

Journalistic Challenges and Practices:

A Professional Study Tour for 12 Prominent Polish Journalists

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Participant Biographies

JOANNA CIEŚLA-HANKE

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: POLITYKA



Joanna started her journalistic path as a co-author and performer of a news bulletin on Polish Radio Channel 3. In 2003, she started writing for “Polityka” magazine. Since 2008, she has been a member of the Social Issues Department and also cooperates with their Science Department. Her core interests are social policy, mainly in the field of education, public health and the labor market. She had the honor to be awarded in the Polish edition of the European competition “For Diversity, against Discrimination,” in the “Crystal Pens” competition for journalists focusing on public health issues. She also won the Professor Roman Czernecki EFC Award for articles on education.

PIOTR CIEŚLIŃSKI

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: GAZETA WYBORCZA



Piotr started his career in 1989 with an assistantship at the Institute of Theoretical Physics. Two years later, he joined “Gazeta Wyborcza” (Electoral Gazette), one of the most influential newspapers in Europe. He was involved in setting up the science section and continues to work there as an editor, responsible for the hard sciences and engineering. He has also covered the pandemic for the last two years. He is a recipient of awards from the Polish Physical Society and a winner of Science Populariser, a competition for science popularisers organized by Polish Press Agency and Ministry of Science.



JAROSŁAW KOCISZEWSKI

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: FREE RANGE SP. Z O.O.

Jarosław's entire professional career has been related to foreign news. He started to work as a Polish Radio and Rzeczpospolita daily correspondent in the Middle East followed by numerous publications, posts and expert positions in various media, with a particular focus on audio and press. Over time, he has moved in the direction of new media, such as wp.pl, new.org.pl, newsweek.pl and podcast production. He quit public media due to illiberal changes in Poland and recently has focused increasingly on use and development of new media to counter disinformation and censorship, and to support the development of a civil society.



ANDRZEJ KOZŁOWSKI

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: FREELANCER

The first steps in Andrzej's journalism career were during his studies, where he tried to use every opportunity to publish articles on international security and modern technologies. When he finished his PhD, he worked for five years as an editor-in-chief of the largest Polish website about cybersecurity and disinformation, CyberDefence24.pl. He continued his work as a freelancer writing for specialized digital issues portals such as SpidersWeb, HomoDigital and ItReseller.



KAJA PUTO

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: KRYTYKA POLITYCZNA

Since 2013, Kaja has been a freelance journalist cooperating with many Polish, English- and German-language media. Her main area of focus is Germany and Eastern Europe. She is interested in both social issues (e.g., migration, discrimination) and political issues (e.g., international relations, information warfare). She mainly writes feature stories, opinion pieces, and often appears on the radio as a public affairs commentator (e.g., on TOK FM). She also works as an editor, tutor, and media projects coordinator. She is currently working on her first non-fiction book devoted to the beginnings of Polish business in the 80's and 90's.



MAGDALENA RIGAMONTI

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: ONET.PL

Magdalena started her career at Newsweek, Polish edition, in 2002. Now she works at onet.pl, one of the biggest portals in Poland. Previously affiliated with Dziennik Gazeta Prawna (DGP, Daily Legal Newspaper), one of the most important dailies in Poland. Mainly, she conducts interviews with politicians. Her awards include Grand Press, Mediator, and the Fikus Award. Before joining Onet.pl photos for her interviews were taken by Maksymilian Rigamonti; together, they formed the duo RigamontiRazy2. They were the authors of several books, including The Echo, a photobook about the Volhynia massacre, which was awarded the Photography Book of the Year 2018 in Pictures of the

Year International. In 2022 her own, recent book, *Niewygodni* was published. She is a member of Press Club Polska.



NATALIA SAWKA

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Natalia has been an Agence France-Presse (AFP) fact-checking reporter since 2019. AFP is a part of Facebook’s third-party fact-checking program. As a fact-checker, she searches for online disinformation in Polish social media and writes stories on topics such as Covid-19, environment, politics and science. Currently, she is mostly focused on the war in Ukraine. Before AFP, she worked at the largest Polish daily newspaper “Gazeta Wyborcza” (Electoral Gazette), covering news, opinions, interviews, and stories from Poland.



JOANNA STEMPIEŃ

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: TVN24 BIS, TVN GRUPA WARNER BROS, DISCOVERY

Joanna has worked in television for 15 years. Her entire professional career has been with TVN24 Poland. She works from the Warsaw office and deals with foreign policy. She particularly enjoys brainstorming sessions during newsroom meetings and the process of “shaping the subject.” She specializes in climate change, women/LGBT rights, and Catholic Church sex abuse scandals. Most recently, she has prepared reports about the war in Ukraine, specifically on China’s approach and sanctions, working to understand them and explain in an accessible way.



JOANNA SOCHA

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: W INSIGHT

Joanna is a business and financial freelance journalist based in Warsaw and a founder of a women-oriented career-focused platform “W Insight.” She launched W Insight on March 8, 2018 with a vision to create a space for inspiring and insightful stories of powerful women that would encourage aspiring female leaders to follow their dreams. As a freelancer, she usually contributes to a London-based financial publication “Mergermarket,” where she covers mergers, acquisitions and corporate strategy in Poland and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Before “Mergermarket,” she worked for “Harvard Business Review Polska,” where she focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and women in business. Her most recent accomplishment is being shortlisted for the Bracken Bower Prize organized by the Financial Times, for the best business book idea of authors below 35.



AGATA SZCZĘŚNIAK

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: OKO.PRESS

Agata is an author, political commentator and analyst. She is currently a journalist at OKO.press – a fast-growing, non-profit, investigative journalism and fact-checking project, whose name is an acronym from Ośrodek Kontroli Obywatelskiej (Center for Civic Control). In 2020, OKO.press received the Index on Censorship journalism award and the Equality Crowns media award from Campaign Against Homophobia for “analyzing the events concerning the LGBT community in Poland carefully and with dedication.” She covers Polish politics and women rights. She regularly comments on current affairs in the Polish leading news media (TV and radio). Occasionally, she writes for other media, such as Gazeta Wyborcza (Electoral Gazette). She is a host at radio Tok.FM program “Jest temat!” (There is a topic!). In 2019, she was a member of the Grand Press jury, the most prestigious journalist award in Poland.



DOMINIK UHLIG

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: GAZETA WYBORCZA (ELECTORAL GAZETTE), BIQDATA

Dominik is an experienced lead editor with a demonstrated history of working in the online media industry. He is skilled in politics, storytelling, news writing, editing, and feature writing. Since 2001, Dominik has been working in the editorial office of Gazeta Wyborcza (Electoral Gazette). In the national department, he covered Poland’s preparations for joining the European Union, and then was a parliamentary reporter. He also dealt with social issues, such as NGOs, the elderly, and animal rights. In 2010, he joined the online editorial office, as a journalist and then as an editor for the Wyborcza.pl homepage. He was invited to co-create a new website dealing with politics as part of the Google Digital News Initiative project Sonar.Wyborcza.pl website in 2016. Since 2018, he is the head of BIQdata.pl, Wyborcza's data department.



SZYMON ZDZIEBŁOWSKI

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: POLISH PRESS AGENCY

Szymon is an experienced science writer. He started to cooperate with the Polish Press Agency, Poland’s national news agency, in 2008. Since 2016, he has been a full-time reporter. Before that, he contributed to several popular science outlets in Poland and national weeklies. In recent years, he has focused more on scientific policy and social affairs, especially those related to public health. Szymon is passionate about heritage, museums and archaeology. He covered a comprehensive reform of higher education in Poland in 2018, when a new bill was introduced. Szymon has reported on numerous international events, such as the Falling Walls Berlin 2017 and Big Science Business Forum 2018 in Copenhagen. In 2019 he was a fellow of the Erice International School of Science Journalism (Italy).