Umar Hassan | Journalist

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A data journalist and digital content specialist with over a decade of experience across the national, regional and specialist media. Produced original digital and data journalism reporting for Press Gazette, HuffPost UK, DatacenterDynamics and more. Combined data analysis, visualisation and multimedia storytelling with commercial expertise in SEO, audience development and content performance. Can identify stories in public datasets and report on stories across sport, technology and local news for social and web platforms.

CORE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Data journalism, analysis and visualisation**: R, Excel, Flourish, Google Sheets and Datawrapper.
- **Specialist reporting**: Interviewing, newsgathering and researching complex topics.
- **Digital publishing**: WordPress, Ghost, digital editing and multichannel digital content production.
- **AI-assisted content production**: ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini, Copilot.
- **Audience development**: SEO, SEMRush, Google Analytics and content performance analysis.
- **Multimedia production**: Video and digital content creation with Adobe Creative Suite and DaVinci Resolve and building webpages with HTML, CSS and JavaScript.
- **Social and digital content distribution**: Content production and strategy across YouTube, LinkedIn, X, Meta Business Suite and Hootsuite.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Journalist **Jan 2025 - present**

Birmingham Newman University - Redesigning course page content and layout

- Advised the Web and Digital Manager in redesigning the University's course pages based on recommendations made in a web audit. Led to changes in content presentation, leading to 10 direct applications made to the LLB Law course.

Press Gazette - Reach PLC local newsbrands data project

- Analysed almost 200 articles across one day's worth of coverage for three Reach PLC news websites, using Excel and Visual Basic to look at editorial output, where nearly three-quarters of its content were syndicated across Reach's sister brands.

EM360Tech - B2B specialist technology content

- Created SEO-focused B2B technology content, covering complex topics by using search data to identify keywords to target for blogs, such as a guide on microservices.

Content Performance Manager **Ricemedia (now M3 Agency)** **Jan 2023 - Jan 2025**

- Optimised existing MOT blog content for Merityre, leading to MOT terms coming back to page one of Google and a 10% increase in SEO traffic in three months.
- Updated 20 pages in four days for the Employers section of the ICAEW website, leading to the client not leaving the agency and an internal performance award.
- Improved organisation of scheduling and posting monthly Organic Social content for Formula One Autocentres, M3 Agency and Oxford Plastics by two hours per month.

Digital Content Executive **Ricemedia (now M3 Agency)** **Jan 2022 - Jan 2023**

- Wrote high-ranking blog content that ranked on page one of Google for e-commerce, healthcare and professional services clients (Diamond Heaven and Skirting4U).
- Streamlined the agency's content production process by building a data model in Google Sheets, reducing client content publishing times by 25% in two months.
- Incorporated A/B testing to test blog call-to-actions, where sales-orientated CTAs produced 100% more blog conversions than blogs with non-sales CTAs.

Freelance Journalist **Jan 2019 - Jan 2022**

HuffPost UK - Collaborating on a data piece around COVID's impact in Birmingham

- Contributed to a joint data piece, exploring how COVID's impact on one part of the UK and how it affected the city, from business to mental health and physical health.

Journo Resources - A Day in the Life interviews with journalists and broadcasters

- Planned and organised interviews with Jane Haynes, Louise Goodman and Jim Rosenthal, as well as sourcing and capturing content for each interview feature.

The Bureau Local - #SoldFromUnderYou investigation

- Contributed to the #SoldFromUnderYou investigation with a day-long hackday, investigating how public spaces have been sold off for millions of pounds due to councils facing financial hardship.

EDUCATION

Birmingham City University

MA Data Journalism, Merit **Sep 2020 - Sep 2021**

The Economist - Two-week placement with the data journalism team

- Planned and researched a few data stories to pitch to the Graphic detail editor, using R and Excel to look at issues around internet freedom and heavyweight boxing.

Birmingham Eastside - Facebook Live of the 2020 United States presidential election

- Worked with data and multimedia journalists to broadcast an overnight livestream of the 2020 United States presidential election on Facebook Live in four days.

BA (Hons) Media and Communication (Journalism), 2:1 **Sep 2014 - Jul 2017**

Birmingham Eastside - England Rugby World Cup data story picked up by BBC

- Analysed ESPN Scrum data around the number of West Midlands players in England Rugby World Cup squads, which was picked up by BBC Birmingham.

Sky Scholarship 2015 - Runner-up

- Won one of four places on the coveted Sky Scholarship, spending two weeks in London on the Sky Campus, shadowing various roles within various departments, such as content services to Sky News and Sky Sports News.