Ethical Journalism

A comprehensive code of ethics template to guide journalists in a ‘post-truth’ era

Public Consultation Draft

September 2018

The Free School

www.journalistethics.com
This space aids ethical media professionals to exchange information.

Discussion boards are organized by content format:

- Television
- Public
- Digital
- Art
- Print
- Radio
- Photography
- Social Networks

Acronyms

EJCP: Ethical Journalists Collaboration Project

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Part One: Introduction

This public consultation draft aims to derive a comprehensive ethics framework to guide journalists and media publishers who operate in a ‘post-truth’ world. This modernization is essential in an era where ‘fake news’ abounds in a visible number of mainstream, niche and alternative media outlets (Dorf & Tarrow, 2017). This dire development is causing an ever-growing number of people to lose confidence in the accuracy and intent of media content and the ability of media broadcasters to self-administer their own self-authored ethics code.

The ethical journalist who is serious about mastering their craft should aim to be self-reflexive. A journalist’s background includes factors such as their personal upbringing, education, community memberships, faith and work experience. Journalists should be aware of how their personal background and environment may influence their professional methods, for better or worse.

Methodology

This book synthesizes content from 22 journalism ethics guidelines published by media and journalism industry sources in the English language. These include codes of practice administered by journalism schools, professional associations, media publishers, a statutory authority and a trade union.
Table 1 overleaf lists the details of these consultation sources. Thematic data saturation was achieved after reviewing 12 sources listed in this table.

A scrutiny of the consultation sources listed in Table 1 reinforces the need for the construction of a contemporary ethical guidelines template that includes detailed context discussion, practical operational guidelines and modern illustration examples. The brevity of the ‘IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists’ document authored by the International Federation of Journalists (2018) is indicative of virtually all ethics guidelines published by institutes that serve professional journalists. The body section of this document contains 9 topical points and 260 words of discussion. Four of these discussion points are limited to one sentence.

Eurasianet (2017)
### Table 1

**Journalism Ethics Codes: Consultation Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Publisher description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Society of Professional Journalists</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Washington Post Standards and Ethics</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Media Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. National Scholastic Press Association</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Arizona State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>University of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Society of American Business Editors and Writers</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Poynter Institute</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Journalism College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Australian Communications and Media Authority</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Statutory Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Australian Press Council</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. E tū</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The Press Council</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Canadian Association of Journalists</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Canadian University Press</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Student Press Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. National Union of Journalists</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Press Council of Ireland</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Media Council of Tanzania</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Hong Kong Journalists Association</td>
<td>Hong Kong, China</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. International Federation of Journalists</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Philippines Press Institute</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Press Council of India</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Professional Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Al Jazeera</td>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>Media Publisher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The web addresses for these guidelines are contained in the references section of this document.

Defining journalism

The word ‘journalism’ means different things to different people. This interpretation may vary by context. One person’s favorite ‘freelance journalist’ may be regarded as a ‘gutter-press gossip columnist’, i.e., a non-journalist, by another who is equally fond of this writer’s publications.

The definition of ‘journalism’ provided by the Merriam-Webster (2018a, NP) dictionary offers a useful starting point to deconstruct the meaning of this all-important noun.

Figure 1

Definition of Journalism

Definition of JOURNALISM

1. a : the collection and editing of news for presentation through the media
   b : the public press
   c : an academic study concerned with the collection and editing of news or the management of a news medium

2. a : writing designed for publication in a newspaper or magazine
   b : writing characterized by a direct presentation of facts or description of events without an attempt at interpretation
   c : writing designed to appeal to current popular taste or public interest

Mirriam-Webster (2018a)
Journalism is strongly associated with print media writings, especially those that aim to disseminate contemporary news stories that are of interest to the public. Print media includes digital outlets such as online newsletters and online magazines. This noun also refers to traditional paper-based media such as newspapers and gazettes.

This definition of journalism by Mirriam-Webster is narrow. Journalism takes place via other media beyond print formats. Table 2 lists major non-print media sources that create and disseminate journalistic content.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalism media</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Radio broadcasts</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Television broadcasts</td>
<td>Public Broadcasting Service (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Public forums</td>
<td>Press conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Digital cinematic media</td>
<td>DTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Recorded media e.g. CD, DVD</td>
<td>BBC Worldwide Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social network media</td>
<td>Twitter account of the Press Secretary –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President of the United States of America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is no academic, professional or governmental institution that has sole authority to define and classify different types of journalism. Examples of journalism classifications include:

**Advocacy journalism**: a partisan branch of journalism that disseminates information to pursue a social or political outcome. This type of journalism is ethical if the creator/publisher is transparent and desist from intrusively disseminating false or misleading information. This branch is associated with propaganda. Audiences are frequently skeptical of content.

**Alternative reporting**: a branch of journalism whose character is defined as opposite to or noticeably different to the consensus in mainstream media that reports identical issues in the same region. It may publish topic content or perspectives that no mainstream media report.

**Current affairs**: a popular branch of journalism that aims to disseminate developments that concerns a variety of news topics such as sports, politics, entertainment and finance.

**Database journalism**: The writer/s aims to build a repository of knowledge for public consumption.

**Documentaries**: The creator/s aim to construct a motion cinema production that offers an accurate account of public interest information that is available for public consumption. Digital media is the dominant format for documentary production nowadays.

**Gutter press**: “Press that engages in sensational journalism (especially concerning the private lives of public figures)” (Farlex, 2012). This term has a strongly negative connotation.

**Investigative research**: A branch of journalism that aims to collect and analyze a range of data sources to independently extract a true account of a matter of historical significance.

**Mainstream**: A branch of journalism that disseminates information to mass audiences.
**Muckraking**: This type of journalism aims to expose political corruption. It also uncovers unconscionable, fraudulent and wasteful business practices committed by industry, government and non-governmental institutes (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). This category may overlap with the notion of ‘whistleblower journalism’ associated with media publishers such as Wikileaks. This branch of journalism has a negative connotation as it may expose journalists, publishers and their supporters to grave danger.

**Realpolitik journalism**: An ideological approach to journalism that argues any reporting style is legitimate if it causes a just outcome: ‘the end justifies the means’. This approach may reject the need to adhere to prescribed ethics codes. It is associated with advocacy journalism.

These categories of journalism are not mutually exclusive. For example, some muckraking alternative media journalists use investigative research to interview whistleblowers to produce documentaries that are intended to be archived indefinitely in the public domain. They may foresee that this content will realize mainstream appeal over the medium- to long-term.

**Opinions**

Around half of the ethics codes published by media and journalism associations urge journalists to carefully distinguish between opinion and fact. These sources may use perfect or loose synonyms to discuss the word ‘opinion’. Examples include “Comment, conjecture, rumor and unconfirmed reports” (Press Council of Ireland, 2018, NP).
The Mirriam Webster (2018b) Dictionary offers the following definitions of ‘opinion’:

1. a view, judgment, or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter
2. belief stronger than impression and less strong than positive knowledge
3. a formal expression of judgment or advice by an expert.

The Australian Community Television Alliance (2011, NP) policy document titled ‘Community Television Broadcasting Codes of Practice’ states that licensees must “Clearly distinguish the reporting of factual material from commentary and analysis.”

A visible minority of ethical guidelines state that journalists and publishers should publish opinion articles in a separate section, commonly known as ‘open editorials’ (‘open-ed’). The Canadian University Press offers specific guidelines on this topic.

xiii. Publications should maintain opinion and letters sections, and strive to publish as many such pieces as space allows while reserving the right to refuse to publish pieces that compromise the editorial integrity of the publication. An open dialogue with readers should be encouraged (Canadian University Press, 2018, NP).

It is important for ethical journalists to make clear distinctions between facts and comments/opinions so that their critical audience can evaluate whether personal bias likely
influences the content. They may also assess whether a journalist is qualified to disseminate personal comment on matters that require specialist training and active professional registration.

Defining Journalist

In a similar vein to the term ‘journalism’, there is no academic, professional or governmental institution that has sole authority to define and classify different types of journalists. The Washington Post (2018, NP) argues that journalists should aim to report news. They should not act in a way that makes their media reporting practices newsworthy in their own right:

> Although it has become increasingly difficult for this newspaper and for the press generally to do so since Watergate, reporters should make every effort to remain in the audience, to stay off the stage, to report the news, not to make the news.

A popular way to define and classify journalists is by the number of persons who are employed or acknowledged as the creator of journalistic content.

**Freelance**: these journalists work as independent contractors. The title ‘freelance journalist’ may suggest that this professional has full creative control over their work. This is normally true only when the freelance journalist self-publishes self-edited versions, such as via a personal website. In such cases, the term ‘independent journalist-publisher’ may be more appropriate.

**Collaborators**: these journalists work as part of a team of co-authors and/or co-producers.
**Staff journalists**: these professionals create content on behalf of an employer.

**Anonymous**: some journalistic content does not acknowledge the creator/s of the content. This practice is common among the most famed publications such as *The New York Times*. The public may fairly assume that the content was created by one or multiple journalists, sub-editors, editors and other assistants such as proofreaders and creative directors.

**Editors**: An editor who alters journalistic content may be regarded as journalists as they are imagined as leaders of journalists. Many sub-editors and editors were promoted through the journalist ranks, sometimes from entry-level cadetships to senior staff journalists.

**Centralized agencies**: Editors and publishers frequently attribute authorship to a centralized news agency such as Reuters and the Australian Associated Press.

**Photographers and creatives** who work for journalism agencies may be classified as journalists.

These classifications above are not mutually exclusive and titles may be misleading. A freelance journalist may collaborate with a team of staff journalists to produce one publication.

**Brief History of Western Journalism**

Journalism is frequently regarded as synonymous with the notion of the ‘press’. Its foundations are rooted in the evolution of the ‘printing press’. The German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg constructed the first printing press that used a Latin-based alphabet in 1440. The first newspaper written in the English language was *The Weekly Newes*, first published in London in *circa* 1621.
The printing press enabled pioneering journalists to disseminate information in print form in Europe to a community beyond their immediate proximity. Prior to the 17th Century, most residents of Europe were not literate. This partially explains why mainstream journalism did not proliferate throughout the European continent during this period.

Mainstream print media production expanded rapidly during the 19th Century. This is partially attributable to increases in literacy rates. The development of faster printing presses and cheap wood-based paper products enabled publishers to mass produce media content. So-called ‘yellow newspapers’ (*i.e.*, tabloid newspapers) were the first print media types to achieve mass national circulation in Britain and America around the turn of the 20th century. The format and content of these stories uses sensational headlines. Their short stories invariably contained little detail about data sources or investigation methods that underpin conclusions.

The earliest forms of television journalism overlap with the mass production and circulation of print media journalism. These primitive forms of motion cinema were not televised to mainstream national audiences. Content was mostly aired in private domains such as cinemas and college campuses. Television journalism first proliferated in the United States of America during the 1930s, as recognized by *The Communications Act (1934)(USA)*. Content centered on the dissemination of mainstream news such as political affairs, sports and celebrities’ lifestyles.
Broadcast journalism first proliferated on a mass scale during the Second World War. Prior to this period, radio was mostly used to broadcast local entertainment content such as playwright skits and music. The mainstream proliferation of social network media over the past decade is the most recent dramatic development in the world of journalism. Using online applications platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, personal websites (e.g. blogsites) and YouTube, any individual can create journalistic content to cater for audiences of diverse geographies, demographics and ideologies.

**Context and Perspective**

The private and professional backgrounds of journalists, editors and publishers may influence their perceptions at conscious and subconscious levels in numerous ways. Consider the example of a 22 years old journalist working in Vientiane as a foreign correspondent for a central news agency based in Boston. She was born and raised in Scotland and speaks English and Gaelic as native languages. She holds a Bachelor of Business Degree and has never studied Asian languages, culture or history. She cannot speak Lao and has been living outside of Scotland for three months.

This Scottish journalist must rely on certified Lao–English translators to obtain information from local business persons who cannot communicate adequately in her native languages. She chooses to consult multiple independent translators to confirm that meaning has not been lost-
in-translation or distorted by a translator purposefully or unwittingly. Prior to submitting her manuscripts to her editor, she consults a cultural advisor who is of Lao origin and has lived in English-speaking Western nations for 20 years. This consultant reviews her manuscripts to confirm that the interpretations of interview transcripts are accurate, based on the local context.

Sometimes a journalists’ literal interpretation of textual data is incorrect because the peculiar context that underpins their story may distort the apparent meaning of content. Consider the case of an elderly journalist from Zimbabwe who interviews a Texan teenage sports prodigy in America in the English language. This rising sports star tells the journalist that his mother’s influence on his career has been more “awesome” than other family members’ contributions.

According to the Collins English Dictionary (2012, NP), the adjective ‘awesome’ means “causing or inducing awe; inspiring an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, or fear”. The word ‘awesome’ may aim to impart positive or negative connotations, depending on the intention of the speaker/writer. A professional, conscientious journalist should clarify words in transcripts that may convey multiple meanings.
Since the 1980s, the word ‘awesome’ has gradually transitioned from a word that has a negative literal meaning to a word that has a strong positive connotation. The use of the word ‘awesome’ as a positive adjective is strongest among members of Generations: X, Y and millennials who live in Western countries such as Australia, Canada, Britain and the United States.

Environment

The domain where a journalist may reside, and report exists at four broad levels: local, national, regional and global. Table 3 overleaf illustrates how The Epoch Times publishes written content – i.e., online media and print newspapers at each level.
### Table 3

**Local, National, Regional and Global Media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Epoch Times issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td><em>Epoch Times, New York</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-ny-news">https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-ny-news</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td><em>Epoch Times, United States of America</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-us">https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td><em>Epoch Times, Asia &amp; Pacific</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-asia-pacific">https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-asia-pacific</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td><em>Epoch Times, International</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-international">https://www.theepochtimes.com/c-international</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The local environment includes places situated in immediate proximity to where a person lives, works and socializes. Suburbs, districts, boroughs (*e.g.* The Bronx), states and provinces are examples of local environments.

Suburbs, districts, boroughs, states and provinces are located within nations. For example, Utah is a state of the United States of America. Saskatchewan is a province of Canada. Canada and the United States of America are members of the North American continental region. South America and North America are two continents on planet Earth, *i.e.* the globe.
In the sphere of journalism, these four domain classifications that I discuss above are not mutually exclusive. For example, consider the newspaper *The Sydney Morning Herald*, based in Sydney, Australia. This publication serves as the mainstream state-wide newspaper for the state of New South Wales. This publication has the largest circulation of Australia’s newspapers. Many people in Australia and overseas consult the online and print version of this newspaper as Australia’s national ‘barometer’. In effect, *The Sydney Morning Herald* offers a Westernized global perspective of cultural, economic and political developments that take place in Australia.

**Western and Universal Perspectives**

Discussions that occur in Sections Two and Three are dominantly Westernized in their outlook. English is the global *lingua franca* of commerce and numerous other domains such as academia, entertainment, international diplomacy and air traffic control. Most nations house publishers that print at least one mainstream newspaper in the English language on a regular, ongoing basis.

Case studies in this book center on member nations of what I term the CRANZUKUS club – Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Some analysis of other nations takes place. The practitioner journalist may reflect on whether the values presented in this book translate to their unique professional contexts specifically or global society-at-large. The development of a truly universal ethical journalism framework may transpire from the feedback received from this public consultation draft.
Part Two: Contemporary Journalism

I argue that Western news media and journalism at-large are currently undergoing a radical transformation. I suspect that this position will be fiercely contested by many/most readers of this passage who reflect on this claim during 2018. This positive transformation is currently in its infancy when compared to the long-term entrenched *modus operandi* and publishing norms that have shaped Western mainstream media practices over the past half century.

On 11 January 2017, President of the United States of America, Donald Trump refused to take a question from CNN (mainstream media) journalist Jim Acosta during a live press conference. This event has been widely documented as accurate by print media sources (*e.g.* USA Today, 2017). This incident is clearly captured by mainstream media videos hosted on YouTube (*e.g.* CNN, 2017). This is not an isolated incident. During the first 20 months of his Presidency, Trump has repeatedly accused multiple mainstream media outlets of disseminating ‘fake news’ via his official Presidential Twitter account. This public claim by a sitting American President, using explicit non-diplomatic language, is unprecedented.

Figure 3 overleaf provides a sample of Trump’s ‘fake news’ public tweets.
In recent years, the readership and viewership of mainstream news media continues to decline month-over-month in the United States of America (e.g. Pew Research Center, 2018a; 2018b). The readership and viewership of alternative media have increased at broadly similar rates. At 31 July 2018, *The Alex Jones [news] Channel* records 2,424,102 subscribers (YouTube, 2018). This is an increase in total subscribers of around 62% over the past four years. This news media channel’s subscription base was *circa* 1,493,033 accounts in July 2014 (Track Analytics, 2018).
Communications Media

Over the past fifteen years, four dominant online platforms have hosted the rapid proliferation of independent startup news media. These include outlets staffed by individuals, collaborators and institutions. These platforms are: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and personal websites.

Lionel Nation is an example of an independent journalist who self-operates a media platform. At 15 September 2018, his YouTube Channel “Lionel Nation” (2018) hosts 4,521 videos and 213,347 subscribers. Nation’s approach engages in extended discourse to analyze political issues.

Journalistic Style

Journalism is like other arts and crafts. Its practitioners may adhere to one or more distinct genres. A handful may develop a ‘signature-style’. Popular journalist content styles include: diplomatic, aggressive, humorous, satirical, academic, ‘dry’ (factual), business English, abstract and colloquial. These categories are not mutually exclusive. They may partially overlap.

Alternative and startup media tends to be more critical of government agencies and ‘establishment’ institutions. It is less diplomatic than entrenched mainstream media. Table 4 lists examples of alternative and startup media outlets that commenced during the past decade.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Content origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Benjamin Fulford</td>
<td>Sole operator – Global politics</td>
<td>Various, online</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lynnette Hardaway</td>
<td>Collaborators – Social commentators</td>
<td>Blog &amp; social network media</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Rochelle Richardson;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Diamond &amp; Silk’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tommy Robinson</td>
<td>Sole operator and collaborator</td>
<td>Various, online</td>
<td>Canada, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chinese TV 8</td>
<td>Chinese language TV broadcaster</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tommy McKearney</td>
<td>Independent blogger</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Independent Australia</td>
<td>News provider</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Diamond & Silk’ (2018) are an interesting case study. Some public commentators argue that the bulk of their content is not journalism and their work is suited to other adjectives. These include titles such as social commentators, political activists, professional celebrities and entertainers. May you review their creative media content and decide for yourself (e.g. see Twitter, 2018).
I surmise that alternative startup media are more independent than mainstream media because they are less beholden to the interests of major financial sponsors. Furthermore, their independence and lack of diplomacy is their unique selling point. Their outspoken rejection of the establishment underpins their niche that imagines themselves as the inverse of mainstream.

**Post-truth Era**

A range of public commentators, including institutional and individual publishers, talk about the global media operating in a so-called ‘post-truth’ era. This term has gained mainstream popularity over the past decade. This principle first became prominent around the turn of the new millennium. This is captured by the title of Keyes’s (2004) book titled “The post truth era – Dishonesty and deception in contemporary life.” Peters *et al.* (2018, p. v) describes the Post-truth era as characterized with “Alternative Facts, fake news” which may be “devastating for the fundamental values that underpin the way that a nation defines and operates its democracy”.

**Life, Liberty and Property**

The principles that guide the ethical journalist and media publishers are invariably a personal, voluntary matter. One journalist may feel compelled to perpetually abide by religious scriptures such as the Talmud, Christian Bible or Quran. Other journalists may feel no compulsion to be guided by any religious texts. The moral standards imposed on journalists may vary widely between employers, stakeholders and jurisdictional regulators that oversee their work.
It is beyond the scope of this public consultation draft to explore in-depth the origins and teachings of ancient and contemporary philosophy. Many journalists and media communications scholars state the Western Lockean philosophy is a guiding principle that may inform journalists’ ethical choices and humanistic principles (e.g. Steel, 2013, pp. 9, 12, 31–32).

The classic philosopher John Locke (1689) argues that the state is morally obliged to serve its populace to protect life, liberty, and property. The fundamentals of Locke’s philosophy of Natural Law are enshrined in America’s Constitution. These principles may guide the ethical journalist.

**Life:** All people have the right to have their health and general welfare preserved and maximized. No person should be arbitrarily executed.

**Liberty:** All people have the right to be free of slavery, arbitrary imprisonment, torture and exploitation.

**Property:** The right to own and accrue private possessions, by legitimate means, is a universal right bestowed on all citizens.

For some, the appeal of Lockean philosophy lies in its simplicity. This three-pronged guideline is simpler than the ten-pronged comprehensive, original ‘FLOATSFAIR’ ethical journalism model that I construct and explore in the following section.
Part Three: Ethics Template - FLOATSFAIR

Introduction

This section introduces 10 interrelated topics that I argue should guide those who aim to create, publish and disseminate ethical journalistic content. These 10 topics are:


The first letter of each topic above derives the acronym “FLOATSFAIR” that I use to name the original ethical guidelines template that I explore in this section. These classifications are contested. They may be fluid in different contexts. The second edition of this publication, which aims to draw on global feedback, may clarify, expand or reduce these classifications accordingly.

This section constructs eight checklists that may aid journalism professionals to act ethically when discharging their duties. The first checklist is a condensed one-page summary of the essential elements that may guide journalists, editors and publishers.

The seven topical templates offer a comprehensive, complementary set of ethical guidelines. Each topical section provides technical discussion and case study illustrations to aid those who work in the profession to critically assess the logic and application of these ethics checklists.
The need to acknowledge data sources ('acknowledgement') illustrates the difficulty in attributing an ethical behavior to one mutually exclusive category. The need to acknowledge primary and secondary data sources also relates to issues of ‘transparency’. This activity is the only duplication that occurs in the detailed ethics guidelines template checklists.

**Summary Checklist**

The image overleaf, provides a one-page summary checklist that journalists, editors and publishers may consult prior to disseminating media content to the public. This table contains 22 core evaluative criteria that concern ethical journalism.

Cells that have heavy bold borders are distinguished to indicate to stakeholders that their work practices and categorization most likely align with the ethical alternative. Journalists and editors should reflect on the peculiar context and their personal/professional experiences to determine if and how they should adapt their behavior if they select a box that contains the fine border.
# Ethical Journalism Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Fair.</strong> Uses hateful or degrading speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploits disempowered persons/groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Lawful.</strong> Abides by civil and statutory laws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Organization’s publication charter is adhered to</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Accuracy.</strong> Provides relevant context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses misleading or deceptive language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasizes facts and avoids speculation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulates and validates data sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explores reasonable counter arguments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offers stakeholders the right to reply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title reflects the substance of the content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apologizes for and corrects prior inaccuracies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Transparency.</strong> Discloses conflicts-of-interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discloses primary and secondary sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursues a non-disclosed or biased agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employs psychological manipulation (‘psy-ops’)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Safety and health of stakeholders are respected</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Freedom of speech and thought is promoted</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Acknowledgement.</strong> Recognition of contributors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Independence.</strong> Content reflects author’s opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. <strong>Responsibility.</strong> Expert contributors are qualified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasizes negativity, despair, defeatism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Signed: Journalist/s_  
_Approved: Editor/s_
It is not reasonable to expect publishers to acknowledge all 63 detailed ethical guidelines that I explore in this section. Some criteria may not be applicable to all contexts. Publishers have a right to present content in an aesthetic manner that is simplified and appeals to the reader. They are not required to address each ethics issue in the main body of their media content.

Most ethics disclosures can be supported by directing audiences to a location that describes the publisher’s universal business practices in detail. They may also be disclosed via references to supporting content that relates to unique journalistic content such as one news article or magazine issue. Examples of supporting references includes content placed in:

- Footnotes
- Appendices
- Webpage content
- Introductory or concluding credits
- Public disclosure forums such as gazettes.

It is useful for institutional publishers to disclose the contact details of a public relations officer whose role aims to clarify the ethical guidelines imposed on staff journalists and editors. The ‘About’ or ‘Contacts’ details of the official website are suitable locations to list these contacts.
Advanced Ethics Checklist

This section discusses the 22 issues listed in the summary ethics checklist and expands this template. For the sake of convenience, the summary ethics template lists core issues that fit to a one-page working document. There are other ethical issues that conscientious journalists and publishers may consider prior to releasing content to public audiences.

Checklist boxes in this section that contain an asterisk * warn the professional completing/reviewing the template that this option is likely the ethical course-of-action. They should reflect on the peculiar context and their professional experiences to determine if/how they should adapt their behavior if they check a box that does not contain an asterisk.

The classification of these lists is contested. Some categories may be irrelevant. Some tables may require additional points. Some categories within the same table partially overlap. This partial duplication has been minimized. Some duplication is necessary to identify nuanced ethics issues.

Discussions in this section are intentionally brief. I fairly assume that the reader has a basic grasp of the purpose of authentic journalism. For example, in the forthcoming sub-section titled “Fairness“, I do not justify the need for journalism professionals to avoid using “hateful or degrading speech”. I likewise do not defend the need to desist from exploiting “disempowered persons/groups”. I suggest that a person enrolls in a Journalism 101 course at a reputable college.
that specializes in applied education if they instinctively conclude that it is legitimate for a
journalist to spread hate speech or attack vulnerable persons. Upon completion of this course,
may you reassess your position, and freely decide for yourself where you stand on these topics.

It is not the intention of this document to change journalist’s mindsets or practices. May the
reader exercise their freewill and sound judgment and perpetually act in a way that is just and
professional when discharging their duties as a member of the world of journalism.

A copy of the ethics templates are archived in the appendix section.

Fairness

The notion of ‘fairness’ is widely debated in the public and private spheres. It is a principle that
is difficult to define universally and slippery to illustrate. Rawls (2001), argues that fairness
underpins the notion of justice. A crude summary of his thesis argues that people should not do
to others, things they would not like to be done to themselves if they were in the other person’s
position. We hear children talk instinctively about Rawlsian notions of Justice as Fairness from a
young age. It is common to hear one sibling say to another, something along the lines of “how
would you like it if I went into your room when you were away from home and read your diary!”.
Table 5 lists seven ethical criteria that should guide fair media professionals. The content of this table is consistent with Rawlsian theories of Justice as Fairness.

### Table 5

**Ethical Journalism: Fairness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Uses hateful or degrading speech.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exploits disempowered persons/groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Obtains permission to quote sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Respects the dignity of others; avoids undue humiliation, shaming and embarrassment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Avoids pigeon-holing people by mentioning their residential suburb, occupation, gender, age etc. when this is not relevant to the issues reported.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Allows stories that are resolved to rest-in-peace.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Content connects crimes and controversial actions of private citizens to their friends, family and associates, when there is no known connection to these other parties.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Print, radio and television media frequently identify a person’s residential suburb, age, gender, occupation and other personal demographic information when they describe perpetrators and ‘victims’ of crimes. These details are usually irrelevant. Their inclusion stereotypes and sensationalize the details reported. Consider this real-life example that identifies the age, gender, occupation and residential suburb of a man charged with murder. These details appear in the title and opening sentence of the *Kaieter News* article, overleaf.
Unemployed Man Charged for Murder of Mahaica Vendor

“Malcolm Brown, a 30-year-old unemployed resident of Belmont, Mahaica, East Coast Demerara was yesterday charged for the murder of Mahaica vendor, Fareez Yassem.”

Kaieter News (2018, NP)

Such descriptions may unfairly exacerbate existing stereotypes about people whose profile fits specific demographics. Consider these arguments in relation to the article extract above:

“Man”: It is a fact that most men commit murders; men are the murderous gender.

“30-year old”: Those who have not yet reached maturity (e.g. middle age) are more likely to commit murders because they are not wise elders of our community.

“Unemployed”: Unemployed persons are more likely to commit murder because of factors such as poverty, boredom and their inability to fit into social environments such as the work sector.

“Belmont, Mahaica, East Coast Demerara”: This murder took place in a dangerous, violent, crime-infested area of Guyana. It is therefore just another homicide statistic and is not shocking.

“Vendor”: This perpetrator’s crime is worse than certain other murders, because he has taken the life of a person who is employed and adds value to their economy and society.

It is difficult to imagine that any news story can be meaningful and interesting if the demographics of all parties involved are fully concealed. I argue that those who work in the
journalism profession should aim to identify only those distinguishing features that provide the most essential relevant context to the story and the expectations of their ethical audience.

I suggest that journalists should not unduly prolong a major story that is resolved. This argument is the only guideline that is not listed in any ethics guideline itemized in Table 5. I draw on my personal experiences over the past three decades to reach this conclusion. Friends, colleagues and family alike frequently complain that the mainstream media rarely allow a sensational headline story to ‘die’. I conclude that these grievances have two main roots. First, it highlights the lack of creativity of certain mainstream media, and their need to constantly recycle sad stories to sell content. Secondly, it does not allow direct and indirect victims of crime/trauma to experience closure from a private grief, as this drama is constantly relived in the public domain.

The mainstream commercial media has traditionally drawn out ‘stale’ stories in two ways. The first manner highlights minor events that have a loose, indirect connection to the original story. The other approach persistently reports new angles and trivia about the original story.

Consider the case in point of the 12 boys trapped in a cave in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand in July 2018. Events that have no direct connection to the Chiang Rai story feature prominently in the media long after the last boy was rescued on 18 July 2018. For example, on 4 August 2018 BBC News reported that most of these Thai boys attended a monastery service in Thailand. This
article shows photographs of these boys attending this gathering. This depiction has no obvious association with their entrapment in a cave. It is not clear if these boys or their guardians invited the media to attend and take photos (BBC News, 2018). Such follow-up trivia stories may continue in the media weeks, months, years and decades after a single event was revolved.

I propose that there is no legitimate need to connect controversial behaviors and crimes perpetrated by private individuals with their associates who have not been involved in these actions. These associates invariably include public figures such as politicians, entertainers, executives, religious ministers and elite sportspersons. Such behavior is blatantly unfair as it connects a public figure to a ‘disgraceful’ act when there is no evidence that the public figure has taken part in the controversial event and is not known to support the actions of the perpetrator.

I refer to the case study of the arrest and imprisonment of Richard Buttrose in 2010. Mr. Buttrose was charged with dealing cocaine. Richard Buttrose is the nephew of Ita Buttrose. Buttrose’s stellar career as an editor and commentator in magazine and television domains is widely recognized in Australia. She has never been accused of supporting her nephew’s illicit behavior.

The image shown in Figure 4 is indicative of how multiple mainstream media publishers have repeatedly linked the story of Richard Buttrose’s crimes to his aunt, Ita Buttrose.
I suspect that guilt by association stories are tantamount to crimes such as harassment and defamation in certain contexts and jurisdictions. This action may imply guilt merely by association.
Lawful

The need to act in a way that is lawful is arguably among the most important factors that members of the journalism profession should perpetually respect. A major error of judgement in this regard can result in dramatic outcomes. Dire consequences may include the bankrupting of staff and publishers in serious cases of defamation. It could also result in the arrest and imprisonment of these agents if they purposefully or unwittingly break the law.

Table 6 summarizes eight issues that relate to law and order. These topics cover aspects that relate to domestic civilian law and criminal law. This checklist also considers international law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abides by Criminal Laws <em>e.g.</em> harassment.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Abides by Statutory Laws <em>e.g.</em> false advertising.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Abides by Common Laws <em>e.g.</em> property rights.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minimizes exposure to Tortious Laws, <em>e.g.</em> Negligence, Defamation, Passing-off.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Honors contractual obligations.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Abides by International Law.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uses SPAM to disseminate content.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Offers an unsubscribe option for e-mail recipients and other recipients.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5 offers a positive example of the unsubscribe option. This message is routinely attached to newsletters emailed to subscribers of Club India (2018).

Figure 5

Unsubscribe Option: Club India Newsletter

Some jurisdictions have enacted laws that state that digital communiques must include an unsubscribe option. It is standard business practice for organizations to assume that recipients of their mailing list may not wish to receive digital content indefinitely. Most organizations therefore choose to incorporate the unsubscribe option in cases where this inclusion is voluntary. This ensures that their organization is not associated with persistent spamming practices.

Organizational Principles

Most media outlets follow an institutional code of ethics. They may also be required to abide by a code that is enforced by private and statutory accreditation authorities that regulate the
industry. In Australia, the Australian Communications & Media Authority (2018) publicizes an inventory titled “Codes of Practice and Compliance”. This website lists various codes of conduct that governs those who broadcast media content via television and radio outlets.

Figure 6 offers a positive example of a code of standards and ethics published by The Washington Post. This image shows the index of contents that appears on the first online page.

**Figure 6**
The Washington Post: Standards and Ethics

THE WASHINGTON POST STANDARDS AND ETHICS

The Washington Post Standards and Ethics

A. Conflict of interest
B. The reporter’s role
C. Errors
D. Attribubion of sources
E. Plagiarism and credit
F. Fairness
G. Opinion
H. The national and community interest
I. Taste
J. The Post’s principles

Accuracy

The imperative of providing accurate news and media content arguably ranks as the highest priority among most ethical professionals who work in the realm of journalism. Truth and accuracy underpin the credibility of content created/disseminated by individuals and collectives.

Inaccurate media content is invariably attributed to two main causes. The first source is ‘fake news’ – deliberate distortions of messages via lies and misleading conduct. The second origin occurs via unintentional errors. The notion of ‘sloppy journalism’ fits into the second category. Journalists may unwittingly report erroneous content due to numerous factors. For example, they may not check the accuracy of secondary sources by consulting the primary sources. This may occur because they are perpetually time-pressed to produce a large amount of publishable content in a tight-time frame, to maximize newspaper sales and advertising revenues.

Table 7, overleaf, lists 16 guidelines that should aid the ethical journalism professional to create and disseminate accurate media content.
Table 7
Ethical Journalism: Accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quotes sources out-of-context.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides relevant context to support content.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Presents images in a truthful and relevant context.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Uses language in a clear manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uses misleading, deceptive or pejorative language; e.g. reports</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceptional cases and overly generalizes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Discloses/explains research methods.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Triangulates data sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Validates the accuracy of secondary data sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Emphasizes facts and avoids speculation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Explores reasonable counter-arguments.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Distinguishes between news facts and opinions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Uses evidence selectively and ignores data that does not align with</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the desired narrative or outcome.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Manipulates people’s behavior and environmental settings prior to</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taking a photo or video footage to portray a preconceived image and/or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Offers stakeholders the right to reply in the current content or in</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a forthcoming production.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Apologizes for and corrects prior inaccuracies.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Title reflects the substance of the content.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Journalists and publishers have a duty to create content that is correct and reported in a fair context. Some journalists highlight sensational, isolated incidents and falsely extrapolate these outliers to misrepresent patterns of the population.

Most journalists would benefit from studying undergraduate courses in statistical sampling and mixed methods research. Furthermore, completion of such a course should be mandatory in
journalism and communications majors. These principles underpin the construction of evidence-based research. They are core knowledge required of the ethical journalism professional.

Over the past two decades, online media content exceeds those published and disseminated via other outlets such as radio broadcasts, television footage and print media. This partially explains the inclusion of the widely recognized new word ‘clickbait’ into the mainstream lexicon. Online publishers that receive pay-per-click revenue from embedded advertisements that do not appear on the home page may benefit financially from using incomplete, false, misleading or sensational ‘clickbait’ titles to entice readers to open webpages that contain sub-par content.

Figure 7 offers an example of the use of a flawed online news article title.

Figure 7

Clickbait Print Media Titles

https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/437473/Air-pollution-now-leading-cause-of-lung-cancer

Air pollution now leading cause of lung cancer

AIR pollution has been named as the leading cause of lung cancer, the World Health Organisation’s cancer agency said.

By TOM RAWLE

Rawle (2013, NP)
The final sentences of this article severely diminish the impact of air pollution on increasing lung cancer rates. As reported by Rawle (2018, NP) in his conclusion:

*Dr Sharp said it is important to keep the risk of air pollution “in perspective”.*

*She said: “Although air pollution increases the risk of developing lung cancer by a small amount, other things have a much bigger effect on our risk, particularly smoking.”*

This article’s title may mislead the Express’s mass readership (Oxenham, 2018). It is generally accepted that most online readers do not progress much further than the title of the article.

**Transparency**

Media professionals have an ethical obligation to be open and accountable to their stakeholders. For many people, the notion of *secrecy* is synonymous with deception. Privacy, on the other hand, refers to the legitimate needs of persons or collectives to limit sharing their personal details with others on a ‘need-to-know’ basis. Secrecy is often associated with antisocial actors who selfishly guard information that may benefit humankind. It may also be associated with agents concealing knowledge and motives, because of criminal/unethical past behaviors and future intentions.
Table 8 lists eleven ethical guidelines concerning transparency that may inform those who work in media and communications industries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Avoids conflicts-of-interest. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discloses conflicts-of-interest. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discloses primary and secondary sources. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pursues a non-disclosed or biased agenda. *</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employs psychological manipulation (‘psy-ops’). *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Identifies sponsors. *</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Identifies all sources or offers a legitimate reason for not identifying certain contributors. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Uses subtle contextualization of media content and advertisements to secretly promote products. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Discloses all stakeholders that are related to the content creator and publisher such as corporate owners and major financial sponsors. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Avoids covert surveillance unless it is justifiable and is approved by an authority e.g. Editorial Manager. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Media staff disclose their profession and employer to interviewees and stakeholders prior to engaging. *</td>
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</table>

Media professionals have an obligation to avoid and disclose conflicts-of-interest. They should refrain from accepting gifts and secret payments from stakeholders that have an interest in their professional work. Accepting such gifts is suggestive of soliciting/taking bribes for financial gain.

It is difficult to accept that media actors who are ‘owned’ by powerful vested interests act independently. If an online newspaper sources 90% of its commercial revenue from one client – a for-profit corporation, it is fair to assume that this sponsor exerts dominant control over the
publication’s content. Disclosing conflicts-of-interests allows the informed reader to assess actual or perceived bias. They may draw their own conclusions about media content accordingly.

Figure 8 is an example of a print media column that declares a potential conflict-of-interest. This article appears in the opinion editorial of The Age newspaper. This article informs the reader that the author of this opinion piece was a former leader of the Australian Liberal Party.

Figure 8
Declaring a Contributor’s Conflict-of-Interest

He won't admit it, but Turnbull knows Shorten has his number

John Hewson is a professor at the Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, and a former Liberal opposition leader.

There can be no doubt that Malcolm Turnbull feels - even if he won’t readily admit it - that Bill Shorten has clearly bettered him, both in the last election and now in the Longman byelection.

The Age (2018)
This disclosure places Hewitt’s criticism of Australia’s then incumbent Liberal Party Prime Minister in context. Hewitt exited the role of Leader of the Australian Liberal Party less than 12 months after losing the 1993 election and failing to win the office of Prime Minister of Australia.

Safety

Journalists and citizens have an obligation to avoid harming conscious entities: animals, plants and the environment at-large. The environment includes Earth’s atmosphere and beyond.

Journalists should not reveal their sources if disclosure could endanger the health or safety of these collaborators or their family and associates. Journalists need to carefully consider balancing the competing issue of disclosure. Journalists that use pseudonyms and cite anonymous sources generally lack transparency and credibility. Journalists, editors and publishers that cite anonymous/undisclosed sources should offer a fair account of the reasons that justify this action. They should encourage readers to critically evaluate their content based on this lack of disclosure.

Figure 9 below is a media story about the imprisonment of British journalist Tommy Robinson in May 2018 for allegedly committing contempt-of-court. Robinson ostensibly reported details about a court case that was suppressed from the public domain by a British court. The case

www.journalistethics.com
involved offences such as rape and pedophilia. Robinson argues that the British public have a right to know the details of major crimes that are committed in British jurisdictions. Some journalists argue that their conscience as media professionals compels them to inform the public of the perils that exist in their society. Moreover, they have a democratic prerogative to do so.

Figure 9

Journalist Allegedly Ignores Court Suppression Orders


EDL founder Tommy Robinson jailed for contempt of court

Robinson sentenced to 13 months after admitting offence following Facebook broadcast

The Guardian (2018)
Tommy Robinson is no longer in prison. He was released on bail on August 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2018. This journalist is currently ‘free’ from prison confinement.

**Freedom**

The right to free: speech, thought and conscience are important in Western democracies. This imperative is amplified in nations such as America and Canada which enshrine them in legal documents such as constitutional amendments (USA) and a Bill of Rights (Canada).

Table 9 lists five freedoms that ethical journalists should aim to preserve and promote when discharging their professional duties in nations that espouse these human rights protections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encourages critical-thinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uses propaganda to argue the point.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Encourages audiences to draw their own conclusions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Promotes freedom-of-speech and freedom-of-thought.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uses the law to place a voluntary or forced ‘gag-order’ on stakeholders that have an interest in the media content.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several countries, including Austria and Belgium, have enacted criminal laws that ban the expression of holocaust denial views in the public domain. These laws apply to journalists and publishers. These laws are controversial for some because they use socially constructed laws to deny Natural Law, i.e., free speech. The Belgian case study in Figure 10 illustrates the application of this law.

Figure 10
Holocaust Denial: Prosecution in Belgium

Holocaust denier ordered to visit concentration camps and write about them

Hawkins (2013)
In 2013, a Belgian court ordered a former Belgian politician to visit five former Nazi concentration camps. This court order instructed Laurent Louis to publicly acknowledge this experience as judicial punishment for engaging in Holocaust denial in the public domain.

**Acknowledgement**

Intentional plagiarism is one of the most serious accusations that can be levelled at a journalist or author. Intentional plagiarism includes failure to acknowledge that work claimed as one’s own is a partial adaptation of an existing work. Plagiarism is theft; it is dishonesty. A nuanced message that underlies accusations of plagiarism is that the journalist lacks the talent and/or work-ethic required to write respectable content. In other words, they are a lazy and/or talentless fraud.

Table 10 lists three ethical considerations that journalists and publishers should consider with regards to the acknowledgement of sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifies data sources.*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Credits inspirational sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Acknowledges collaborative content creators: writers, producers, proofreaders, editors * et al.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Inextricably overlaps with transparency issues.
Journalists have an ethical obligation to acknowledge sources that inspire their work. Such recognition may appear in a range of locations that directly cross-reference media content. This includes notes on their personal webpage and footnotes at the end of their article.

Figure 11 is a case study illustration. Author Sheryl Sandberg was accused by Malone (2013) of celebrity ‘name dropping’ in the acknowledgements section of her book titled “Lean In”.

**Figure 11**

Acknowledging Inspiration and Assistance

[Link to the New Republic article](https://newrepublic.com/article/112578/what-sheryl-sandbergs-acknowledgments-reveals)
It is inevitable that journalists will likely offend multiple people every time they disseminate their content. It is impossible to be all things to all people. May your independently guided ethical instincts and training aid you to make sound decisions when you encounter scenarios that fall into borderline, black-white-grey categories.

**Independence**

Feedback from proofreaders, critical audiences and editors may enhance the quality of our work. The pinnacle of journalism and authorship are situations where content creators enjoy unfettered control over the essence of material published in their name. Few journalists who contribute to mainstream media outlets can exert this level of influence. Their opinions and evidence-based arguments cannot conflict with the agenda of higher authorities with veto rights. Higher powers include editors, owners, majority shareholders and major corporate sponsors. This is the nature of institutional journalism, especially mainstream corporate journalism.

One way that journalists can publish content independently, and reach large global audiences, is to use online platforms to disseminate written, spoken and artistic content. Two major categories of these platforms include webpages and social network media applications. Specific examples of these platforms include:
• Twitter (social network media)
• Steemit (social network media)
• Ezine articles (webpages)
• Personal websites (webpages)
• Hosted podcasts e.g. DTube; Steemit (webpages)
• Self-managed blogs that publish opinions (webpages).

Figure 12 is a case study of a self-publishing independent journalist who disseminates content via YouTube, public forums and her personal website. This journalist, Deborah Tavares, is based on the West Coast of the United States of America. Her work scrutinizes official government documents available on the public record. She publishes under the identity ‘Stopthecrime.net’.

Figure 12

Stopthecrime.net

Stopthecrime.net (2018)
Tavares discusses topics that are virtually absent in mainstream media. These include issues such as Agenda 21 and the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program and their ostensible connection to lethal, destructive human-made weather patterns. Tavares’s work exists on the fringe of contemporary journalism. Her diligent work is arguably classifiable as an intersection between investigative journalism, muckraking, documentaries, advocacy and alternative media.

**Responsibility**

It is fitting to end the discussion of journalism ethics with an exploration of issues that relate to responsibility. The imperative requirement for media professionals to constantly act in a dutiful manner inextricably overlaps with all issues that concern ethical behavior.

Table 11 explores 13 issues that pertain to responsible behavior. Failure to consider these issues may expose journalists and publishers to accusations of civil and/or criminal culpability.
## Table 11

**Ethical Journalism: Responsibility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Avoids trial-by-media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expert contributors are qualified.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Emphasizes negativity, despair, defeatism.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Duly acknowledges positive aspects of stories.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uses journalism for ‘entertainment only’ purposes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Uses language and style that is appropriate for the intended audience.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Places the community interest and national interest ahead of narrow vested interests such as for-profit corporations, lobby groups and political parties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Respects privacy and confidentiality of stakeholders; only divulges sensitive information when there are exceptional valid reasons such as protecting the national interest (e.g. military defense).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does not glamorize suicide. Reports suicides only when there is a public interest. Provides a 24-hour crisis phone contact when reporting suicides.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Contacts victims of crime or their family/associates when they are experiencing grief in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic encounter.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Obtains parental/guardian consent to interview children and those with intellectual disabilities. Interviews the vulnerable person cautiously and in the presence of a responsible guardian.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Employs ‘checkbook’ journalism – pays informants for providing information.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Publishers maintain an opinion and/or letters to the editor section that encourages open dialogue.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A court of law is the best place to determine the guilt or innocence of those accused of crimes. Journalists should quote the opinions of those who are licensed in their jurisdiction to provide expert commentary on high-stakes matters. For example, a locally registered Midwife has more
authority to discuss the pros and cons of a home birth than a retailer of home-birthing kits who has never trained or qualified as a registered medical officer.

Journalists should use language and style that is appropriate for their intended audience. For example, profane words and sexually explicit discussions are rarely appropriate for content that is aimed towards minors. Rare exceptions exist, such as health education articles authored for responsible adults such as nurse educators who teach sex education courses in high schools.

Journalists who pay sources for their information may bring their profession into disrepute. The motives of people who demand rewards for information that serves the public interest are questionable. Those who engage in ‘checkbook journalism’ should disclose this information.

**Journalism case study: Wikileaks**

Wikileaks is a media publisher based in Sweden. Its Chief Editor, Julian Assange, has been living inside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London as a political asylum refugee since 2012.

Figure 13 captures the home page of Wikileaks’s Twitter account at 2 August 2018.
Figure 13

Wikileaks’s Twitter Account

https://twitter.com/wikileaks?

WikiLeaks Retweeted

theJuice ⬇️ @thejuicemedia · Aug 2

The Australien Government has made an ad for the Department of Home Affairs, and it’s surprisingly honest and informative. #auspol

We’re on Patreon: patreon.com/thejuicemedia

Visit patreon.com

My Police State | Honest Government Ad

The Australien Government has made an ad about it’s plans to turn us into a Police State, and it’s surprisingly honest and informative.

Wikileaks (2018)
Supporters and opponents of Wikileaks hold polemic views about the duty of care that this media publisher exercises when disseminating (*i.e.* leaking) classified government information without the consent of the host government. Proponents of this agency fiercely argue that Wikileaks is a human rights champion because it fearlessly publicizes information that corrupt governments conceal from their citizens who have a right to this data. Critics of Wikileaks argue that the unauthorized publication of classified, illegally obtained government information assists the criminal agenda of outlawed transnational organizations who pose grave dangers to humanity.
Part Four: Ethical Journalism Case Studies

Case study 1: Opinion Piece, IELTS

Re: https://www.ielts.org/

The format of this opinion piece adheres to the open editorial submission guidelines of The New York Times as shown in figure 14.

Figure 14


How to submit an Op-Ed article

The New York Times accepts opinion articles on any topic, for the Op-Ed page (Monday through Saturday), the Sunday Review, our Opinionator and other online series, and the International New York Times (which is edited out of Paris, London and Hong Kong).

Articles typically run from 400 to 1,200 words, but submissions of any length will be considered. All submissions must be original, and exclusive to The Times. We will not consider articles that have already been published, in any form, in print or online. Submissions may be sent by email to opinion@nytimes.com.

Unfortunately, because the number of submissions is so large, we have to pass on much material of value and interest, and cannot reply to all submissions. If you do not hear from us within three business days, please assume that we will not be able to use your article. You should then feel free to offer it elsewhere.

Op-Ed and You

Trish Hall, the former Op-Ed and Sunday Review editor, explains how the page works. She writes: "Anything can be an Op-Ed. We’re not only interested in policy, politics or government. We’re interested in everything, if it’s opinionated and we believe our readers will find it worth reading."


www.journalistethics.com
Rationale

I argue that this illustration is an open-editorial opinion piece as opposed to journalism for two core reasons. This case study does not refer to primary/secondary evidence to support the arguments. The second reason is the lack of impartiality. The author of this piece has publicly called for the IELTS consortium to be prosecuted and sued in the public domain during 2017 and 2018 (Jericho, 2018). He therefore cannot claim to offer an impartial account on the topic of civil and criminal culpability of the global IELTS cartel from a journalist’s perspective.

Linguistic Imperialism and the Old World Order

By J. Jericho

Over the past decade, it has become increasingly evident that the world is transitioning into a new economic world order. This transformation of the global political economy is transpiring on a scale and pace not witnessed since the construction of the Bretton Woods system in the aftermath of WWII. The Brexit referendum on 23 June 2016 is symbolic of the maturation of this momentum towards a just economic order that is based on national sovereignty as opposed to fascist global control exerted by a handful of inbred crime families. This evolution has been gradually unfolding since BRICS members held their first official summit in Yekaterinburg in 2009.

I am hopeful that the consolidation of this righteous new economic order will provide the impetus and political clout required for global leaders to address one of the most blatant mass human
rights atrocities that has persisted on our planet in living memory. Since the late 1980s, the white supremacist International English Language Testing System (IELTS) consortium has engaged in state-sponsored transnational organized crimes on a mass scale. Their agenda aims to further enrich the national sponsors of this corrupt language exam: Britain, Canada and Australia. IELTS’s global scams include human-trafficking, modern slavery, fraud, racketeering and extortion.

Australia, Canada and to a lesser extent Britain have long ranked among the top five destinations for economic migrants. This is due to their advanced economies, sophisticated infrastructure, stable societies and prestige. There is ample opportunity for unconscionable governments of these nations to take advantage of desperate economic migrants from developing countries to enrich their homelands via rigged migration visa scams. Sadly, this dire scenario has been taking place on a colossal scale for decades via systemic IELTS exam fraud, with no end in sight.

In 2016, the CEO of IDP Education Australia, a co-owner of IELTS, was awarded a salary package of AUD 16.4 million. Two thirds of Andrew Barkla’s salary were derived from IELTS sales. One IELTS tests cost "circa" one month’s salary earned by a mid-career Filipino nurse. As evident from this unconscionable oligopoly price gouging, IDP Education has nothing do to with education. Its ruthless, criminal agenda aims to maximize profits, dividends, stock prices and executive salaries.

The majority of IELTS’s human trafficking and fraud crimes are citizens of India and China. It is time for China and India to show leadership. These powerful nations have a moral obligation to
prosecute Australia, Britain and Canada before the International Court of Justice. The ostensible absence of diplomatic intervention by these powerful Asian nations, and others, causes me to question whether the state-sponsors of IELTS’s crimes covertly offer other nations’ leaders bribes and/or threats in return for these nations looking the other way. Australia is the largest supplier of uranium to India. It is the largest supplier of iron ore to China.

In recent years, the number of anti IELTS protest websites continues to grow exponentially. The number of complaints about IELTS posted on blog sites, YouTube, chat forums and personal websites number in the hundreds of thousands. This is a conservative estimate. This online truth revolution makes it near-impossible for national stakeholders to bury their head in the sand and hope that this massive injustice will eventually go away. It will not. This morbidly obese elephant in the sewer must be euthanized – one way or another.

I propose that the Canadian and Australian Governments offer IELTS’s fraud victims permanent residency visas. Most victims each spent hundreds-of-thousands of dollars on tuition fees, as international students, and IELTS exam fees to ‘purchase’ residency visas that were falsely advertised by Canada and Australia as the reward that awaits eligible international students who graduate in their nations. These nations use IELTS as their proxy to expel most international students from their country via examiner fraud after they graduate and are no longer welcome.

The voluntary issuance of residency visas to circa one million people who have been defrauded by IELTS by the Morrison, May and Trudeau Governments, and their predecessors, offers these
nations a face-saving way out of this quagmire. This solution will also save each nation tens of billions of dollars in compensation which they are obligated to pay to the many people whose life-course has been destroyed by sadistic state-sponsored trickery.

I foresee that Britain, Canada and Australia will adopt this cash preserving, restorative justice option to circumnavigate the International Court of Justice costly solution. After all, when it comes to IELTS, it has always been about the money.

Figure 15
Criticism of IELTS in the Not-for-profit Semi-mainstream Media

Special Broadcasting Service (2017)
On June 21st this year, ABC announced that it had re-signed the core cast of *Roseanne* for a new series titled *The Conners*. The show is a spinoff of the *Roseanne* reboot, minus its main star, Roseanne Barr.

ABC announced on May 29th that it was not resigning Barr for an 11th season of *Roseanne*. This decision was in response to her infamous tweet that ostensibly makes racists comments about former Obama official Valerie Jarratt. Barr has since candidly apologized for her tweet via multiple public forums including Twitter, YouTube and mainstream television. She vehemently denies that she or her tweet are racist. Barr claims that she has been misrepresented by the mainstream media who feel threatened by her pro Trump public comments.

All core cast members from the *Roseanne* reboot have signed up for first season of *The Conners*. These actors include TV veterans Laurie Metcalfe, John Goodman, Sarah Gilbert as well as Michael Fishman and Lecy Goranson. ABC has publicized a premiere date of Tuesday, October 16 in the mid-evening timeslot.

Time will tell if *The Conners* can achieve the stellar ratings realized by the tenth season of *Roseanne*. This reboot was ranked number one in its timeslot for all nine episodes. It recorded peak ratings of 27.3 million viewers for its premiere.
I am skeptical that *The Conners* can reach the minimum ratings of *Roseanne* Season 10, which levelled out at 13.5 million viewers. Imagine *I Dream of Jeannie* rebooted without a Jeannie or Barbara Eden. What would be the point of a reboot of *Different Strokes*, minus Arnold Jackson?

The original *Roseanne* sitcom series screened on network television from 1988 to 1997. It achieved the number one slot in 1989, peaking at 32.7 million viewers during its fourth season.

**Commentary**

The *Roseanne* article aligns more with journalism than the IELTS open-ed article. The essence of this story concerns a specific contemporary development. The *Roseanne* article contains twelve facts and one core opinion. I speculate that *The Conners* is unlikely to reach 13.5 million viewers.

The image overleaf completes a FLOATSFAIR template for the *Roseanne* article. May you reflect on these categorizations and independently decide if you agree with these selections. The insertion of not applicable (n/a) responses indicates that not all criteria are relevant to all journalistic content. There are no conflicts-of-interest, contributors, expert commentators or known inaccuracies associated with this draft article. This piece does not cite sources or offer stakeholders the right to reply. This announcement by ABC is common public knowledge. It has been reported by numerous (100+) independent, established television and print media outlets.
## Ethical Journalism Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Fairness.</strong> Uses hateful or degrading speech</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploits disempowered persons/groups</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Lawful.</strong> Abides by civil and statutory laws</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Organization’s publication charter is adhered to</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Accuracy.</strong> Provides relevant context</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses misleading or deceptive language</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasizes facts and avoids speculation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulates and validates data sources</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explores reasonable counter arguments</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offers stakeholders the right to reply</td>
<td>n/a - none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title reflects the substance of the content</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apologizes for and corrects prior inaccuracies</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Transparency.</strong> Discloses conflicts-of-interest</td>
<td>n/a - none</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discloses primary and secondary sources</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursues a non-disclosed or biased agenda</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employs psychological manipulation (‘psy-ops’)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Safety and health of stakeholders are respected</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Freedom of speech and thought is promoted</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Acknowledgement.</strong> Recognition of contributors</td>
<td>n/a - none</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Independence.</strong> Content reflects author's opinion</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. <strong>Responsibility.</strong> Expert contributors are qualified</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasizes negativity, despair, defeatism</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signed: Journalist/s**

[Signature]

[Signature]

**Approved: Editor/s**

[Signature]

[Signature]

www.journalistethics.com
Part Five: Ethical Journalists Collaboration Project

The Ethical Journalism Collaboration Project (EJCP) offers a dedicated online space where current and aspiring journalists can exchange knowledge, ideas and support. For example, authors can arrange reciprocal proofreading support from likeminded collaborators.

This webspace aims to offer the following free services:

- Public and private chat boards that allow participants to exchange contact details;
- A file depository upload that allows participants to exchange files.

This space is subject to minimal moderation. Content is only modified in extreme cases, such as the requirement to comply with American law. The website is hosted in the United States of America. This nation enshrines strong protections for free speech in its constitution and laws. *The Sullivan Case (1964)* further protects free speech for America’s journalists.

This forum went live during August 2018. This author is the inaugural moderator.

https://journalistethics.com

**Journalist Ethics**

This space aids ethical media professionals to exchange information.

Discussion boards are organized by content format:

Television; Public; Digital; Art; Print;
Radio; Photography; Social Networks.
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Please email Jay Jericho if you would like to advertise your not-for-profit media-related organization in this space for free of charge.

jay@journalistethics.com
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Appendix: Ethical Journalism Templates

Annex 1

**Ethical Journalism: Fairness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>1. Uses hateful or degrading speech.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exploits disempowered persons/groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Obtains permission to quote sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Respects the dignity of others; avoids undue humiliation, shaming and embarrassment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Avoids pigeon-holing people by mentioning their residential suburb, occupation, gender, age etc. when this is not relevant to the issues reported.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Allows stories that are resolved to rest-in-peace.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Content connects crimes and controversial actions of private citizens to their friends, family and associates, when there is no known connection to these other parties.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex 2

**Ethical Journalism: Legal Compliance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abides by Criminal Laws <em>e.g.</em> harassment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Abides by Statutory Laws <em>e.g.</em> false advertising.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Abides by Common Laws <em>e.g.</em> property rights.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minimizes exposure to Tortious Laws, <em>e.g.</em> Negligence, Defamation, Passing-off.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Honors contractual obligations.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Abides by International Law.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uses SPAM to disseminate content.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Offers an unsubscribe option for e-mail recipients and other recipients.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3

Ethical Journalism: Accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quotes sources out-of-context.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides relevant context to support content.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Presents images in a truthful and relevant context.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Uses language in a clear manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uses misleading, deceptive or pejorative language; e.g. reports exceptional cases and overly generalizes.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Discloses/explains research methods.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Triangulates data sources.</td>
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<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Validates the accuracy of secondary data sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Emphasizes facts and avoids speculation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Explores reasonable counter-arguments.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Distinguishes between news facts and opinions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Uses evidence selectively and ignores data that does not align with the desired narrative or outcome.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Manipulates people’s behavior and environmental settings prior to taking a photo or video footage to portray a preconceived image and/or narrative.</td>
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<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Offers stakeholders the right to reply in the current content or in a forthcoming production.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Apologizes for and corrects prior inaccuracies.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Title reflects the substance of the content.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 4

### Ethical Journalism: Transparency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Avoids conflicts-of-interest.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discloses conflicts-of-interest.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discloses primary and secondary sources.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pursues a non-disclosed or biased agenda.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Employs psychological manipulation ('psy-ops').</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Identifies sponsors.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Identifies all sources or offers a legitimate reason for not identifying certain contributors.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Uses subtle contextualization of media content and advertisements to secretly promote products.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Discloses all stakeholders that are related to the content creator and publisher such as corporate owners and major financial sponsors.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Avoids covert surveillance unless it is justifiable and is approved by an authority e.g. Editorial Manager.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Media staff disclose their profession and employer to interviewees and stakeholders prior to engaging.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Annex 5

### Ethical Journalism: Freedom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encourages critical-thinking.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uses propaganda to argue the point.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Encourages audiences to draw their own conclusions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Promotes freedom-of-speech and freedom-of-thought.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uses the law to place a voluntary or forced ‘gag-order’ on stakeholders that have an interest in the media content.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Annex 6

## Ethical Journalism: Acknowledgement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifies data sources.*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Credits inspirational sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Acknowledges collaborative content creators: writers, producers, proofreaders, editors *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Annex 7

## Ethical Journalism: Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Avoids trial-by-media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expert contributors are qualified.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Emphasizes negativity, despair, defeatism.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Duly acknowledges positive aspects of stories.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Uses journalism for ‘entertainment only’ purposes.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Uses language and style that is appropriate for the intended audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Places the community interest and national interest ahead of narrow vested interests such as for-profit corporations, lobby groups and political parties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Respects privacy and confidentiality of stakeholders; only divulges sensitive information when there are exceptional valid reasons such as protecting the national interest (e.g. military defense).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Does not glamorize suicide. Reports suicides only when there is a public interest. Provides a 24-hour crisis phone contact when reporting suicides.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Contacts victims of crime or their family/associates when they are experiencing grief in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic encounter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Obtains parental/guardian consent to interview children and those with intellectual disabilities. Interviews the vulnerable person cautiously and in the presence of a responsible guardian.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Publishers maintain an opinion and/or letters to the editor section that encourages open dialogue.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ethical Journalism Template

1. **Fair.** Uses hateful or degrading speech
   Exploits disempowered persons/groups

2. **Lawful.** Abides by civil and statutory laws

3. **Organization’s publication charter is adhered to**

4. **Accuracy.** Provides relevant context
   Uses misleading or deceptive language
   Emphasizes facts and avoids speculation
   Triangulates and validates data sources
   Explores reasonable counter arguments
   Offers stakeholders the right to reply
   Title reflects the substance of the content
   Apologizes for and corrects prior inaccuracies

5. **Transparency.** Discloses conflicts-of-interest
   Discloses primary and secondary sources
   Pursues a non-disclosed or biased agenda
   Employs psychological manipulation (‘psy-ops’)

6. **Safety and health of stakeholders are respected**

7. **Freedom of speech and thought is promoted**

8. **Acknowledgement.** Recognition of contributors

9. **Independence.** Content reflects author’s opinion

10. **Responsibility.** Expert contributors are qualified
    Emphasizes negativity, despair, defeatism

Signed: Journalist/s

Approved: Editor/s

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