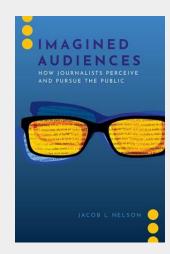
Imagined Audiences

How Journalists Perceive and Pursue the Public

Many believe the solution to ongoing crises in the news industry--including profound financial instability and public distrust--is for journalists to improve their relationship with their audiences. This raises important questions: How do journalists conceptualize their audiences in the first place? What is the connection between what journalists think about their audiences and what they do to reach them? Perhaps most importantly, how aligned are these "imagined" audiences with the real ones? Imagined Audiences draws on ethnographic case studies of three news organizations to reveal how journalists' assumptions about their audiences shape their approaches to their audiences. Jacob L. Nelson examines the role that audiences have traditionally played in journalism, how that role has changed, and what those changes mean for both the profession and the public. He concludes by drawing on audience studies research to compare journalism's "imagined" audiences with actual observations of news audience behavior. The result is a comprehensive study of both news production and reception at a moment when the relationship between the two has grown more important than ever before.



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