content**
  - EDJNET: 6
  - NON EDJNET: 10

- **A European digital marketplace**
  - EDJNET: 7
  - NON EDJNET: 13

- **Translation services**
  - EDJNET: 8
  - NON EDJNET: 8

- **A simplified copyright regime**
  - EDJNET: 2
  - NON EDJNET: 10
26% of the respondents would like to make their content scalable, but they do not know how. 34% of them claim that just a part of their content is scalable while 18% of them state that all their projects are scalable by design. 16% of the respondents are not interested in this type of service.

54% of the respondents believe that a collaborative approach among newsrooms have helped them achieve “something I could not do on my own”. 40% of the respondents acknowledge that it is hard to get everyone on the same page. Only one respondent has had a totally negative experience.

EDJNET, HERE YOU ARE

24% of the respondents visit the EDJNet website at least a few times per week; 44% of the respondents do it a few times per month while 28% of them have rarely or never visited it. In any case, 62% of the respondents sometimes get interesting cues from it; 20% almost always. It is worth highlighting that 14% of those who rarely/never visit EDJNet website, “almost always” deem it useful (while for 43% of them is rarely/never so). 66% of the respondents have subscribed to the EDJNet newsletter which is: sometimes useful (61%); almost always useful (30%); rarely or never useful (9%).

Half of the respondents follow EDJNet occasionally on social media: 68% of them find interesting contents there; 24% almost always; 8% rarely or never. Among those who follow EDJNet social media on a regular basis (28%), half are sometimes satisfied and 36% almost always satisfied; one respondent is rarely or never satisfied. Those who rarely/never follow EDJNet social media (14%) are coherently rarely/never satisfied.

The majority of the respondents (72%) are happy with the translation service in place within EDJNet; 34% of them find it very helpful whilst 22% do not.

Among the tools and services provided by EDJNet, the respondents’ favorite ones are: Our Pick and Stats Monitor (60% of positive rates); Data Search Engine and WITUD (54%); Quote Finder and HelpDesk (50% of positive rates).
Q45

78% of the respondents are interested in methodological and background information about the ddj production to be provided by EDJNet Medium channel - notably, 62% of the respondents are highly interested in this service.

FOCUS: WHAT EDJNET PARTNERS NEED

The vast majority (74%) of the partners deals with data on a regular basis covering at least four topics whereas around half of the partners (52%) covers EU affairs less frequently, that means occasionally or a few times per month.

60% of the network believes that EU affairs is something more than news reports about what the EU institutions do. But it seems that “comparing or contrasting countries” is tricky in practice. Why? One reason might be the scale of the stories which the majority claims to be nationally or locally relevant. Audience might be a correlated factor as it is also mostly national or local.

A data-store where to find and showcase data would foster data journalism in EDJNet partners’ newsrooms, according to 43% of them. 48% of them have a GitHub account and 26% are
planning to have one; in fact, among those who do not have a GitHub account, training or mentoring would be more likely to foster data journalism.

When asked if data journalism has improved the coverage of EU affairs, the bulk of the EDJNet partners is neutral or agree somewhat. The service which would ease the collaboration between the data teams and Europe desks among EDJNet partners would be a coordinator with skills on both sides (48%) while the type of content dealing with European affairs that would fit EDJNet partners’ interest is “Structured data that come both with a pan-European and a local angle” (70%).

56% of the partners make at least a part of their content scalable while 22% would like them to be so. The most favorite incentives to adaptation and syndication among partners are: financial contribution (40%); provision of translation services (38%); a service that gives data and suggestions on possible trails to explore (26%); a data search engine (22%); bilateral talks with a syndication officer (22%).

Respondents were asked to assess the services and the tools indeed provided by EDJNet. As regards the multilingual availability of articles on the EDJNet site, 25% of the EDJNet partners deem it “very useful” against 21% who deem it “not helpful for my purpose” and 43% who deem it “sometimes helpful”. Most partners have subscribed to EDJNet either internal or external newsletter. The bulk of them get helpful cues from there at least sometimes, while 5 respondents ‘almost always’.

As for the tools provided by EDJNet, the Data Search Engine collects the majority of positive ratings, while the HelpDesk the majority of negative ones. Our Pick collects seems to be the most appreciated, as over one third of the EDJNet partners deem it very useful. On average, the tools seem not to meet EDJNet's partners needs or, alternatively, not to be known enough.
Q45 [EXTRACT]

As regards social media, 60% of the partners follow EDJNet on social media occasionally while 40% on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the bulk of them at least ‘sometimes’ gets interesting cues from there (notably, 4 out of 10 among those who follow EDJNet ‘occasionally’, ‘almost always’ are satisfied). 65% of the partners appreciate the service that EDJNet Medium channel offers in providing methodological and background information about the ddj production.

Eventually, 61% of partners visit EDJNet website a few times a week, 13% at least ‘once a day’ and 26% ‘rarely or never’. Again, this does not imply that they are not interested in its content since 78% of them get interesting cues from there at least ‘sometimes’.

DATA AND ETHICS

52% of the respondents have a data ethics rule of thumb in their newsrooms. 62% of them do not feel obliged to tell the owner that their data are being used. 58% would never acquire data through a leak. Those who do so (34%) are mostly aware of the consequences.
As for transparency, 66% of the respondents claim that every article goes with a reference to the source(s) while 24% do so only for in-depth stories.

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

88% of the respondents rely on social media strategy to engage and grow their audience. Google Analytics is used by 74% of the respondents while the others opt for Parsely, Chartbeat, Omniture, Manis stats or internal metrics. Page views are the most common metrics (72%), but just a minor share (10%) relies only on them; most respondents combine different metrics, notably engaged time or unique users.
FINAL HINTS

The respondents were asked to indicate or assess which services, tools, incentives were more likely to improve their reporting on all things Europe. The survey included actual services and tools provided by EDJNet, as well as ideal alternatives.

Combining the answers given to different questions, it can be said that the existing services meet the needs of the respondents, but there is room for improvement as well as for further promotion to make them known and used more. For example, the existing newsletter could be better designed to deliver extremely curated and easy re-usable content (so that it indeed provides national or local trails to build on, as required by the respondents); similarly, the Newsworthy/Stats Monitor service could meet the need for ‘structured data with both a pan-European and a local angle’ if more NUTS2 and NUTS3 maps were developed. In view of the business plan, EDJNet could assess whether the network could serve as that ‘bridge’ between the Europe desks and the data teams the media outlets seem to seek.

The survey suggests that both the EDJNet Medium channel and the Git-Hub account should be boosted. As for the services already provided by EDJNet, it would be worth exploring how the ‘wanna-be’ Data Search Engine should look like. Finally, EDJNet could provide specific training in content scalability given that one-third of the respondents would like to make their content scalable, but they do not know how. Eventually, the on-demand translation service is indisputably appreciated.