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## **Journalism ethics in crisis**

The study observes the new (and some old) ethical challenges faced by journalists in the contemporary 24/7 multimedia environment. Of specific interest is how increased online competition affects the journalistic process as a whole. The paper also seeks to explain why the ever-growing time pressure and the need for speed often seem to be regarded as self-evident among journalists.

The web-related new ethical and ideological dilemmas, in particular, are examined through two specific cases, namely, the press reporting of the Finnish school killings, which took place in 2007 and 2008. The analysis is based on 35 interviews with Finnish news journalists and editors. The case of school killings is relevant because it led to a public debate over proper journalistic behavior and consequently forced journalists to defend their actions to the general public and to discuss ethical issues in their midst. Consideration is given to how concrete ethical choices or lack thereof were being justified. In addition, the study examines how journalists re-negotiate their professional self-perceptions, give meaning to their work and seek to self-legitimize the journalist position in society, when faced with public criticism.

Speed can be seen both as an essentialized value and a problematized side effect of news work. In the scholarly literature over journalism ethics it is often emphasized how the commercial imperatives override ethical considerations in the current profit-oriented media. What this paper suggests, however, is that both on the level of legitimizing arguments and practices the contradiction between journalistic core values and present-day pressures and possibilities is often smaller than assumed. Furthermore, the paper suggests that there were two things hindering ethical debate among the media professionals: First, the journalists' tendency to attach to situational ethics and downplay the importance of generalisable rules, and second, their tendency to concentrate on individual ethics and ignore the collective aspects and the overall impact of the media.