

Photojournalism at war: how do you do it (and pay for it) in the new media market?

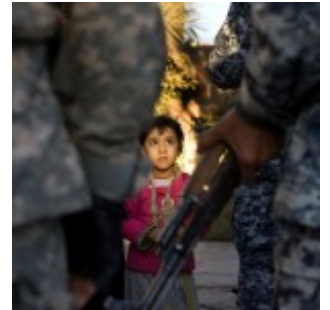
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[Danfung Dennis](#) is a brilliant young war photographer who has had his stunning work splashed across the front pages of papers like the New York and London Times and top magazines like Newsweek. But he wants to know how to do his job.

How do you combine stills, video and audio work in the midst of a dangerous conflict situation and secure the kind of quality imagery that will capture both the story and the headlines? And how does a freelancer make it pay in a world where clever new equipment is leveling the skills playing field?

This guest blog by Danfung, who [spoke at Polis last year](#), explores the opportunities and challenges of conflict photojournalism today.



Photojournalism at war: a battle for survival?

By Danfung Dennis

The barriers of entry have dropped considerably in the journalism industry. Canon's EOS 5D Mark II released a few months ago is changing the industry by allowing high resolution still photos and high definition video to be captured on the same device, at a price that most freelancers can afford. It allows professional lenses to shoot video at the high qualities that only feature films once had budgets for. The low light capabilities are unprecedented.

I recently had video of a night raid in Afghanistan published on a newspaper website, and a frame grab extracted from that same video published as a full page still image in the paper, which demonstrates the convergence between still and video content. (They paid a day rate of stills only, claiming it was the same content, and even then the rate was reduced due to budget constraints).

With magazines and newspapers on the decline and slashing their budgets, freelancers have been the first to feel the hit. The pressure for freelancers to produce more content to stay viable is strong. For example, [John D McHugh](#) was commissioned by the Guardian to do a six month embed with the US military to write a blog, shoot still pictures and produce video multimedia. The ability to produce multiple forms of content, deliver it by satellite modem from the field, at higher qualities than ever before at a fraction of the cost, combined with the evolving channels of distribution online, is changing media landscape rapidly.



I am returning to Afghanistan this week to experiment with this model. I will be embedded with US forces in the Korengal Valley and hope to shoot HD video and stills, edit and produce a pieces on my macbook, encode for broadcast, web, iphone and video podcast platforms, transmit by satellite to my website and update my RSS feed, twitter, facebook, vimeo and blog platforms with regular video dispatches from the front line.

I posted a [preview of my work](#) on civilian casualties turning Afghans toward the insurgency on my website a few

nights ago and had over 5000 hits in the first 24 hours. But my question is, 'how can I monetize my content and actually make a living with this networked solo videojournalism model when internet content is expected to be free, no matter how good or original the content is?'

This article was written by Danfung Dennis

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