

O’Keefe, Garrett J. Review of *Environment Reporters in the 21st Century*, by David B. Sachsman, James Simon, and JoAnn Myer Valenti. *Science Communication* 33.1 (2011): 134-137.

The time is well overdue for a data-based cataloging of who “out there” in the core of professional journalists is covering science-related topics, what their qualifications are, what motivates them, how they go about their jobs, and how they deal with everyday conflicts in their work. *Environment Reporters in the 21st Century* takes an admirable first step in that direction. Authors David B. Sachsman, James Simon, and JoAnn Meyer Valenti bring an enviable combination of backgrounds to the task drawn from academic and professional journalistic settings. The book first briefly reviews previous studies and commentary on environment reporting—which are quite sparse and disparate—and then moves into the methods of the present study, which involved personal interviews with nearly the complete set of more than 600 U.S. daily newspaper and electronic reporters with significant environmental beats. A detailed presentation of the findings follows, some surprising and many not so, and concludes with a compelling examination of key environment reporters reflecting on their experiences from a variety of perspectives. The authors are to be particularly commended for their research design and tenacity in carrying it out. They wisely drew heavily from previous major sample surveys of all U.S. journalists carried out by Indiana University scholars as recently as 2002, drawing the bulk of their questionnaire from those studies. This, of course, allowed direct comparisons of attributes of environmental journalists with the general population of reporters, providing an invaluable context. While the authors do not go into great detail about their interviewing protocols, it seems clear that rounding up their 600+ informants, taking a geographic region at a time over 5 years, for 40-minute telephone interviews with a nearly 100% response rate must have been Herculean.

See also at: <http://scx.sagepub.com/content/33/1/134.full.pdf+html>