

Just 7 percent of journalists are Republicans. That's far fewer than even a decade ago.



By
[Chris Cillizza](#)
Reporter

May 6, 2014 at 12:52 p.m. EDT

A majority of American journalists identify themselves as political independents although among those who choose a side Democrats outnumber Republicans four to one, according to a new study of the media conducted by two Indiana University professors.

Write Lars Wilnat and David Weaver, professors of journalism at Indiana, [of their findings](#):

Compared with 2002, the percentage of full-time U.S. journalists who claim to be Democrats has dropped 8 percentage points in 2013 to about 28 percent, moving this figure closer to the overall population percentage of 30 percent, according to a December 12-15, 2013, ABC News/Washington Post national poll of 1,005 adults. This is the lowest percentage of journalists saying they are Democrats since 1971. An even larger drop was observed among journalists who said they were Republicans in 2013 (7.1 percent) than in 2002 (18 percent), but the 2013 figure is still notably lower than the percentage of U.S. adults who identified with the Republican Party (24 percent according to the poll mentioned above).

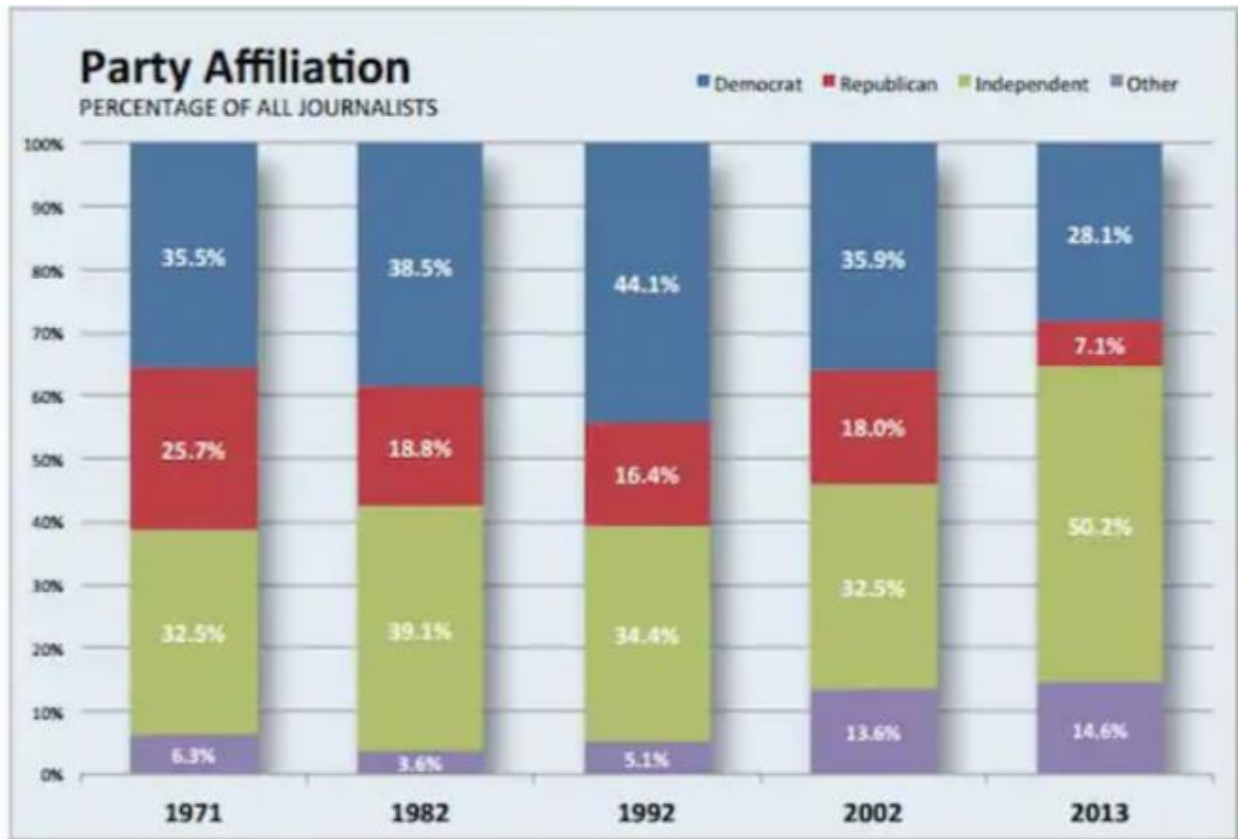


Image courtesy of The American Journalist in the Digital Age

The great thing about this survey, called "[The American Journalist in the Digital Age](#)", is that it's been conducted four previous times -- in 1971, 1982, 1992 and 2002. That allows for some fascinating comparisons of how partisanship (or the lack thereof) among reporters has evolved over that time.

Back in 1971, the first time this survey was conducted, there was simply more partisanship among reporters. More than one in three (35.5 percent) said they were Democrats while more than one in four (25.7 percent) described themselves as Republicans. At that point, 32.5 percent called themselves independents.

Over the last several decades, three things have happened: 1) The number of Democratic-identifying reporters increased steadily prior to a significant drop in the latest survey 2) The number of Republicans has steadily shrunk with that number dipping into single digits for the first time ever in the new survey 3) more and more reporters are identifying as independents. What seems to be happening -- at least in the last decade -- is that journalists are leaving both parties, finding themselves more comfortable as unaffiliateds.

These numbers will likely affirm the belief in conservative circles that "all" reporters are secretly Democrats. (The study was conducted via online interviews with 1,080 reporters.) While I am not in the business of disputing the study's finding, I would note two caveats:

1. This is among *all* reporters not just political reporters. While that may seem like a minor issue, it's worth noting that assuming these party ID numbers are true for those of us -- like me -- who cover politics day in and day out may not be entirely accurate.

2. The movement toward independent status among reporters is in keeping with a similar move in the broader electorate as they find the two parties increasingly rigid and, therefore, less welcoming.

The entire study, which details that journalists are less happy in their jobs than ever before and that most believe the industry is headed in the wrong direction, is [worth reading in its entirety](#).



[Chris Cillizza](#)

Chris Cillizza wrote “The Fix,” a politics blog for The Washington Post. He left The Post in April 2017.