Journalism ethics and standards include principles of ethics and of good practice to address the specific

challenges faced by professional journalists. Historically and currently these principles are most widely

known to journalists as their professional "code of ethics" or the "canons of journalism." The basic codes

and canons commonly appear in statements drafted by professional journalism associations and individual

print broadcast, and online news organizations.

Every news organization has only its credibility and reputation to rely on.

Tony Burman, editor-in-chief of CBC News

While various existing codes have some differences, most share common elements including the

principles of — truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity impartiality, fairness and public accountability — as

these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent reportage to the public.

THE CODE

All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Code, which

includes this preamble and the public interest exceptions below, sets the benchmark for those ethical

standards, protecting both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It is the cornerstone

of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment.

It is essential that an agreed code be honored not only to the letter but in the full spirit. It should not be

interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so

broadly that it constitutes an unnecessary interference with freedom of expression or prevents publication

in the public interest.

It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to apply the Code to editorial material in both printed and

online versions of publications. They should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial

staff and external contributors, including non-journalists, in printed and online versions of publications.

Editors should co-operate swiftly with the PCC in the resolution of complaints. Any publication judged to

have breached the Code must print the adjudication in full and with due prominence, including headline

reference to the PCC.

The Press Complaints Commission is charged with enforcing the following Code of Practice which was

framed by the newspaper and periodical industry and was ratified by the PCC on 01 August 2007.

Evolution and purpose of codes of journalism

The principles of good journalism are directed toward bringing the highest quality of news reporting to

the public, thus fulfilling the mission of timely distribution of information in service of the public interest.

To a large degree, the codes and canons evolved via observation of and response to past ethical lapses by

journalists and publishers. Today, it is common for terms of employment to mandate adherence to such

codes equally applicable to both staff and freelance journalists; journalists may face dismissal for ethical

failures. Upholding professional standards also enhances the reputation of and trust in a news

organization, which boosts the size of the audience it serves.

Journalistic codes of ethics are designed as guides through numerous difficulties, such as conflicts of

interest, to assist journalists in dealing with ethical dilemmas. The codes and canons provide journalists a

framework for self-monitoring and self-correction as they pursue professional assignments.

Codes of practice

While journalists in the United States and European countries have led in formulation and adoption of

these standards, such codes can be found in news reporting organizations in most countries with freedom

of the press. The written codes and practical standards vary somewhat from country to country and

organization to organization, but there is a substantial overlap among mainstream publications and

societies.

One of the leading voices in the U.S. on the subject of Journalistic Standards and Ethics is the Society ofProfessional Journalists. The Preamble to its Code of Ethics states:

Public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the

journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account

of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the

public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's

credibility.

The Radio-Television News Directors Association, an organization exclusively centered on electronic

journalism, maintains a code of ethics centering on -- public trust, truthfulness, fairness, integrity,

independence and accountability. RTDNA publishes a pocket guide to these standards. RTDNA publishes

a pocket guide to these standards.

Examples of journalistic codes of ethics held by international news gathering organizations may be found

as follows:

• British Broadcasting Corporation: Editorial Guidelines

• Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: Journalistic Standard and Practices

• Al Jazeera: Code of Ethics.

• Code of Journalists of the Republic of Slovenia

Definition Code of Ethics

A Code of Ethics is a set of standards, rules, guidelines, and values that govern and guide ethical business

behavior in a company, profession, or organization of it's employees, interactions among the employees,

and interactions between the employees and the general public.

Some codes of ethics have the force of law. Violations of these codes may be subject to administrative

(e.g., loss of license), civil or penal remedies. Other codes can be enforced by the promulgating

organization alone; a violation of these codes is usually limited to loss of membership in the organization.

Other codes are merely advisory and there are no prescribed remedies for violations or even procedures

for determining whether a violation even occurred. Furthermore, the effectiveness of codes of ethics

depends on the extent to which the management of the organization embraces and supports them.

Common elements

The primary themes common to most codes of journalistic standards and ethics are the following.

Objectivity

• Unequivocal separation between news and opinion. In-house editorials and opinion pieces are

clearly separated from news pieces. News reporters and editorial staff are distinct.

• Unequivocal separation between advertisements and news. All advertisements must be clearly

identifiable as such.

• Reporter must avoid conflicts of interest — incentives to report a story with a given slant. This

includes not taking bribes and not reporting on stories that affect the reporter's personal,

economic or political interests. See envelope journalism.

• Competing points of view are balanced and fairly characterized.

• Persons who are the subject of adverse news stories are allowed a reasonable opportunity to respond to the adverse information before the story is published or broadcast.

• Interference with reporting by any entity, including censorship, must be disclosed.

Seek the Truth and Report It

Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate

distortion is never permissible.

Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of

wrongdoing.

Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sourcesreliability.

Always question sources’ motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to anypromise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.

Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound

bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of

context.

Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always

permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.

Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label

it.

Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open

methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of

the story

Never plagiarize

Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular

to do so.

Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.

Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability,

physical appearance or social status.

Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.

Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.

Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not

misrepresent fact or context.

Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.

Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and thatgovernment records are open to inspection.

Code of ethics for Journalists and other Media Professionals

Ethical responsibility to Sources and Subjects

Minimize harm

It is essential that all risks of being inflammatory, misleading, or inconsiderate to subjects and sources be

minimized. This is especially relevant to those engaging in original reporting. To minimize possible harm,

we encourage our writers to do the following:

• Ensure facts are correct by getting verification from multiple sources.

• Try to contact the subject of the article whenever possible.

• Not publish an article based solely on speculation, hunches or wild guesses.

• Before publishing, make a mental list of all parties involved in the article and think about how

each will feel about the article.

Avoid misrepresentation

Do not publish any sort of interview story without ensuring that the interviewee is absolutely happy with

the articles final text. Even if this means giving up the interview - Wikinews will only lose out if it

offends interviewees - remember to respect that they have taken the time to talk to us.

Get all sides of a story

Ensure sources and quotes from both sides of an argument are included in articles to avoid being biased

towards either side. Ideally, all opinions expressed in an article should be direct quotes. Wikinews has no

official opinion on anything; however, sources often do.

Respect anonymity

Any source that requests to remain anonymous is fully entitled to this. You are not obliged to bring up the

possibility of anonymity, but you are obliged to honor requests for it. It is important not to apply undue

pressure to the source if they do not wish to be named. At the same time, anonymous sources can make

stories less credible, so it is important to make some effort to persuade reluctant sources to volunteer to goon the record. Explaining to a source why you would prefer them to go on the record is a gentle and often

effective way of persuading them to do so. In any case, the decision rests with the source.

Ethical responsibility to our Readers

To our readers we have the duty to be:

Independent

Wikinews is not owned by a corporate entity. It is a project that is under the banner of the non-profit

organization, the Wikimedia Foundation.

Neutral

All Wikimedia Foundation projects must conform to the policy of Neutral point of view. Wikinews is no

exception. Our responsibility to our readers is to provide news that contains no bias. This includes

removing and re-editing stories that have been determined to advocate a particular point of view to the

exclusion of others.

Truthful

Wikinews wants to be truthful. We want to bring the real information. We work hard to do that. We make

sure what is being reported is truthful. We remove and re-edit stories that contain unverified sources and

thus may be untruthful.

Accountable

In relation to being truthful, Wikinews wants to be accountable also. We make sure that what we are

reporting to the public can be accounted for. We take blame for stories that contain untruthful

information.

Accuracy and standards for factual reporting

• Reporters are expected to be as accurate as possible given the time allotted to story preparation and

the space available, and to seek reliable sources.

• Events with a single eyewitness are reported with attribution. Events with two or more independent

eyewitnesses may be reported as fact. Controversial facts are reported with attribution.

• Independent fact-checking by another employee of the publisher is desirable

• Corrections are published when errors are discovered

• Defendants at trial are treated only as having "allegedly" committed crimes, until conviction, when

their crimes are generally reported as fact (unless, that is, there is serious controversy about wrongful

conviction).

Opinion surveys and statistical information deserve special treatment to communicate in precise terms

any conclusions, to contextualize the results, and to specify accuracy, including estimated error and

methodological criticism or flaws.

Ethics and standards in practice

As with other ethical codes, there is perennial concern that the standards of journalism are being ignored.

One of the most controversial issues in modern reporting is media bias, especially on political issues, but

also with regard to cultural and other issues. Sensationalism is also a common complaint. Minor factual

errors are also extremely common, as almost anyone who is familiar with the subject of a particular report

will quickly realize.

There are also some wider concerns, as the media continue to change, for example that the brevity of

news reports and use of sound bites has reduced fidelity to the truth, and may contribute to a lack of

needed context for public understanding. From outside the profession, the rise of news management

contributes to the real possibility that news media may be deliberately manipulated. Selective reporting

(spiking, double standards) are very commonly alleged against newspapers, and by their nature are forms

of bias not easy to establish, or guard against.

This section does not address specifics of such matters, but issues of practical compliance, as well asdifferences between professional journalists on principles

Standards and reputation

Among the leading news organizations that voluntarily adopt and attempt to uphold the common

standards of journalism ethics described herein, adherence and general quality varies considerably. The

professionalism, reliability and public accountability of a news organization are three of its most valuable

assets. An organization earns and maintains a strong reputation, in part, through a consistent

implementation of ethical standards, which influence its position with the public and within the industry