PREFACE

In an era of major changes in the field of information, the public interest and the Principle of Credibility are highlighted as the cornerstones of journalism.

No matter how much the Press environment changes, the return to the duty towards the truth and ethics is a compass, for Media and journalists alike, for a better future. Transparency and accountability guarantee the freedom of the Press and, along with neutrality, support the sought after Media credibility.

Nowadays, expectations for digital Media are set high, and the road to the bloom of the Press industry is paved with self-regulation.

In this spirit, a framework of rules ensuring virtuous competition is of high value.

The Principles and Values of journalism add to the quality characteristics necessary for the society, to show its trust, for the State, to recognize the ethical advantage of New Media, as well as for the market, to include quality specifications in its rules.

The main aim of the present Self Commitment Framework and the Code of Conduct in Publishing is the comprehension of the Journalism Code of Ethics, the best practices and Publishing Rules followed by the largest online Media in the world.

Shareholders and those involved in publishing organizations, along with journalists, share the common interest of integrity and credibility of their Media.

It is common knowledge that owners, publishers and journalists have conscience of the responsibility they bear towards the public and their obligation to safeguard the validity of the Press. They comprehend their mission as journalists, are fully aware and conscious of it, and remain unaffected by personal interests and motives unrelated to this purpose.

The fundamental principles of journalism reflect the professional ethics of the Press. This includes the duty of preserving the validity of the Press and defending the freedom of the Press in the framework of the Constitution and the compliant laws.

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In two publications (*selfregulation longform-handbook*), it includes definitions and suggested practices for each online medium. This procedure is of evolving nature, and the publishing rules will be continually renewed.

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THE DUTY TOWARDS THE PUBLIC

Validity and Accuracy

The accuracy and the validity of news constitute two fundamental elements for the Media, since they are directly based on their credibility and the trust of the public.

The press associations of the Online Publishers Association (OPA) have composed this regulatory framework, based on which, journalists should cite information accurately, after a cross-check has been conducted.

There are two ways in which the validity of the information provided by a source can be ensured:

A) DOCUMENTATION

The question posed by our journalists in their "sources" is how they got to know the information they are citing, and after their source specifies the way, then it is cited along with the information itself.

B) CONFIRMATION AND RECORD KEEPING

Our journalists evaluate their sources based on their previous credibility and whether they could actually come to knowledge of the information in question.

Ensuring accuracy and validity of news is even more challenging in the era of digital journalism.

Journalists share their story with their source, before its publication, only when they lack specialization in a topic and ask for verification of their report by the "specialist". E.g. a scientific announcement.

Dissemination of unverified information

The Media should avoid frequent dissemination of rumors.

There is room for unverified information only in the following cases:

1. Outsourcing a group of volunteers. A journalist could turn to their audience for help in verifying information. This technique may turn out to be useful, but great attention should be paid so as to not disseminate malicious information or confuse readers regarding what is verified and what is not.
2. In the case where rumors are circulated and the audience expects to hear more on them. If the journalist verifies that a widespread rumor is true, they will contribute to accurate information. On the contrary, if they deduce that the rumor is not true, they will essentially fulfill a social function by proving it false.
3. In the case of dissemination of information from social media posts (Facebook, Twitter etc.), the journalist ought to cross-check whether the source used is a valid account. See related chapter on Social media and news.

Practices

- The journalist ought to cross-check the news from at least two sources.
- The validity of the information can be ensured, based on the source's previous credibility.

- The reporter is obliged to repeatedly ask their source how they came to know a piece of information, and to report it.
- In case there is reference to unverified, but crucial information, they ought to mention the reason of the publication and that it is not completely cross-checked.
- It is considered sensible for the journalist to avoid quoting or interpreting someone else's words, and in case this happens, to do so with care and as much precision as possible.

Especially in the case of claims made by a propaganda machine - which in any case does not constitute a main news piece by itself - the journalist ought to conduct further research in order to ensure the accuracy and the validity of the information conveyed.

- Record keeping, in the form of documents and videos from interviews and events, ensures the validity of news. Accuracy and validity of news constitute the two fundamental elements for the Media, since they are directly based on their credibility and the trust of the public.

A journalist ought:

- Not to characterize a whole group of people based on information from members of said group.
- Not to consider the "public opinion", or what is conveyed from others, facts.
- Not to let deadlines be the cause of a lower accuracy level.
- To make sure that headlines and references are as accurate as the topic itself. This applies to the correct spelling of names and terms as well.
- To avoid conveying the words of someone else, or giving voice to people that are not honest and reliable. In the case of people that "hand out" news information -especially politicians- this might be impossible to avoid. In that case, the topic should be balanced out by providing the precise information available (See article "Sources, credibility and interpretation").

Corrections

Each of our Organizations has a specific policy regarding the correction of previously published reports. That way it is ensured that they are valid, and the Media does not repeat a mistake by using non cross-checked material from its archive.

It goes without saying that our Media respect the spelling, syntax and article editing rules.

Balance and impartiality

Our journalist ought to always make an effort to be balanced and free from prejudices. Despite the fact that there are many different forms of journalism (text, TV, online), honesty and integrity are common among them. Other important elements are accuracy, independence and freedom from biases and stereotypes. In an era of rapidly increasing doubt, and perhaps justified skepticism of the audience regarding the impartiality of the Media, as well as the integrity of journalists, it is of utmost necessity τo maintain the highest standards possible in order to safeguard the values of journalism and to protect it from anything harmful to the trust of its audience. In this direction, balance and impartiality constitute values widely used in the same context, regarding ethics in journalism.

TO THE POINT

An opposing point of view is not weaker than the one considered right. Its right to be heard is equal. Any comment should be subjected to self-restraint. Honesty is of course sought after, justice comes first, though. If there is a lack of such balance, any news conveyed this way risks being classified as propaganda! Comment is free, but facts are sacred, as C. P. Scott famously wrote on 1921 in the newspaper Manchester Guardian.

The journalist's duty is, therefore, to balance out the forces of any personal, or widely accepted and considered to be right, opinion, with the accurately reported news.

To that end, our Media encourage strict impartiality. However hard this may be, Media should always convey the truth while remaining fair. It cannot distort or fabricate facts. In any case, though, it seeks pluralism -in the form of different opinions- on the presented topic. The subject of the topic reflects objectively the range of perceptions and the amount of opinions in a society.

Stories should be impartial, meaning that they should present every opinion and conflicting side there is.

Impartiality means that a journalist makes a real effort towards an accurate and truthful report, and is not biased in a case, in a way that could lead the audience to reach the conclusion desired by the journalist.

Practices

- Journalists ought to provide the source of any comment or view, even if their own opinion is widely accepted.
- They make efforts to contact people they refer to, so as to have their commentary.
- Our Media mention the efforts made in order for the journalists to come into contact with people expected to leave a comment.
- If the Media for which a journalist is employed do not endorse an objective model of journalism, and recognize their bias towards a specific political or social point of view, it does not mean they completely abandon balance as well. Even in this case, they have some responsibilities.
- Presenting only one side does not serve common interests.
- The influence of one-sided news dissemination, in a specific space, for a specific audience, eventually forces the journalist to take under consideration the other side in an argument.

CONCLUSION:

One way to confirm the balance rate is to follow the reactions of Media users. Comments on the content can help determine any cover-ups. Clearly, comment sections may get flooded with meaningless comments, but yet again, the commentators' reactions might alert us on time about questionable balance issues.

What would be ideal and fair, of course, would be to at least mention both opposing sides, even if the reader is aware of the writer's specific opinion. In any case, the citizens' right to pluralist and completed information is an obligation for journalists and Media alike.

Privacy

Publishing elements of a person's private life raises many moral issues. Private life is not the same as it used to be. Considering the number of publications – posts in publicly accessible channels, such as the Social Media, the boundaries between public and private communication are open to interpretation.

Occasionally, the “breach” of someone's personal life, and the degree in which that happens, is derived from what expectation the person in question has of privacy.

For example, celebrities know that loss of privacy is the price they have to pay for fame. Respectively, politicians and other public officers know that their decisions are under public scrutiny, and with this in mind, they often make decisions accordingly. Nevertheless, both sides often complain about the high coverage of their personal lives.

When our journalists are confronted with a powerful revelation, they must have in mind that this could potentially cause discomfort. They should be humble regarding their power to make the revelation. However, the strong interest in the lives of celebrities and the high public “bet” on the lives of the “powerful” leads to more aggressive reports-articles on these people.

Reporters draw the line between cases of “spying” a celebrity in a private space (e.g. in their homes), and cases where the celebrity knows they might be visible, e.g. when standing on a window while knowing that photographers are outside, or cases where it is expected that there will be no complete privacy (in an event with 1000 guests).

When it comes to the personal life of someone that is not of common interest, journalists must carefully think through the value a revelation might have, and the damage it might cause.

In most cases, common people attract the journalists' attention because they are somehow connected to a topic of high interest, such as a crime.

The advent of Social Media rendered once private conversations between citizens, accessible to journalists, among others. These conversations might include news of journalistic interest, especially if they reflect a “hot” public trend. However, isolating certain comments from certain people could raise issues.

There is an impression that anything that is posted publicly is up for publication, as anything discussed in a public space cannot be expected to remain secret. However, what is public and what can be published are two different things, and publication is an intentional action that must be treated with caution.

The definition of “public” on the Internet is unclear. A tweet or a Facebook post can be visible to ten, hundred, or thousand people.

Besides, it is crucial to take under consideration the fact that a person's online identity is hard to verify. Someone can claim they are 30 years old, and only be 16.

Practices

- It is suggested that "intrusion" into someone's private life be avoided, unless it is clearly of public interest. Generally, the degree of permeation in a person's private life must be justified by the gravity of the story and the public good that can possibly occur through this publication.
- Attention should be paid when publishing identification details, such as exact addresses, since this could put at risk the safety of the people that have become a topic on the Media.
- The Mass Media should not take photos of people in private spaces without their consent.
- The name of a suspect should not be published until they are connected with a crime by the Authorities.
- Special care should be taken regarding publicity of children or teenagers, that are still under the care of their parents.
- A good practice is to inform the interviewee about the dissemination of the story and their pictures, as well as how long they will be available in archives.
- It is suggested to contact in advance the person whose information will be published, before anything concerning them becomes public.

Children: Coverage, pictures and interviews

Child protection is a primary duty for journalists and our Media, especially when the coverage of the topic at hand involves, directly or indirectly, children.

Coverage of topics involving children, whether directly or indirectly, always requires special treatment. More specifically, attention and discretion are required, even more so when journalists have to handle cases of children that are accused of crimes, are victims of violence, or are eye witnesses.

The Codes of Ethics of Journalists have certain provisions, which enforce the Media to respect on the highest degree the rights of underage people and to avoid exposing children to the public eye.

There are laws restricting picture taking or public exposure of children. The issue, however, is, first and foremost, moral. Based on international conventions, this moral factor surpasses, in any case, any need to inform the public. At the same time, legal issues are raised regarding the protection of children victims.

For example, a guardian might give their permission to take pictures of a child that has fallen victim to violence, physical or sexual. It is not, however, moral to publish said pictures, even if parental permission has been granted.

Even if the victim's testimony is important and can reveal significant information about the case, publishing pictures of underage or teenage people still constitutes

a serious violation of child protection rights, since the moral factor, in this case, is above public interest (victim protection).
Instead, it is preferable – always on the orders of the prosecutor- to publish pictures of the perpetrator, not just for child protection, but also for the information of the public and the protection of public interest.
Children – crime victims and eye witnesses
Our Media respect the request of anonymity of a child that has fallen victim of a criminal act, or a child that has witnessed a crime, even if their names have already been published, on the competent court's ruling. The name is used only if a child is exposed to publicity through interviews, or if the parent publicly names the child.
Our Media make every effort possible so as to obtain parental consent. When an exceptional occurrence takes place, such as panic conditions in a school, it is usually impossible for a journalist to receive parental consent. Nonetheless, issues of morality are raised again, since child protection always comes above all.
Practices

- Our Press Organizations have specific rules of anonymity regarding children.
- In stories about illegal acts of children, or problems marginalized children face, maintaining anonymity makes even more sense.
- Even if an incident includes the name and the age of a child, it is taken under consideration whether it is absolutely necessary to mention in the story, or in a picture, the place where the child resides.
- Our photographers and journalists ought to be careful regarding how and where they take pictures or videos of young people.
- For the publication of a picture, the opinion of the guardians and the possible consequences on the child should be taken under consideration.
- Regarding posts an underage person publishes online, such as tweets, blogs, Facebook statuses and other updates, balance, regarding the value of the news and any possible damage this might cause, is crucial.
- Our Mass Media do not reveal, directly or indirectly, the identity of children under 16 years old that are witnesses or accused in cases of offenses, especially sexual ones.
- Our journalists, as a rule, do not interview or take pictures of children under 16 years old regarding topics related to their personal state or well-being, without the consent of their parents or other adult they are in the care of (guardian).
- Mass Media and our journalists are obliged to abide by the provisions of the International Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child.

Interactive platforms

Interactive publications that use multimedia (hereafter: interactives), regard choices that at first glance might present no particular moral consequences. Their potential, though, which is their ability to offer live and fascinating communication, makes the careful examination of the way they are constructed indispensable.
The ideal solution is the combination of interactive elements best fitted for the event or the news in a story. The basic principle of interactivity must be: “to tell the truth”. Telling the truth,

though, can be done in many ways.

CONTENT

Many interactives are non-linear, thus allowing the users to enter and navigate them in multiple ways. As a result, the users might lose track of the broader significance of the story, or those elements necessary to understand it. The creators of the interactives should contemplate which kinds of truth they want the users to gain, while they navigate any possible path through the story. They must ensure that any relation between parts of the presentation is preserved through time, even during archiving.

COMPREHENSIVENESS

An element included in the principle "to tell the truth", is "to be able to recognize different voices in all legitimate opinions regarding a topic". The nature of certain elements (sound, image, video), that accompany multimedia stories, makes the fulfillment of this principle a challenge. A visual story, such as a slideshow or an audio file, works better when focusing closely on a topic, a character, or a location. This does not necessarily constitute a problem – many great stories have close focus – but including different points of view in stories with broader topics is important.

DEGREE OF COMPREHENSION

The creators of interactive stories reinforce the users' knowledge through the kind of interactive elements they add in them. This means that, for example, the user is given the choice to click on a map to find information on education, elections or criminality. These elements should be visible, enticing, and easy to use. Users should not have to put in a lot of effort to access them, neither should they be flooded with useless information. Not using such elements, or choosing too complicated ones, is not considered unethical, but limits the amount of truth users can gain from the story.

AVOIDING DISTORTIONS

Whatever is considered "a rough estimate/speculation", should be defined as such when it is used.

Practices

- Interactives should be organized and internally connected in such a way, so as to enable their users to comprehend the main points of the story.
- The connection between the parts of an interactive presentation must be maintained, even when the story has been archived.
- The diversity of opinions should be included in multimedia presentations,

combined with the capacity of some forms, like video, to offer at the same time the viewpoint of an individual opinion.

- Interactive elements should be visible to users, enticing and easy to use.
- Reproductions of the events through infographics or animation – VR should reflect reality. If this reproduction goes further than what is known and reaches dramatization, speculation or fiction, this should be made clear to the user.

Online commentary

The most interactive action of visitors in digital Media is commenting and reviewing not only concerning current events, but also regarding easier to digest and entertaining topics. Our journalism associations define in the Terms of Use of their websites whether they will give readers the ability to comment, under which conditions, and in which case they will exclude readers from the public discussion forum.
Generally, Mass Media, by giving the audience a “voice”, reinforce transparency and accountability, and eventually, the audience's commitment and loyalty.
It is of utmost importance to clarify that the same rules apply to the space given to readers for comments that apply to journalists, editors on editorials, or columnists.
The best way to avoid hateful, abusive or other comments of that nature, is a moderator that can keep commentators in order, by obliging them to adopt a more civil tone, in accordance with the way in which the Association perceives a public discussion forum.
In any case, live commenting is a modern forum for opinion exchanges that gives the audience a voice and is important for the future of journalism. However, every Media defines its own context in the Terms of Use.

Practices

- Online commenting gives voice to users-visitors.
- It is important to respect the red line, which the readers must not pass.
- The presence of a moderator is indispensable.
- Comments including racist characterizations of any kind do not contribute to the public discussion and their use is discouraged.
- Giving readers a “voice” is a modern practice, important for the future of journalism.

A disclaimer is required in the Terms of Use, defining in advance the accepted behavior regarding online commenting on topics, and more specifically, journalistic topics.

Fabricated news & misleading titles

Since it is unthinkable to fabricate news, a clickbait title should be worded with care, so as to ensure it is reflecting reality.
For that matter, there should be nothing in a journalistic topic that is fabricated, a figment of the journalist's imagination (title, text, picture, graphics, sound and video).
Our journalists sign all of their stories. When an author does not sign their article, then either the Media does, or the unsigned article is considered to bear the management's signature. At any rate, journalists must not use nicknames, complex characters or fictional names, ages, locations and dates. They must not stage, nor forge, events for the camera or the microphone,

and they must not use sound effects, nor should they replace video or audio from a topic A to a topic B. Journalists must not “steal” audio, by adding sound effects to fabricate an event. Particular attention should be paid to checking the validity of articles on the web, so as not to fall into the trap of reproducing false information. Nowadays, the number of hoaxes that are solely created to trap users or valid Media is extremely high.

MANAGING SOURCES

Confidential Sources

The editors of each of our journalism Organizations ought to discuss their standards with their employees, as well as to make efforts to achieve a certain degree of consistency concerning how and why the journalists of the Organization can grant a source confidentiality.
Usually, among journalists, and especially among their critics, the term used for sources left unnamed is “anonymous sources”, or an explanation is provided on the article as to why the source asked to remain “anonymous”. This term, though, can be misleading, or even inaccurate, in ways that undermine the credibility of the journalism Organization. The truth is that few news reports, if any, use information from truly anonymous sources: i.e. people whose identities are unknown to the journalist and the Organization alike.

Practices

If journalists intend to publish a story, they can use the confidential information as a starting point to find reliable sources, whether they speak officially, or off the record, in order to base their story on them.
Every small step our journalist makes towards reassuring the reader or the user that they have made an effort to use reliable sources is an important step. Using terms such as “confidential”, “anonymous”, or “unknown sources” could possibly harm the reliability of the journalist, and under no circumstances does it render them accurate as to what they convey. Therefore, the use of such terms must be avoided.
Due to the journalists' commitment to their sources regarding confidentiality, they often cannot verify their reliability through other sources.
Sometimes, though, a confidential source can put the journalist in touch with a reliable source of their own, so that the latter can guarantee the former's reliability.
On other occasions, a source trusted by the journalist might suggest they get in touch with a third person that demands confidentiality, i.e. a source that asks to remain anonymous.

WHEN TO GRANT A SOURCE CONFIDENTIALITY

Before granting a source confidentiality, a journalist must first discuss in detail the reasons why the source avoids taking official responsibility of their claims, which is exactly what happens when the journalist does not name them.
It is recommended that our journalists explain to their sources that their texts and their sources gain credibility when their names are used in them. They should also try to comprehend in depth the motives behind the source's wish to reveal information.

Sometimes, such discussion may reveal that the source is not certain enough of what they convey, so as to officially support their statements. This is something the journalist must be aware of. Perhaps the source might not share firsthand information, thus, in that case, the journalist should ask for their help, so as to get in touch with the original source, or the origin of the information.

The journalist can create a relationship of trust with the source, by stating they do not use secondhand sources, and by asking them to help by revealing or guiding towards the original source.

If the reason why the source asks for confidentiality is groundless, the journalist ought to press the source and judge whether they can persuade them to speak officially. It is suggested that journalists be willing to abandon a source, if the reason they demand confidentiality for is so baseless that doubts of their credibility are raised.

The journalist may ask the source if there is anyone else that may possess that information, or whether there are any related documents. If the sources provides them with the documents, there is no need to ever name the source, or to use an anonymous source: they can simply cite the documents.

There are, yet, two criteria the journalist should bear in mind when using these documents: firstly, if the source had legal access to them or if they are the product of theft, and secondly, in what degree they are valid.

If another person possesses the same information, the journalist may attempt finding out whether that person wishes speaking openly and officially. If a person is the only source of information regarding a certain news piece, then the journalist may have more reasons to grant them confidentiality.

The more important the information, the more willing the journalist to reach an agreement with the source. If the information is not that valuable, the journalist may adopt one of the following two approaches:

1. They may tell the source they do not wish to discuss with them, unless they are willing to make an official statement (on the record).
2. They may tell the source they would like to hear the information for background reasons, but that it is unlikely that they use it without a name available. This might help in understanding the topic better, or it might lead to another source.

Journalists can never have a clear view of the information, before they grant the source conveying it confidentiality. Sometimes, they can adopt approach 1 during the interview, stating that if things reach a certain point, they do no longer wish to discuss off the record. In that case, it is possible to resort to use approach 2, thanking the source, but stating that they might not use that information, unless they can add a name to it.

Information from anonymous sources has a value, if it is genuine. If a source provides the journalist with information, then they can search for documents related to it, or verify it through other sources. The journalist may describe how the source knows that specific information, that way adding to the credibility of the received information. Regardless of the source, the information will be valuable.

However, the value of an opinion is completely dependent on the person expressing it. A person that criticizes others and does not publicly support their opinion shows cowardice, and journalists should not honor such opinions by publishing them.

Journalists should be more willing to grant confidentiality to a source they approached themselves, and hesitates talking to them, than to a source that approached them with information they believe they will publish.

When beginning a discussion, journalists should try to persuade the source to help with the story. Confidentiality is a technique they can use to initiate the conversation. They may immediately understand the reasons behind the source's reluctance to be revealed. They may manage to persuade the person to make an official statement (on the record) during the whole interview or during a part of it, if they use confidentiality to begin the discussion and give themselves time to win the source's trust.

However, when a source approaches them with information, and wishes to remain anonymous, journalists should then realize they are being deceived. In many cases, the source approaching them is not a real source, but a pawn, or wants to make them pawns. This does not mean they must not grant them confidentiality.

The source may provide them with valuable information, which they may confirm elsewhere. A potential approach, when having to do with a very eager source that on their own initiative approaches them and begins a conversation, is to grant confidentiality concerning the discussion, but clarifying that they will probably not publish the information, unless the person makes an official statement of if they can verify the information independently.

It is suggested that journalists react and directly ask that person why they do not want to be revealed, if they are so eager to see the information they give published.

Journalists should be more willing to grant confidentiality to a vulnerable source than to a more powerful one. They should, nonetheless, bear in mind that power and vulnerability are relative. There are officials that abuse their power, by leaking undisclosed information for political purposes. Journalists have been very tolerant with many powerful people trying to avoid their accountability and achieve their purpose, hidden behind journalists.

It may be preferable for journalists to lose some reports than to find themselves in this kind of unbalanced, dependency relationships. It is suggested that they bear in mind that some of the information received by such sources may be false or misleading, since the lack of accountability allows them to leak fragmented or false information.

If the story a journalist publishes is within the law's jurisdiction, or if the State does not have a law that shields the right to publication in that case, then they should consider whether police or judicial authorities will attempt to pressure them into revealing their source.

In that exact moment, the journalist must decide whether that story, the information provided by the source, and the source itself, are so valuable that they can risk finding themselves defendant in court. The journalist should bear in mind that this is something to reckon before granting confidentiality, and not just before publishing their story.

It should, however, be noted that not all stories based on confidential sources pose a risk of the journalist finding themselves in court. Many of them, in fact, have no risk at all.
If a journalist promises confidentiality in a source, especially one that could potentially attract the attention of the police authorities or the secret services, they should consider whether they can keep that promise.
Relationships between journalists and their sources are built on trust. The source should trust the journalist, so that they can understand the story and convey it in an accurate and fair manner. The journalist should trust that the source tells them the truth.

TRUST IN A SOURCE DEPENDS ON THREE FACTORS:

- The evaluation regarding the source's personal credibility.
- The research the journalist has conducted as to how the source knows what they claim they know. A reliable source can always be wrong or remember something false. "How do you know that?" and "How else do you know that?" are the most important questions in journalism and are essential, in order for the journalist to pose the right question every time they are confronted with anonymous sources.
- The journalist's ability to verify all the events narrated by the source. It is not necessary to transform their demand for verification with documents and other evidence into doubt of the source's honesty. Anything verifiable through other sources is something a journalist does not need to place all of their hopes in one source for, and something that can hardly lead back to that source.

Sometimes, the journalist may be unable to verify all the facts mentioned by a source. If it is possible to verify some of them, though, their trust of the source's honesty and accuracy will grow. Many stories based on anonymous sources are stories that, sooner or later, will be published anyway.
It is possible that a story will be eventually published by the majority of the Media, in most cases, unless the journalist and/or the Organization they are employed in decide to keep a hard stance against anonymous sources in general. The goal each time is not a short-lived success, but the message conveyed eventually to the readers, which is essentially the judge of not only the journalist's, but also the Media's, credibility.
When our journalists discuss confidentiality, they ought to be precise, regarding the terms of the agreement, and what the other side perceives as such. They should make sure that the other side understands that documents, and other official sources verifying the information, will be necessary.
A direct discussion with the source is suggested, regarding whether they can attribute that information on that source by name, or if it is simply some useful information that can lead them elsewhere.
If they can attribute it to the source, they have to discuss the way they will refer to them, and to avoid agreeing to an inaccurate or misleading description.

A broad and general description (a “government source”) is better than a misleading one. Especially if the person does not agree with a more specific and useful description on who they are (“a close associate of the vice president”), it is suggested that the journalists negotiate what they can reveal on how that person came to that information (“according to a person that read the report”).
Out journalists should have discussed with the editors beforehand what actions will be taken if the source has lied. Whether, for example, they would be willing to reveal a source that has lied to them. A source could themselves be misinformed. Yet, misinformation does not always constitute a lie.
The subject of the aforementioned discussion should be what happens if the journalist is served a subpoena to testify in court. The journalist should have decided if they would be willing to be a defendant in court in order to protect their source. Would the source reveal themselves in that case? If the source has broken the law, though, it is highly unlikely they will reveal themselves on their own.
Powerful people often have conversations with journalists behind the scenes, discussing topics under the condition their identity will not be revealed. The reporters ought to firmly object to this, and attempt to persuade the source to make an official statement.
As a matter of fact, journalists could take this one step further, by boycotting this informal updating, unless they know that the information is unusually valuable. It is preferable to spend time taking official statements of publishing stories presented by official sources, than partaking with journalists of other Media in a situation that harms everyone's credibility.
Our journalists should be especially prudent when conveying statements of spokespersons, without using their names. When representing an official, an organization or a company, an official statement is necessary.
A rare exception can be made when the spokesperson provides information that is not directly related with the official or the Organization they represent. In that case, the journalist may have serious reasons to grant confidentiality to a spokesperson that would reveal negative information about the person or the Organization they represent.
Journalists should always have in mind that oral statements often have no significance. It is possible, in fact, that their credibility will be boosted, if they openly state to the public that the specific spokesperson does not reveal their name, clarifying that the reasons cited do not meet the standards of confidentiality of the publishing organization where they are employed.
After discussing with the source, they should reattempt to persuade them to speak officially. In the end of the interview, they should ask the sources again if they would like to make an official statement for a part or the total of their words. Sometimes, returning to the source after the story is written, and trying to take certain phrases or pieces of information, to officially and namely attribute them to said source, works.

Credibility and attribution

A source's credibility and the reference to them are two of the foundational principles of journalism that serves the public with regard to honesty and search of the truth.

EVALUATING THE RELIABILITY OF SOURCES

It is important for a journalist to critically approach the credibility of a source, not only on the

early stages of research, but also on the final evaluation during production.
The connection of the source to the topic, and their possible bias about it, are the first things to question.
Given that there is no common understanding, the journalist is often used as a means of propaganda in the case of a conflict of interests. It is important to be aware of the position, the viewpoint and the perception of the source regarding the topic, as well as to distinguish insufficiency or possible contradictions in the source's claims.
In any case, the range of opinions must not be distorted, but social, political, and financial traits of the sources must be taken into consideration, whether we seek information from organizations, geographical groups or online communities.

SOCIAL MEDIA

It is risky for the journalist to seek information from people unknown to them, whose credibility and validity have not be evaluated (e.g. random sample from social media). The range of viewpoints could be limited if the sample is not representative. Different Social Media affect the range of opinions by default.
Social media are important domains for information mining, source tracking and media assets (photos, videos) finding. Special caution is required when using material from user/citizen content, and not journalist content (See related chapter on User Generated Content, UGC), the primary concern always being to confirm and track the original source.
Next, the journalist is obliged to ask the source for license to use the material and refer το the source's information, reference which should in any case be made.
Note: In the case where the journalist uses as a source, content (e.g. a social media post) from a fellow journalist's personal account, they should determine whether this content represents their colleague or the Media they are employed in.

ATTRIBUTING INFORMATION TO SOURCES

The way the journalist refers to the source ensures the news' accuracy, so that the readers can evaluate its credibility.
Firstly, precision in wording is necessary. Reference to the source should be clear and detailed (e.g. name, title/degree, Organization the information comes from or their link to the topic). In the case of anonymous source, the reference to them should include as much information as possible. Information regarding partiality or the source's link to the topic is valuable as well.

ANONYMOUS SOURCES IN MATERIAL FROM OTHER MEDIA AND THIRD SOURCES

Reports from other media Organizations, based on anonymous sources, require a careful approach from the journalist, especially when they intend to use them on their topic.

The material must be relevant to events and not be acquired otherwise. The topic should be indeed valuable and constitute news, worthy of publication. The use of material from such sources must first be approved by the editor. The topic must be balanced and the journalist must seek commentary on the parameters described in it.
Additionally, before the journalist begins such a topic, an effort in good faith should be made in order to bring the information to light officially and with a name on, or at least, to confirm it from their own sources. There should be no hesitation to “freeze” the topic, if the journalist themselves has doubts on the kind of information in their possession. If this material is eventually used, it should be attributed to the person that published it and the anonymous source's position should be mentioned.

ANONYMOUS SOURCES

The use of anonymous sources should be made with special caution and clear rules, so as to ensure the Media's transparency and credibility.
The journalist should only resort to them, if the material is of paramount importance, and available only under the condition of anonymity, as well as when the source is reliable.
The editor's approval, a cross-check of information from multiple sources, and the verification of the source's motive behind anonymity and the information's publication, are all obligatory.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

In the digital article, the journalist should make reference to the source with a link as well, so that users themselves can evaluate their credibility. Reference to the source during the story should be made in a visible spot, whether that is in the beginning, the end, or repeated in the article.

Practices

- The journalist verifies the source's credibility and attributes the information clearly.
- Awareness of the position, the viewpoint and the perception of the source is indispensable.
- While searching for sources, the journalist takes into consideration that the “tanks” where the search is conducted (e.g. Social media) may limit the sample of viewpoints collected.

Alternative ways to cover as wide a range of opinions as possible must be sought.

- The information's origin must always be investigated, if the source knows it firsthand. If not, the journalist investigate whether the original source is reliable and updated.
- Particular attention must be paid to correctly reference the source, as accurately as possible. In the case of anonymous sources, their link to the topic must be described.
- The use of anonymous sources must be avoided, unless the source is reliable and offers valuable information concerning the development of the research and the topic's coverage.
- The journalist uses links and/or accompanying phrases in reference to the source.

Name and information withholding

Journalism is about revealing the truth, and the journalist's duty is to contribute to the citizens' being properly informed and with good judgment. Information always has a name, and so does the informant.

In most of the withholding cases are included people that, one way or another, are associated with journalism, or with violent and shocking situations. Other cases concern children, that, since they cannot testify, are entitled to special treatment, and for that reason there are laws regarding picture taking and testimonies of children.

RAPE/SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

Sometimes, attack victims consent to their names being published. In other cases, a person can become known to a broader audience as a person that disappeared.

When the case is solved, and only then, can it be confirmed that they had fallen victims to sexual assault, and as a result, it is too late to remove their names from the story's media coverage.

If the story is not of high interest to the readers, then it is possible that the victim's name should be published at all.

If the charges against the alleged perpetrator are eventually judged by the justice system, the only authority competent to decide, as false and malignant, then the complainant is not entitled to protection from publicity.

SUICIDE

Some cases of teenage suicides attract significant publicity, especially when there are suspicions of their victimization due to bullying or cyber-attack. In these cases, the parents file the incident and their names, but the names of the possible perpetrators are not announced. In such a case, the terms under which the charges will be made are within the jurisdiction of the Justice, and the public needs to be informed of the circumstances and the details of the incident – not the involved parties.

If the charge involves an underage person, then the Media refer us to the rules applied in the cases where the identity of underage people accused of crimes is revealed.

ABDUCTION VICTIMS

It is crucial to ensure the balance between the victim's safety on one hand, and the need to inform the public, on the other hand, especially in the case of a widely known person.

SERIAL KILLERS

It is a common opinion among specialists, that serial killers' names should not be published, or, more accurately, that their names and photographs should not be on display, because it is exactly that attention for their actions that they seek, and satisfying them may lead to people following their lead.

At the same time, there is great curiosity about these people, as well as a public interest dimension, in what concerns public policies ought to be developed, regarding what pushes these people into being criminals (if for example they had been victims of child abuses themselves). Understanding the motives of those people is equally important with making extensive reference to the victims' stories.

HOMOSEXUALITY AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Under certain circumstances, homosexuals and anti-government activists may be in danger if their names become public.

INFORMATION ON PUBLIC SECURITY AND PROTECTION – MILITARY OPERATIONS

Police reporters and war correspondents usually agree on following the safety rules of the enterprises.

It's up to the editor to decide if the produced material can be used by the Media. A quick answer is that it depends on the situation. Do we have to do with an outright law violation, or is there any other imperative cause as to the public revelation of the information? Will delaying the revelation cause any kind of damage? Is anyone's life in danger?

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PERSONS

There are cases where the names of private person– but with a recognized profile – i.e politicians' family members, become a part of the narrative and of publicity.

This depends partly on whether a person that is in the focus of the public eye involves their family members in their cases.

In other words, this depends on whether they become public persons as well. In any case, even though there are legal frameworks preventing the publication of public persons' names (i.e. known entrepreneurs), it is, however, suggested (as an international practice) to publish them only when the case where they are confirmed to be involved, concerns the public interest (e.g. accused of tax evading and infidelity).

WHOSE DECISION IS THE NAME PUBLICATION?

The decision of publishing names of people involved in certain cases depends, of course, on the existing laws, but also on the circumstances and the social conventions that allow or enforce the publication of a name. In some cases, the editors and the journalists may take calculated risks, if they believe that the publication of a name benefits the public interests.

It is important to ponder the effect the right to private life, established by the European Convention on Human Rights (of the Council of Europe) has on the press's ability to exercise the liberty of expression.

An idea that also gains ground in Europe is the “right to be forgotten”, concerning the results on search engines (e.g. Google) about a person.

Practices

1. The inviolable right to private life is guaranteed not only by the State's institutions and legal instruments, but also by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Thus, everyone has the right to the respect of their private life, to anonymity of themselves and of their family.

- The journalist is called to become the intermediate between an event and the audience. At the same time, their professional credibility, and their Media's credibility as well, become the target of the public eye.
- The cases of sexual assaults, rapes or suicides (of children and teenagers mostly), require special care, so that the victims and their families are protected from public stigmatization of their morality. Since the journalist's profession requires constant and lively relationship with their audience, even the caution in using, and timing, the identification of the victim's, or the perpetrator's, name, is crucial to their recognition as an information provider. Additionally, in serial killers cases, the journalist acts according to the legal or social psychology requirements, avoiding untimely name publication, so as to shed light on the motives of these actions.
- In the cases of prosecutions of homosexuals or political and social activists, the publication of their names could have consequences in their lives.
- In a world of anti-terrorist hysteria and military intelligence being the States' priority, the journalist ought to protect themselves, and the prestige of the Media where they are employed as well. It is also their moral obligation to protect their confidential sources of information. Cyber-attacks in citizens' privacy are a domain where the journalist can prove their tone and their spirit, as an independent and unrestricted provider of information for the common interest.

Interviews and how to conduct them

We use the term interview to describe the conversation in any technological platform we choose.

Practises

-The journalist ought to mention to the audience, the time and medium of the interview, so as to be protected in case the interviewee's original statements are altered (via e-mail, a Skype conversation etc., an interview via phone call).

-The off the record rule applies on the online domain as well. If the interviewee does not forbid the publication of a piece of information, the journalist has every right to include it to their report.

Various basic rules:

‣ON THE RECORD. The information may be used without reservations, and the source can be named.

‣OFF THE RECORD. The information may not be used in a publication.

‣BACKGROUND. The information may be published only on the conditions agreed with the source. Generally, the sources raise the issue of anonymity.

‣DEEP BACKGROUND. The information may be used, but without attribution. The source does not wish to be identified in any way, even on the condition of anonymity. If a piece of information or a statement is on the record, there are restrictions and obstacles in what concerns

their publication. Sometimes, interviewees insist on preapproving the article. However, this would essentially reduce the value and distort the meaning of the article's content.
Journalists may occasionally accept to cross-check the validity of a statement, or a part of the interview, by returning to the source, but this should be the journalist's initiative and not a condition to publish the interview.

There are cases where it is demanded that the questions are given beforehand, or that certain questions are not posed, but the redactors should not give each interviewee the chance to have control.
If a statement of a comment the interviewee makes during a seemingly normal information exchange is a key statement sought after the journalists, the interviewee may feel they have been deceived. A way to avoid this is to inform the source before publication, so that they know that the statement will be used, with no room for objections.
Journalists should make a clear reference to the sensitive parts of the interview – especially in the cases of young, traumatized people, or people not accustomed to the interview process- because their comments and their names will be forever online.
Interviewees with traumatic experiences require special treatment. Sensitivity and discretion must be shown, and not cannibalism in the name of news.
Depending on the circumstances and the interviewee's morals, the journalist might need to dedicate considerable time to conduct the interviews, and to show patience and courtesy.
As a legal issue, promise of anonymity is a convention, a contract to be honored even in the event of the interviewee's death. The journalist may still have the obligation to respect the convention. In such a case, it may be sensible to ask for the deceased relatives' permission to use the material.
In the online world, the exposure of people, names and sources, includes considerable risks, not only for the interviewee, but also to the journalist themselves.
Information reproduction and dissemination is broader, faster, and with greater consequences than a journalist can handle.
For this reason, except for the process and the occasional restriction or facilitation mentioned, the journalist should consider how their work can be protected as much as possible.

Practices of taking and editing pictures and video

The power of image is indisputable, and plays an essential role in Press and digital media reports alike. The developments in digital technology and the increased use of unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, create new parameters in taking and editing pictures and videos, as well as the need to set up a “road map” for photographers and cameramen and define the way in which data will be used in the future.
These rules gain even more value if we take into consideration that a widespread practice will thus be created, regarding virtual reality (VR) being used in news narratives, on the pretext of shocking images or difficulty in picture-taking due to distance or inconvenience.

PAPARAZZI PICTURE TAKING – DRONES

The development in technology dictates the need to establish a clear policy regarding ethical issues in picture taking. The Media must publicly declare (Mission Statement of a Media) they follow paparazzi tactics, and clarify to the audience they practice this kind of journalism, if that is the case. For instance, using drones for photography has enabled paparazzi-picture taking, or snapshots from flights over private property.

Nowadays, various online media involve gossip content, making it necessary to define themselves as such.

Overall, the principles of respect of privacy and individuality must be applied in drone picture taking, as with any other kind of picture taking.

PICTURE AND VIDEO EDITING

Our Press Organizations do not permit tweaked photos and deliberately cut shots. A photo clean-up from scratches or other imperfections is acceptable, but not further software editing is allowed. In case it is uncovered that important details of the photo have been meddled with, reliability is at stake.

A parameter that occurs from the development in picture editing and the software that enables it, is whether the interference is acceptable, as for example two people that have never met shown together, or a person showing in an environment they never really were in.

In these cases, it is suggested that the edit in the picture be explicitly explained.

Even in the cases where the face of the person pictured must be pixelated, so as to protect their identity, or use of pictures specially edited by the Police Force is made, an explanation as to who edited the pictures and why must follow.

In order to avoid confusion in reenactment videos, it is suggested to mark in a visible space that it is a reenactment and not real events.

VIOLENCE OR MENTAL ANGUISH IN SHOTS

A dilemma between ethics and professional conscience photographers and cameramen usually face, concerns whether they must be self-restricted in situations like a funeral, so as to avoid further stress to people already in pain (due to war, natural disasters etc.).

Sometimes, ethics dictate not to pick up the camera or take wide shots and focus on terrified or mourning people.

Another moral issue concerns putting down the camera to help in a rescue, or suspecting that the scenes shot will be used in propaganda (e.g. a photographer or cameraman recording a violent moment during which soldiers hurt prisoners).

In this case, the torturers, knowing that they are being recorded, may use extreme violence so as to make an example of the situation.

If that is the case, the photographer or the cameraman is called to reflect on the impact their pictures or shots will have in the future. If they realize that their presence affects the situation, it would be best to get back and shoot from a distance.

The presence of a camera usually stirs up extreme behavior, while its absence rarely allows atrocities.

GENERIC PHOTOGRAPHY (ARCHIVES)
Using a generic picture from a plane wreck that fits a news article on a plane crash is possible, as per the code of conduct; however it is obligatory to explicitly mention that the picture is from the archives, or that the plane depicted is of the same type with the one that crashed.
“STAGED” PICTURES FROM OFFICIAL/UNOFFICIAL SOURCES
Journalists should be cautious in what concerns “staged” pictures that are occasionally published from governments, large organizations or companies, usually aiming to present an image that will make the person pictured likeable to the readers. On the other hand, sources that aim at damaging the image of important people may possibly circulate pictures with similar content.
MUSICAL BACKGROUND IN VIDEO FOOTAGE
In many cases, the soundtrack of a video may aim at causing feelings of compassion, fear or sadness, thus adding to the video's emotional load.
Practices

- If the photographer or the cameraman present in and shooting violent scenes realizes that their material may be used as propaganda, it is advised that they step back and take wider shots.
- Any kind of editing in pictures, via picture editing software, that puts together two people that have never been in the same place, or pixelates a face to protect people in judicial or police cases, must be mentioned.
- The principles of the respect of personality and privacy must be respected in picture taking as well, especially in what concerns drones.
- In scenes involving mourning or agony, photographers or cameramen are advised to carefully examine whether it would be best to record from a distance.
- When generic pictures are used, it should be explicitly mentioned that the photography is from the archives and not from the actual event.
- In the cases of video reenacting events, in order to avoid confusion, it should be clarified that they are a reenactment and not real shots.

PROTECTING THE MEDIA'S NEUTRALITY

Discrimination based on race, skin color, religion, gender and sexual orientation

Our media avoid harmful or derogatory remarks on the race, the color, the religion, the gender and the sexual orientation of a person. (This also applies on any physical or mental illness or disability). The mention of elements of a person's race, color, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability should be avoided, unless they are indeed related to the story.
In some cases it is suggested that our journalists even adopt new terminology, in order to not explicitly insult immigrants, refugees, homosexual, transgender and transsexual people, as well as people from any minority group. One example is the use of the terms “refugee”, “undocumented immigrant”, “immigrant with fraudulent documents” to describe immigrants,

that replaces non politically correct terms and expressions, such as “illegal immigrant”.
Besides, the right of free movement is universal.
Our journalist should not forget that their first concern should always be the respect of the people's dignity, nationality, freedom of religion, sexual preference, and exceptions can be made only in the case the information is considered incomplete or the public interest is in jeopardy. Abiding by the rules of conduct from all the Media makes possible the safeguard, even in a small degree, of the proper and legitimate management of racial, national and gender references in various press publications.
The policy to be applied in any case, should be one that condemns any kind of discrimination that may lead to incidents of violations of personal rights and isolation of a person. The Press Organization ought not to produce material that can possibly lead to hate or discrimination against a person, based on the age, gender, race, color, religious doctrine, legal status, disability, marital status or sexual orientation of said person.
In some stories, reference to nationality is natural. When, for example, a police report mentions the description of suspects on the run, mentioning their race is evidence that is usually not omitted, and journalism Organizations can make it available to the public. Additionally, when members of a racial, national or religious group commonly consider a topic de facto important, then, reference to their national identity is simply a part of their story, or of the report in general.
If the main people in a story do not “force” the journalist, through their actions, to mention racial information – as is the case of slogans about nationality (or their country), or when people from the same racial group attack people of another – then, the journalist is not triggered and does not need to make reference in a racial element.

People do not only protest due to injustice against their racial group, but also due to their poverty and oppression, something frequent in racial minorities. This

kind of protest is nothing more than a result of the oppression caused by poverty, a problematic situation they try to expose through the Mass Media.

It would be obvious to any eye witness that the main people in riots or crimes belong to a certain racial group. The reader should not be deprived of any information that a person present in the event would have. However, the journalist, trying to “cover” the group involved in an incident, and believing they do the politically correct thing, manages to eventually conceal the events' truth.

Poverty and oppression may be the fundamental problem, but the fact that specific minorities are victims from the start (and as such, fight back against oppression) should not mean that their actions can be concealed or covered up.

In the cases of transsexual people, the right thing to do is to mention them, using their current gender. There is no uniformity regarding people that identify themselves with a different sex of the one they had when born, but their transition to their new gender has not yet been socially accepted. The wish of a person should be respected, by avoiding using pronouns that clearly refer to the two genders (e.g. “he”, “she”) and the choice of syntax is such, so as to not use pronouns. If the way the person defines their identity is a basic element of the news, then it always makes sense making reference to it.

Practices

- The editor should decide whether making reference to racial, national or gender information is a defining element of the report, so as to publish it or not. It is decided when it is accurate, as per journalism and ethics, to include a racial or national element, and when it is not.
- In police report, for example, a title like “A Greek killed his child” is not ethically correct, because the perpetrator did not kill his child because he is Greek. As such, reference to nationality is redundant and charged with negative evaluation. In many publications with such references, prejudices may be lurking, resulting in weakening the Media's objectivity.
- On the opposite, for a person writing about migration flows, it is probably necessary to make racial-national references, because it is the only way to demonstrate the problem in its essence. This way they can emphasize, for example, on the fact that the refugees' country is at war, and as a result they are made to abandon their country.
- Additionally, in the case of a crime targeting somebody's religious beliefs, religious identity should not be concealed.
- The way in which the Media and the journalist will handle the information represents their intentions as well. Using the expression “illegal immigrant” reveals the Media's opposition to immigrants or even refugees. Such a choice is nothing but unethical.
- Presenting national, racial or gender information often aims at protecting society. This is the case of incidents where someone ought to be protected, due to them being a victim of discrimination or even criminal actions, just because they belong to a minority. By presenting the topic, the journalist may raise awareness

of the public, or mobilize Authorities, so that the victim can be protected.
Presenting this topic on time may help prevent similar incidents.

- In the case of reports around transsexual people, our journalist ought to adopt the gender chosen by the transsexual person.
- Journalists ought to have read, and take into consideration, the terminology adopted by transsexual or asexual communities.

Censorship

The main duties of our journalist, in research, article redaction and commentary, are the following:

- To respect the truth, regardless of the consequences for themselves.
- To defend the freedom of information, commenting and criticism.
- Not to confuse the journalist's profession with that of advertisers and propagandists.
- Not to be influenced, directly or indirectly, by advertisers.
- To dismiss any pressure, and not to accept any instructions, other than the ones of the editors.

The term “Public Authorities” is used to define governmental or non-governmental organizations, and independent authorities in local, national or international level, which, in any case, constitute important state organizations. Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights explicitly states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Consequently, public Authorities should respect this declaration that explicitly includes the concept of the freedom of the Press:

- respect of the independence of publishing
- access to public information
- recognition of the right to protect information sources
- prohibition of censorship
- no actions that lead journalists to self-censorship

Any restrictions on the freedom of the Press result from national laws, that should, however, be in accordance with international conventions on human rights. In cases where censorship is imposed by bodies of direct or indirect (when managing funds) authority, serious ethical issues are raised. Such an occurrence would essentially mean that evaluation and approval of articles or photographs would be obligatory before their publication, by an appointed official of the authority in question, that is able to block the material's publication, or demand that changes be made in its content.

Nowadays, however, cases of censorship rarely happen. Our journalists reject any relation to censorship bodies, by refusing to submit any evidence, information or material to them. On the contrary, they seek ways and chances to publish their material intact and with no intervention by the body's field of jurisdiction, even if that means that their report will be publish with a delay.

If they give the right to the bodies in question to remove parts of the material, but not to distort it, journalists, when publishing or broadcasting material under such edit, include a note, e.g. “parts of this report were removed -for example- from the military's censorship service”.

Practices

- The journalists ought to concentrate on defending the freedom of speech, searching and broadcasting the truth without interventions, and to resist any attempt at distorting press information brought by censorship. They ought to resist in any attempt of censorship enforcement, or at least falsification and concealment of information.
- If they find themselves in situations of state inspection of the Media, they ought to search for alternative ways to broadcast their material, bypassing censorship mechanisms.
- If, however, they accept, under specific -potentially warring- conditions submitting the material in censorship services, they ought to refuse publishing it, if it has been seriously fabricated. If the material to be published has not been altered content-wise, but certain parts of it have been removed, the journalist has the option and the right of deciding upon publishing it, if they judge that the saved material still has publishing value. In that case, though, they ought to attach a special not, informing the audience that parts of the report have been removed from the specific censorship body.
- Special caution is needed in bribery, in order to impose censorship: it is unacceptable for the journalist to accept anything of value by people that want them to forge a report.

Speech Excerpts

Using excerpts of someone's words is an everyday practice in modern journalism. It may take the form of citing speeches and statements, or parts of an interview.

Codes of ethics regarding objectivity demand from reporters that they keep their opinions away from their topic. They can use the opinions of other people, though. Objectivity encourages the contribution of all viewpoints, including the careful use of speech excerpts.

Nevertheless, choosing and extracting a phrase could be subjective. In digital Media the problem can be solved with the use of links that lead to the total of somebody's words.

“DANGER ZONES”

A way for the journalist to partially use someone's words is to use an ellipsis to connect two parts of a larger phrase, e.g. “I will go to war…but only if it is necessary”. Isolated phrases are still being accused of being incomplete or of making someone's words seem irrelevant to the rest of the text.

Imagine the above example, if someone placed the president of the USA saying: “I will go to war”!

Journalists often combine phrases that are of journalistic interest with a short but concise paragraph or paraphrase of what someone said. If the paraphrase does not indicate it was taken from elsewhere, or the person is not mentioned, this falls within the limits of plagiarism.

Practices

- The journalist should adopt a conservative approach: Ideally, journalists should not prefer fragmented phrases, nor tweaked ones. For that reason, they ought to resist changes, unless necessary. This strategy will prevent them from getting looser with citations.
- They should take responsibility of the changes made, and be ready to give a good reason as to why any change was made.
- They can pick another phrase. If a phrase needs more corrections, the journalist ought to consider using another one in its place.
- They should not make changes that alter a phrase's meaning, or give the audience a different understanding of what was said, or what the speaker's true intentions were.

Naming suspects of criminal offenses and crimes

Naming a suspect is connected to ethical issues that concern a news' validity and comprehensiveness on one hand, on the context of journalism that serves the truth and the common interest, while on the other hand they have to do with the respect of the person's and the citizen's personality, dignity, inviolability of privacy and presumption of innocence.
Given that the suspect is not always the perpetrator, our journalist ought to take into account all the parameters that constitute the code of ethics, so as to provide the information necessary, with the public interest's protection in mind, and at the same time, to avoid tarnishing the reputation of a person that in the end may be proven innocent.
Modern journalism, especially in its digital form, is permanent: access to documents, sources and events is possible with no time restrictions. As such, evidence on cases where a person was suspect of a criminal act, for which they were accused, tried, and either convicted or acquitted, remain available and accessible forever. Naming a suspect and accusation can be done from the Authorities or third parties, officially or unofficially.
Should one take into critical consideration the source of the indictment (Police or citizens), and if so, in what degree? Special caution is absolutely required in the case of juvenile criminality.
Respect of privacy should be the guide of the journalist's actions, since they are obliged to respect this right of the persons, if, and only if the public interest does not have other demands.
Journalists must not forget that anyone has the right of respect of their private and family lives, their home, their health and correspondence, digital communication included.
Particular respect and discretion are necessary when facing family and friends of people convicted or accused of a crime. They must not be identified without their consent, unless they are substantially linked to the story.
In the same context, special caution is required in the potentially vulnerable position of children that are witnesses, or are victims, in a crime. This should not limit the right to refer to legal procedures.
Redactors should justify invading a person's privacy

without their consent. The complainant's public revelations will be taken into account.
It is unacceptable to take pictures of people in private spaces without their consent, private space being private or public property, wherever there is a sensible expectation of private life. What is generally applied in publishing photos is that focusing on features of faces is exclusively made with their consent. People in a particular mental state and children must be protected. Journalists ought to treat celebrities in the same way they would like to be treated themselves. More specifically, concerning people involved in court procedures – with the exception of public persons, people that have made their identity public, or generally known events – names should not be exposed. The presumption of innocence should prevail in any case.

Practices

- The foundational ethical question that should be answered beforehand is whether people that are seemingly suspects should be generally names, i.e. if their name as information add to the value of a story, compared to the details that eventually compose it.
- The first criteria that the journalist ought to take into consideration is whether the accusations are official or not, with respect to the fundamental right of privacy. A possible approach is mentioning the suspect's name if there has been an official accusation from the Authorities, or if the case is taken in court, if that is a part of public event recording.
- Special caution is required in the case where the journalist names someone as a suspect, when the accusation is unofficial (from a citizen and not the Police), due to the possible consequences to their privacy and reputation, as well as their social relationships, or even their search for employment. As such, it is illegitimate for the journalist to publicly name someone, before official charges by the Authorities are made. Nevertheless, leaking information is an important issue, and for that reason, the editor's decision is indispensable.
- It is suggested that criteria are set and taken into consideration, based on which someone is a suspect:

Are they the perpetrator, the instigator or a person on the background of the story? Additionally, are they a person of public interest?

- Another criterion is the severity of the crime.
- An ethical dilemma is caused by naming suspects, when there is a possibility of legal discharge or acquittal, or the charges are later dropped or proven to be untrue or unfounded, regarding possible damage to a person's and their family's reputation, and reparation possibility.

In that case, the news must be updated immediately, repeating the information correctly and including the possibility of a follow-up story. However, it is difficult to permanently delete all publications and reports, since the original publication still exists and circulates – especially online. In the case of a sound repetition, nothing on the Internet is deleted.
There is a certain procedure/methodology of reparation, during which the journalists is obliged to correct in time, using the appropriate presentation and tone, any inaccurate information and false claims that harm a person's dignity and reputation,

and they ought to publish or report the opposing opinion, without any retorts, that would place them in a privileged position against the affected party.
Additionally, depending on the case, they must give the chance to the suspect or defendant to answer to false accusations, when they ask to, something that will, among others, secure the protection of personal information.

Journalists should always take into consideration the following counterbalance:
The highest interest to inform the public and raising awareness (truth, human lives) with the right to information self-determination, a person's right to reveal or not and to control/define the information concerning it with State authority. Protecting information with the pressing need to publish them.

- In juvenile criminality, special treatment and good judgment are necessary on the part of the redactor on whether they should mention an underage suspect's name, so as to ensure as less damage as possible from publications on underage people, with the crime's severity and their age being criteria.
- The rule is that publishing a name of a suspect should be exclusively done after an official charge has been made. Exception to the rule are the cases where the suspect makes an official statement. For example, this happened in a tax evasion case, where the person made an official statement, in order to defend themselves. Afterward, the Media had no reason to conceal their name.
- Another important and correct, in what concerns journalism, method, is to approach the suspect. When a journalist contacts the suspect, often through their lawyer, then, they have the chance to take a statement or an interview, if they desire. In that way, the suspect may be considered to defend their rights through the publication of their position. “Publication is the soul of Justice”, said Johann Jacob Mayer, a Swiss philhellene, that wrote for the newspaper “Ellinika Chronica”.
- If, however, the suspect explicitly states they do not wish to make a public statement, that is to be respected and their name is protected through its concealment. The rule remains that the name of the suspect is not published, because there is always, eventually, a chance of evidence to the contrary.
- Special caution poses the risk of creating fiction mechanisms. No user should be given a reason to suspect that the informative website may be altering real facts. For that reason, publication of fictional names, places and date is strictly forbidden, while the editors are obliged to set strict limits to the use of concealment mechanisms. Due to the respect of the privacy confidentiality firstly, and if the public interest is not affected, the Media can protect the identity of the main person of a story, but in any case they ought to explain the reasons behind a name's concealment.

Hostage cases

Hostage situations require an incredibly delicate treatment by the Mass Media, regarding the way they handle them.
Our Media take measures so as not to aggravate a hostage case with the way they will handle it. Our journalists avoid contacting the perpetrators of a hostage situation, when this case is in progress, since such an action could implicate things. At the same time, communication of this

kind could be characterized as an adverse action towards the efforts of the Authorities to complete their mission, by ending the hostage situation.
Journalists respect the Authorities' judgment, if the perpetrators demand to make a statement in exchange for the release of the hostages.
The journalist's role, in the cases where a hostage situation is in progress, should under no circumstances substitute that of the Authorities.
Especially were human lives are on the line, the public interest is exactly what dictates information on the incident, with respect of human lives.

Terrorist – Bombing and other threats

Nowadays, threats of bombing or terrorist attacks are even more frequent and are taken seriously by the Authorities. Journalists do not wish to panic the public for a threat that could be proven to be false, and at the same time, they need to inform of its existence, since no one can exclude the possibility of it being true.
Experience, perception and abiding by the code of conduct are a combination that can contribute to the correct treatment of threats by journalists, without exaggerations and without concealing events related to the public.
Publishing criteria are whether the threat is true or false, the source of the information, the kind of threat, the range of possible targets, common opinion and everyday life disturbance with regards to public safety.
The moral issue of whether society should be trained from terrorist attacks is always present.
Practices

- Our first concern in these cases is to evaluate the source. Does the threat derive from information coming from the Police? If it derives from non-state body, cross-checking the information with the Authorities is necessary. If journalists themselves receive the information, they make an effort to evaluate the source and they inform the editor. Institutions and the target threatened are informed, as appropriate.
- From the moment the cross-check is done and there is indeed a threat (regardless it is later proven true or not) the dilemma of whether it will be published or not is created. The editor is informed

and the Media's code of conduct is followed, in combination with the policies and procedures adopted by each Media. The quality of the threat is evaluated (possibility of false threat), along with the disturbance that has already probably been cause during the effort to handle it (building evacuation, circulation regulation), the size of the damage to be cause and the necessity of immediate and collected publication, with regard to the public interest and public safety.

- On the web, where information is immediate, special caution is required, so that the information's speed does not come before validity, and does not cause unnecessary social uproar. However, in some cases, publishing the threat can bring positive results, like the protection of public safety and assistance to the actions of the institutions when confronting it.
- Social media require special caution (see article on the use of Social Media), when used as news sources and interactive platforms of citizen information, since their speed and interactivity complicate information cross-checking and facilitate misinforming, false impressions or manipulation (especially, in extended e.g. terrorist threats) and causing panic. Their rational use can prove to be an essential tool for immediate informing and citizen safety reasons.
- Equally important is for the journalist to follow the incident's progress and write about its conclusion. They ought to update the audience, until the threats ceases to exist, even if it was false.
- In these cases, the editor's experience and perception plays an important role. The Media determines the threat's gravity, and presents the news accordingly (as in, its placement on the website, the title and keywords included, whether it is urgent, whether a notification to mobile phones will be sent, the content as per size and length), abiding by the journalism codes of ethics, with primary concern, the public interest.
- Similarly, the journalist cross-checks their information in the case of hostage situation as well. The Police is the Authority in charge that can verify the information about hostage situations during documentation and evaluation of the source, as well as during the news piece production.

PARTICIPATING IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Concealing Press ID Card

Concealing the Press ID Card during information collection is considered unethical. There are, though, some extremely rare cases where the journalist has a reason to conceal their identity, such as situations where their life is in danger, or they have exhausted all other means of receiving some very important and crucial information, which may concern human lives or the public good.

Our Organizations agree that journalists should generally reveal their identity, as well as the name of the Medium they are employed for, during everyday information collection. It is not right to deceive and mislead the interviewee, or to use tricks to “grab” news.

Making a report using hidden cameras or hidden audio recording has a long history in journalism, but it is not fitting for our Organizations. Generally, such practices are abandoned, with the idea in mind that deceit is not a way to collect news.

Practices

- In rare and extremely important cases, when for example, a journalist's life in a war zone is in danger, then they do not conceal their identity, when required.
- Concealment tactics are only used in the case all other means of accessing the news have been exhausted, and when, for that specific news, logical answers occur to the following questions: Is the story truly important? Are lives at stake? Will the story be "weak" without that specific information? The approval of the majority of the heads in the Media is necessary.
- Usually it is sufficient for the journalists to describe what they see in a public space. For example, describing the Police's attitude towards a protester does not mean they have to reveal their identity and attempt to take an interview.
- When the journalist stops simply observing and begin some form of interview – recording somebody's words in order to publish them, naming them – then it is suggested that the report examine whether they should specify their identity to their interlocutor and seek additional comment.
- As in real life, likewise on the web, journalists ought to reveal their identity in comments, tweets, blogs, forums, and not to use nicknames.

Journalism and Politics

Journalism's "traditional" approach requires that journalists abstain from political activities. The Code of Ethics imposes avoiding any secondary employment in or occupation with politics or the public sector or serving in Public Organization positions, if their integrity as journalists is at stake.

Practices

- By rule, common sense dictates that Journalists not be involved in politics. That included them being employed in Press Offices of the State, parties, or politicians.
- Supporting politicians through social media means political involvement.
- Any journalist wishing to be involved in politics or political activism, ought to answer questions of moral dimension, as to how the journalist's obligation to convey news with impartiality can come to terms with their involvement in political actions.
- Special caution is advised in the cases where first degree relatives of a journalist are involved in politics, since “Caesar's wife must be above suspicion”/

SENSITIVE MATERIAL AND EXTREME CONDITIONS

Profanity, insults and Slander

A press Organization's general position towards profanity, insults and vulgarity does not only de facto reflect their own values, but most importantly, it reflects and shapes their audience's values at the same time.

Our organizations publish vulgarity within quotation marks, and only if they are a necessary part of the information conveyed by the report in question. Using ellipses is also common.

In an online environment, material that includes profanity and insults can be presented with a warning signal that informs the audience of inappropriate content, so that the user can choose whether they want to access the page with that article or not.

Practices

- Insults constitute an integral part of the report, in many cases. In other cases, though, they may only be used for sensational and commercial purposes. In any cases, immediate informing of the editor / chief editor is obligatory.
- When insults are an integral part of the news, it is considered appropriate and obligatory to mention them, but in such a way, so as not to offend the public opinion (by using for example ellipses or description).
- In any case, before the journalist settles on the correct publication of vulgar content, they ought to exhaust any effort possible, in order to

convey the news' content while omitting reference to the inappropriate expressions in question!

- Meanwhile, they ought to describe the events in such a way, so as to facilitate the user's comprehension, and to avoid creating false impressions, that may eventually lead to distortion and misunderstanding of the reality. It is also important, to write in a way that does not insult the person that phrased the vulgarities. This can be achieved through moderate description and avoiding extreme words and expressions.
- When a public person uses profanity, this could potentially be news. For example, all large foreign Media have at some point made a news piece on Jean-Claude Juncker's profanity.
- On our digital Media, it is possible to use a notification (e.g. warning message) that informs the audience that the news contain offensive content. That way, parents for example can protect their child from exposure to it.
- Great attention must be paid in avoiding links to pages that may contain offensive of vulgar content. Additionally, it is important not to show under any circumstances potential link of the presented topic in their own page with inappropriate websites.
- When it comes to publishing visual material that may contain atrocious, cruel scenes of insulting or pornographic content, then the material with the less insulting content possible is chosen, and at the same time, the contentious imagery should be blurred, with the appropriate image editing.

It is considered necessary in that case, to include a notification for the potentially inappropriate content of the report.

- Our Media filter insulting content, based on the respect for their audience.
- When someone that seemingly insults or is the receiving end of results is no longer alive, things change. In such cases, recording and publishing insulting content is absolutely unethical.

Sensual material and explicit content

Frequently, for the sake of traffic, press posts and publications blatantly violate basic rules of ethics regarding the presentation of a topic of intense sensual content or of a topic about sexual, criminal or war violence. Insinuations or bad imitations of journalistic expressions for the sake of sensation, are all tactics to be rejected.

Our Media do not exploit topics of sensual content and intense “bloodstained” reports. When our redactor invokes public interest with the presentation of sensual or shameful content, they should be in position to document it, since every publication may raise questions, if their content can be considered sensationalizing or revolting.

This also concerns pictures and videos that include blood and nudity. Moral issues are raised in articles that describe pornography or amputation, or in audio excerpts, where people in agony are heard.

Users can comprehend the terror of a bombing, without searching for dismembered corpses and realize the horror of sexual mutilation, without a detailed description. They do not need all the horrible details in order to form an opinion about bombers or violent killers. They may feel that by displaying sensational and disgusting content, the Medium seeks only to win visits or "sell", rather than serve the public good of real information.

An interim solution is that journalists never leave sensual and repulsive material made public uncritically and without debate, but that they make the decision towards one or another direction, after serious reflection and consultation in the newsroom.

Practices

-Approaching the so called "edited reality", it is recommended to control and document information, and restrict sensationalism, which may cause undue inconvenience to the public. Tact and sensitivity towards citizens, who can even suffer from a psychological shock due to a graphic description or a visual image, should be the priority of each information officer.

-News sites themselves should build those standards - frameworks which are necessary, so that the published graphic material does not alter the Medium's integrity and status; also, disclosure of graphic material should not be considered indiscretion and insult against the public.

Hate speech and acts of violence

Hate speech and acts of violence are offensive by default, although sometimes they can produce valid news. The question is: where the dividing line lies between what we should write and take photos of, and what not?

Practices

-When the material the journalist possesses is controversial, then one possible compromise is to publish it on the Internet, in such a way that readers need to "click" on it twice, if they really want to read it. However, this practice has some gaps in moral and ethical issues that must be discussed between the journalist and the editor.

-The journalist should evaluate the speaker's profile, the approach of the speech, their intention as to the scope and type of the speech, and the economic, social, and political context, in which it is articulated.

-It is the journalist's obligation and duty to analyze what gives incentives to such speech and to verify the claims of those who promote such behavior. Any narrow-minded attitudes and approaches should, in any case, be balanced out with respect to the opposing voices with moderation.

Suicides

A general "principle" is not to present all the occurring suicides, but particularly of those who are famous, and taking place in a public place and there are many witnesses. In most cases, it is avoided to provide details about how a suicide took place, so that this is not used as a guide to other people. Our media avoid reporting "failed suicide attempt", which can imply that suicide is generally a "success".

Practices

Many organizations coping with the prevention of suicide often give guidance to the media on how to present such news.

-To assess whether the news of a suicide is of public interest in the case, namely, a famous person, whose actions anyway concern many people. With regard to ordinary everyday people, to present it as news, when it has caused unrest, took place in a public place, or there was a large number of people who witnessed it.

-Not to give details on the suicide, as it can be used as an example to follow.

-It is recommended, in such news, to give information about suicide prevention. For example, to list the intervention telephone line for suicide.

-Suicide stories should not be on the headlines.

-Suicides must not be presented as heroic or romantic acts.

-To pay special attention to language. To prefer the phrase "they took their life", to "committed suicide." Also, to avoid the term "successful suicide attempt", as well as "failed suicide attempt."

COPYRIGHTS-PLAGIARISM-ALTERATIONS

Signature of the Author

The signature of the author is the hallmark of the publication! It's the intellectual work mark, whose use is not allowed without authorization. It is the mechanism of increased accountability, validity and public denunciation of plagiarism. Strong signatures are the Medium's goodwill.

BYLINES

The author's signature must accompany the story, when the reporter was in the location indicated by date, in order to gather the information transmitted. If a journalist provides information to a member of the editorial team, who writes the story, then for this information the reporter gets the byline, unless the editor-in-chief decides that the byline should be better given to the author of the article.

Bylines are given to photographers, correspondents, photojournalists and television crew members who provide information to the reporter, without which there would be no story.

If several members of the editorial team write the story, the signature is at the discretion of the editor-in-chief. Generally, the signature should be given to that member of the editorial team who contributed the key facts of the story. Otherwise, a member may take the byline for a circle of the story, and a second member for the next cycle.

Double byline or the author's note can also be used, when more than one of the editorial team members contribute materially to the transmission or completion of the story. Credit lines recognising how someone contributed to the story, are necessary but do not imply in any way a double byline.

If any of the members of the editorial team with a double byline was not in the location indicated by date, the reporter has to say who was where, in a note at the end of their story.

Regarding the contribution of the editorial team members doing a voiceover or work on camera, therefore contributing to the story, this should also be mentioned. The reporter shall not use aliases or nicknames, unless -exceptionally- approved so by the editorial manager (e.g. when the nickname is widely known and has been on a live broadcast earlier).

DATELINES

A dateline tells the user when and where the journalist got the basic information about a story. The distinction between a dateline and a byline is that the latter tells the reader that the journalist was the location, as described in the dateline.

When a story with detailed datelines contains additional information obtained from another location, this should be mentioned in the story.

The dateline for videos and audios should be the location, where the described events actually took place. For audio tracks, the dateline will be the location where the journalist speaks.

If this cannot happen, then the journalist must not use datelines. If a journalist is covering a story on a location A, and then live broadcasts from a location B, dateline is the location B.

IDENTITY-DUTIES

It is duty of our Media to display their identity at a distinct point.
At the same time, it is necessary to have a clear and detail organisational structure with the personnel of the Medium, with detailed information about their duties and responsibilities.

The creation of well-defined, comprehensive and detailed duty organizational structure increases the user's trust to the Medium, thanks to its intention to operate ensuring full transparency and accountability.
At the same time, well-established duties set the basis for the smooth function of the Medium per se, since the duties and responsibilities of the employees are precisely set out.

Plagiarism – Use of material from other journalistic sources

The expropriation of texts, images, sounds and graphics created by others, is very tempting for journalists, especially in the era of the Internet, and is explicitly rejected.
It causes problems not only concerning copyrights and the code of ethics, but also concerning the quality of the texts that reach the reader.
Plagiarism is the use of the work or part of the work of someone else, which is passed off as one's own, regardless if it is done intentionally or not.

Namely, in Journalism, plagiarism is every time that:

- **A.** The journalist uses the entire work, words or ideas of another creator without giving credit to the source of this information
- **B.** Quotes unaltered phrases or sentences from a source without using quotation marks and mentioning their source
- **C.** Paraphrases, i.e. passes off as their own words and style some information or arguments of a writer, without giving credit to the original source
- **D.** changes information or data from another source
- **E.** Undertakes the project of another person or vice versa (when they assign their own project to another person)

Plagiarism journalism uses parts or the entire work of third parties, which after their integration to a content, are given originality by the Medium that publishes it.
The production of text, news reports, photos, sounds and videos has increased exponentially in order to cover the increased needs of the various Media and distributions that are growing day by day.
The basic algorithm tends to press increasingly the content in a growing space. The journalist has to produce more in order to feed the pc monitor.

Another aspect of plagiarism is the extensive use of original texts or extracts form Press Releases and Announcements. The term churnalism refers to this practice.

The main issue in cases of plagiarism & churnalism is that the multiple pieces are considered by the public, due to the method of repetition, as proof for validity.

THE GOLDEN RULE OF JOURNALISM

-The Journalists Associations in the Western World have a very simple statement regarding plagiarism in their Code of Ethics: Never plagiarize the work of others. The golden rule of journalism is*: behave to others the way you would like them to behave to you-when you are skeptical about citing a source of information you got from another medium.*
-Photos, posts or tweets on social media should be approached similarly. Our journalists consider that the use of such material without citation is ethical misconduct.
-In broad terms, wrong citation of a source by a journalist is safer than no citation, ethically and legally. In case there is a mistake in the citation of the work producer, but the source is mentioned, it is easier to correct this mistake without being liable for it.
-The confusion, i.e. the use of materials by third parties, which the journalist considered as their own, is the most common excuse for plagiarism, whereas in other cases journalists claim to have forgotten to add a citation or a link to material they used despite the fact they intended to do so. To the extent that these excuses are honest, there are effective ways to avoid those kinds of problems.
-There are also special applications for plagiarism on the Internet, with which you can search similar texts. The final text of an article can be checked by such a program and detect parts of the text that may not be original.

Various types of plagiarism
In the digital era-and the dissemination of the "copy paste" method, there is the issue about the gradation of plagiarism. Does the "borrowing" of scattered sentences equal to the downloading a text of hundred words, and can the rearrangement of a text be considered as creative work?

- Any kind of plagiarism is unaccepted and any uncited copy is a fundamental violation of the code of ethics of journalism.
- Any news Organization of ours has its own policy regarding the management of different types of plagiarism-taking into consideration that, regardless of its own position, it may encounter problems if its personnel "steals" content from others.
- Taking the work load of journalists into consideration, the presentation of a Press release as their own text is attractive, but the article must state clearly the source and the original work-opinion of the writer.
- The management under no circumstances must prompt the editorial group to steal intellectual property allegedly for the sake of completeness of news reporting.

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM?
In order to avoid accusations for plagiarism, all sources used for the completion of an issue must be mentioned.
In addition, all verbatim quotations from works of others must be cited, since verbatim quotations without quotation marks or reference to the source also constitutes plagiarism.

Thus, quoting information from another source may be used only in quotation marks with express reference and hyperlink. Where there is a publication invocation, consent is not necessary, but it is assumed that there will be a re-publication with screenshot and an active link to the original source, and only a reference will be hosted to aid documentation, rather than the entire publication.

The punishment is now constantly inconsistent, and the only thing perceived as a liability for the journalist and the medium is a large increase in correction and apologies from writing news.

Our very Media agree on a clear framework for such practices and emphatically reject any case of plagiarism, citing the "fair competition agreement" in their Mission Statement as Media businesses. It is also recommended, instead of half measures, that all parties agree to request permission to publish (via online form embedded in the Terms of Use), and that this has, each time, the form indicated by the Medium for which the intellectual work is produced. Also, to establish penalties defined by each Publishing Organization.

Image - Sound – Editing

Plagiarism, furthermore, concerns all types of media assets, and same rules apply as written speech.

In general, "ethics" that describes the processing of audio-visual material and the publication of audio and video files, could be summarized as follows:

Sound files should always tell the truth. They cannot be processed in any way, except for removing pauses or sounds irrelevant to the transmitted message. Upon permission by the Editorial Manager, excessively long pauses can be reduced. No sound editing is allowed regarding the level, volume adjustment, sound parameters, or noise reduction.

In any case, if the editor has any questions about provided and inflicted instructions, they must contact their supervisor, before processing any audio files.

As for image editing, in the case of collage, montage and imaginative or staged situations, the artistic intervention must be clear to the user, with no intention of cheating or deception.

While processing images to video, any intervention must respect the fidelity of the image with the original, without fiddling with the content or the ratio of the content. Counterfeiting faces is allowed only in cases where, under certain conditions and for specific safety reasons, the identity of said individuals should be protected.

Everything that a speaker says must be faithfully reproduced, remaining as faithful as possible to the manner of utterance. This means the use of whole cuts, even with the verbal stumbling or spoonerisms that may form part of the cuts, unless removed using a mandatory indication that the material has been edited.

A producer can join sounds together from different parts of a speech, or a conversation, in order to make them sound as if they occurred in a logical order. Such intervention may entail risks. Being sound, listeners cannot understand the end of the proposals and can perceive the order, in which they are heard, as original. A proposed solution to address this issue is to leave some pauses for the purpose of perceiving mediation of extra time, or to make clear that the material has been edited.

Practices

– The verbal blunders of the speaker should not be processed.

– Despite any processing, the final sound result must remain faithful to the original.

– It is possible to remove certain insignificant stumbles, if there is an explicit clarification that the original material has been processed.

– Extended processing and editing must be done only if explained that the sound and the image has been edited, and the meaning of the statements remains the same after editing the material. With regard to the editing, this is permissible, if it doesn't affect the authenticity of the transmitted message.

– A random eyewitness of a major story should be entirely identifiable, unless there is a serious reason that suggests otherwise.

– Eyewitness identification is not necessary, if their words do not express critical views.

– It's not necessary to identify random eyewitnesses with their personal information.

– The interviewees should be informed about whether their comments are going to be edited or rearranged.

– The witnesses in stressful situations should be encouraged to stop and resume if there is verbal confusion, as they speak.

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS

Acceptance of money from Foundations and Donations

The funding of a medium of communication by a foundation, a NGO, a natural person or an entity, as well as the change in the property ownership enhance its independency, when they are made public, though they must not lead the medium to bias. If the medium has a partisanship, this must be explicitly stated.

Key request is the level of transparency in the relationships between the journalism Organization and the interested parties (funders) and, therefore, the level of intervention r control by shareholders.

Namely, this is a question of weighting whether there will be a strict dividing line between funding and intervention against the journalistic procedure's autonomy and the observation of the Codes of Conduct.

This strict dividing line means zero intervention during the information producing procedure up until the final journalistic product, total transparency in the relationships, and autonomy.

Practices

- If a journalism Organization's owners and funders want to form its character according to their political beliefs and ideology, the journalist ought to defend their journalistic independency and refuse to execute a project which opposes to the principles of journalism ethics, whether they disagree or they identify themselves with the opinions imposed/put forward. In case there is direct intervention the journalist's work or a sudden change of line, which obliges them to abandon the codes of conduct they serve, then the journalist can resign, publishing the reasons for which they withdrew. Afterwards, they can activate the conscience clause demanding compensation, which is a conventional obligation among publishers and Editors Associations. A mutually beneficial agreement, which, on the one hand, establishes the journalist's right to unimpeded practice of journalism, and, on the other hand, reinforces the medium's mission for the citizen's complete and pluralistic information.

- In case of the enforcement of guidelines, the journalist must persist in the question of transparency, since freedom of speech is a foundation of democracy and a condition for the exercise of the practice of journalism. The question of transparency, i.e. stating publicly that the Medium of Communication –and the journalist themselves- has a certain position and stands for certain opinions.

- When the owner of a Medium of Communication attempts to openly intervene in the political developments trying to influence public opinion, the same is applicable as for the case of intervention and control over the journalistic product, i.e. denouncing or refusal to it, otherwise the explicit declaration that certain beliefs are expressed.

- In the event that owners/funders say that they respect the Medium's independency, in the case of every intervention, the relationship bounders must be distinct and the transparency in the relationship between both parties must be explicitly stated from the beginning of the cooperation.

- When the owner/funder pursues revision of an article, before it is published, as long as denouncement or refusal by the journalist is not possible, then the article is signed by the Organization or the head of the editorial team.

- With reference to paywalls and subscriber distribution of information by certain online media, a mayor issue emerges: is the information of the public a public good? Can public be classified between those accepting information as merchandise and those surrendering to the intake of general content news and probably to on-demand content by advertisers? An edition's impartiality and independency must be always clear. The need for a more commercial nature of the Media should not make the editors less impartial and less objective. Transparency regarding the funding is always preferred in the online content of Media of Communication.

- The New Media as a whole must establish new operating rules and present them in a transparent way, in order to ensure their economic self-sufficiency and survival, as well as journalistic independency and their organization quality, advocating the public interest (New Media must have integrated Quality Assurance Systems, the first step being a mission statement and a self-commitment /self-regulation framework).

- It is recommended that the shareholder composition (shareholders, stakeholders, stockholders, trustees) with their percentages exists in a published version. Readers must have a complete idea about funding (donators, sponsors, supporters).

Employees' financial interests

Employees must avoid behaviours or activities –political, social or economic- that might cause conflict of interests or hinder the possibility of fair, exact and unbiased –from any factor- reporting of the facts.

This policy is impossible to deprive the employee of every right, whereas in the event of resulting doubts, the employee should consult their manager immediately and from the beginning.

Journalism professional space has been always exposed to economically or politically appealing imperatives, to such extent that freedom of speech defender and philosopher Baroness O' Neil, in 2012, stated that: "journalists and editors must absolutely make their economic, commercial and property interests known". In conclusion, he underlined that: "Since we expect from other people to be sincere about their asset declaration, as well as about their political beliefs, journalists must be equally sincere".

"All journalists ought to report to their supervisors any conflict of interests".

When a journalist takes over for the first time to cover or work on a story, they must disclose to their direct supervisors every relative (if any) business, commercial, economic or private investment activity, which can be rationally interpreted as a real or potential conflicting parallel activity that is not consistent with the profession of journalism. This also includes situations of people, where spouses, members of the family or close friends develop an activity within the aspects of the economy the journalist is working on.

This category does not contain investments by the journalist or their spouse, a member of their family or their partner, in mutual funds or in capital funds invested by financial organizations consultants.

Nobody must benefit themselves personally from knowledge deriving from financial research, until this knowledge becomes publicly known. In the event of disputing the journalist's intentions, they shall enter into consultation with the editor-in-chief or with an independent consultant.

Employees who write articles on a regular basis and cover the financial news must not possess investment dividends or shares in a company or multinational corporation or joint enterprise or industry that, above from that, is regularly part of the news.

Employees in the financial news reports must also avoid investment activities that yield long-term profits, because such activities can lead to the impression that the employees try to manipulate the market by channeling information which is not consonant with public interest. A particularly significant example is what happened in 1999 in the Athens Stock Exchange, in Greece.

Journalists working on the financial news report, and whose information is based on "inside sources" belonging to the Medium, are forbidden to use information they obtain from inside, until this becomes known to the general public.

Practices

- The journalist, in many cases, is a specialized partaker, and this specialization often makes them independent towards the editor, or even the Medium itself. At the same time, it makes him depend from the "source". When this is translated into an economic source, then the credibility and impartiality of the news item published is disputed even by their own colleagues.

- The journalist has a personal life, their own interests, beliefs and hobbies. Equally normally, the journalist must maintain their reputation, avoiding, at the time of exercising their practice, any conflict of interests.

- Every element of particular economic interest for a journalist working in the financial reports, or for their relatives, must be communicated to the Journalism Organization management.

- As the Washington Post and Guardian Codes of Conduct cite: "Journalists make any effort for their public, avoid any mistakes, and carry out a work of information, without fabricating stories". If there is any doubt, the employee must address to the supervising authority of their department.

- The Medium can set restrictions on a financial reporter's news reporting, who is doing research on capital shares and dividends, in which the journalist's family members have a significantly big participation, and if the latter has not made this "relation" known to the Medium.

- The financial reporter ensures that they will not publish inaccurate information and data, and make clarify in their article in which point they talk with facts, in which with assumptions and in which conjectures.

Acceptance – Rejection of Gifts and Awards

AWARDS

It is very important that the journalist does not fall into the trap of adjusting their job to the terms of the competition (e.g. text length, video duration criteria or a specific approach of a story), with the only goal to participate and achieve a distinction. It's unethical and is contradicting to what the profession stands for. They no longer act like journalists and they are carried far away from their main purpose, which is no other than satisfy the needs for correct and non-biased information of their public.

The competition authority must be representative of the scope of the journalist's research and reflect their own values, as well as those of the Medium they work for. If, for instance, the journalist adopts the values of a Journalism Organization that defends the model of objective journalism, they must participate in the corresponding competitions. If, from the other hand, they belong to the opinion articles field, they can search and accept awards from such organizations promoting this specific field of journalism.

In the event that the awards coming from non-journalistic groups, such as bar associations, social activism groups, political bodies and companies, even if the judges' panel is composed of fellow journalists: This raises, almost always, questions about the transparency and the relationship model between the two parties. The impartiality of a journalist's reporting that might cover in the future the action of such professional, activist or political bodies or groups, might be put into question.

Journalists do not receive awards from business organizations, even if the latter have no ideological position. By these means, however, they guarantee their independency towards the possibility of gaining publicity for free, which would result from their winning an award for said company. This applies even when the distinction, although it comes from a journalism group, mentions the name of a company as a sponsor.

In the event that a Medium wins an award without prior interest in competing on its behalf, then the Group or journalist has the choice to decline the award, with their written statement or public letter to the competition authorities. They can also accept the award, even publish the distinction, excluding however any suspicion of favour. At last, they can ignore the award completely, without accepting the distinction or making it public.

It goes without saying that the journalist should not have accepted any kind of gift, material, from the authority organizing nor having personal relationship with a member of the jury.

GIFTS, FREE TRIPS AND OTHER PRIVILEGES

Acceptance or offering of gifts by journalists can influence the information objectivity and quality or/and lead to questioning the independency of a journalist (or the medium of communication as a whole).

Whether it is a well-intended gesture within the framework of a company or other organization hosting the journalist, whether it is an indirect funding aiming to fill the gap that a journalist's low earnings create to their income –or worst, the total lack of earnings- any gift (or other benefit, such as a trip) might be perceived as a move aiming to indirectly influence the Medium's opinion.

Even if the journalist is impartial, the mere fact that they received a gift jeopardizes their credibility. Even if the Medium takes a particular "line", or the journalist belongs to the school of personal opinion articles, the exchange of gifts customarily is considered to be unethical and unprofessional.

Practices

- The type and value of the gift greatly affect both the attitude the journalist will hold, and the impact on public opinion. If it is pennyworth, there is no problem. For more valuable gifts (e.g. an expensive mobile phone), it is recommended to be given away to charity or returned in order not to form a dependency relationship between the donator and the journalist, and certainly not to create the impression that there is such a relationship.

-In any case, the redemption of a gift or its resale from the recipient journalist is completely unacceptable, as it strengthens the sense of bribery.

-An important parameter regarding the present is whether this is offered personally to a journalist or to a group of journalists. Thus, a gift given to all those who covered a press conference is considered to be acceptable (if the value within reasonable - morally not reproachable limits), compared to a gift given secretly and individually, possibly in exchange for a certain kind of coverage.

-It is important that the systematic acceptance of gifts, especially if it comes to money, not objects, creates a dependency relationship and inevitably affects, to a greater or lesser extent, the credibility of the journalist. Much more if it has to do with the inclusion in some secret and informal payroll status of a large corporation or an organization.

-Many freelance journalists are forced to accept some "aid", as they are unable to pay to cover a journalistic report or a conference. In this case, it is appropriate that they mention themselves their sponsor in their coverage.

-In multi-day journalistic missions that may also have quite the character of a leisure travel, particularly if the journalist is invited together with their spouse/partner, there must be a reporting which would certainly indicate the organizing company.

- Many times, particularly in missions abroad, gifts are offered as part of hospitality. Failure to accept the gift in this case, could offend the host. If the gift is very expensive and can be seen as an attempt to influence the quality of the final journalistic "product", it is suggested to offer it for charity later.

-Free tickets for performances, sporting events and all kinds of shows may fall under the category of facilitating the exercise of the profession.

- Discounts to Mass Media employees from telcos companies, airlines etc. should be accepted only if also available to other types of companies - not only to media.

- Particular care is required when it comes to gifts given retrospectively, and which can be considered a reward for a specific service (e.g. to members of a committee of journalists who vote for the best film, the best books, the best car etc.). Such gifts must be returned, and this return must be made public in a plausible way.

TWO NEW YORK TIMES TEMPLATES

1. **Gift rejection letter template**
   Dear Sir/Madam,
   I have recently received your gift and I admit that it was a pleasant surprise for me. Thank you for being so thoughtful. However, if I accept your gift, I come in a very difficult position, as the New York Times does not encourage editors and reporters to accept anything from the persons or groups they "cover". The newspaper will not want to compromise its integrity, leaving the readership with the suspicion that it could cover a story more thoroughly or distort its controversial elements, when the interested parties have expressed their appreciation for the effort being made. For this reason, I must return your gift, with the hope that you understand our position. To conclude my letter, please accept the expression of my respect, hoping that you experience a minimal part of the appreciation I had when writing it.
   Yours faithfully,

2. **Award rejection letter template**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The recent letter I received informed me that I had been selected to receive an award from ...., and I admit that this was a pleasant surprise for me. Thank you for being so thoughtful. With unlimited appreciation towards your feelings about me, but also towards this award, I wish to inform you that your decision puts me in a very difficult position. The New York Times does not encourage editors and reporters to accept prizes awarded by the persons or companies associated with interest for the stories "covered" by the beneficiaries of the awards. The newspaper would not want to compromise its integrity, leaving the readership with the suspicion that it could cover a subject more carefully or it could distort the elements in question, because the interested parties have rewarded its authors for the effort being made. For this reason, I have to decline the award, with the hope that you understand our position. To conclude my letter, please accept the expression of my respect, hoping that you experience a minimal part of the appreciation I had when writing it.

Yours faithfully,

Freelancers

People who want to work in the journalistic profession as our Media's freelance workers are subject to the following limitations:

Their work as freelancers should not be a factor for a conflict of interests, neither for themselves nor for every Medium.

Such activities should not be involved with the journalist’s professional responsibilities, including their availability on the news gathering.

Activities of this form should not take advantage of the Medium's name or the employee’s position with the Medium without prior approval of the Medium itself.

The final product will be presented before the Medium for approval before being given to any outside publisher, acquirer or transponder. In no case will the Medium proceed to expenditures for research material not used for the purposes of the Medium itself.

SOCIAL MEDIA RULES

Social media and News

SUPPORT OF PURPOSES AND EXPRESSION OF OPINION BY JOURNALISTS

Profiles on social networks give journalists the opportunity to show that they behave like people with opinions, feelings and personal experiences. At the same time, a journalist who publishes opinions, their own or these of others, is a representative of the news Organization for which they work.

OBJECTIVE NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

‣In a news Organization that focuses on broadcasting news reports in an impartial and neutral way, journalists must -say the least- avoid expressing opinions on issues raising intense controversies. A journalist's tweet and pos» with a dogmatic style and a strong expression of opinion can easily be associated to the news Organization as a whole and hurt its reputation as an impartial medium. This, in turn, can harm the relations of the Organization with the public, customers and sources.

‣For a journalist's non-news relating posts, these can also be associated to the Medium for which they work, if they include a controversial view. The same applies if the journalist expresses views on an issue they do not cover. Generally, it is advisable to avoid topics that give rise to controversy, because, sometime in the future, the reporter may be asked to cover different topics, or one employee's views may influence another employee's possibility to cover the topic.

‣For topics relating to sports or entertainment, it may be acceptable for journalists who are not covering these categories, to comment on them on social media. Although writing enthusiastic praises or biting reviews can, even here, create problems. Exception to all this can be specific journalists, including columnists, or bloggers for which expressing their opinion is undeniably a part of their job.

MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION WITH A DECLARED POLITICAL LINE

(ADVOCACY-ORIENTED)

In this case, also journalists expressing opinions may not be a problem -on the contrary, it can fit the character and form of the general intervention. However, it is good for the journalist to handle every case separately, and always in relation to the targeting of said news Organization. It goes without saying that the journalist in these media does not publish contents that trigger political passions or justify violence of any kind.

In conclusion:

The journalist in social media must maintain balance between their professional status and their personal life and privacy. To this purpose, they should be aware that even some posts or messages intended as private, can be easily shared, just like an email can be forwarded and conversations can be recorded. Thus, journalists should never consider that their posts are private and not professional, and violate the Code of Conduct of the Medium they work for. Virtually, as they are in the environment of social media, they are constantly in plain view. Social media highlight the fact that journalists are seen by the public all day long.

WHAT ABOUT RETWEETS, REBLOGGING AND REPOSTS?

The best practice is to add a comment on other posts to place them in the proper context, so that reposting an article or an opinion cannot be construed as endorsement. Our Organizations consider retweets and shares of articles with harsh opinions acceptable, provided that the journalist profile on each social network makes it clear that the retweeting does not mean endorsement.

The most common practice for journalists of major news organizations and newspapers is to indicate under bio the phrase "RTs are not endorsements", namely: "Retweets do not imply endorsement, or, more simply, retweet does not mean that I agree with what I reproduce."

ANGRY CONVERSATIONS

In general, journalists should avoid engaging themselves in angry conversations with fellow journalists, sources, or members of the public on any topic. They have the obligation to treat others with respect. There may be some exceptions-for example, journalists who are paid to openly express opinions, can benefit their news Organization by flaring up a bit the debate on a topic; however, they should be very careful not to exceed the limits and reach to verbal abuse.

Even journalists working for advocacy-oriented Media can, of course, participate in the social debate on topics of general interest, which encourages the exchange of views and helps the information of viewers and readers.

MENTIONING THE IDENTITY

In general, journalists should appear eponymously on social media, giving the name and the Medium they work for, in the bio info of their profiles on the different social networks. Few exceptions can apply to this rule - for example, a journalist can be allowed to create a profile/account in order to act secretly for the needs of a journalistic investigation. This practice is dangerous and should be chosen very rarely and only in cases of high investigative importance, which cannot be investigated by any other means. However, mentioning the name and the medium is not enough, in order for the journalist to win the bet of credibility on social media. When they meet a source in person, they can prove who they are and win the trust of the other, by showing their journalistic ID or professional card. On social networks, reliability and trust are gained through persistence and by "building" contacts through interactivity and the "sharing".

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE NEWS

Journalists should only report news coming from official sources, avoid rumors, whether they find them on social media, or they hear about it randomly in a public place. An exception could be if the existence of such a reputation presents itself a certain journalistic interest (for example, if groundless rumors incite an elected official to give a press conference to clear things out). An exception is justified also in the case of journalists specialized in social media to confirm rumors through crowdsourcing (gathering information from users). In that case, content that is mere rumour should be clearly presented as such. Each Medium has a specific policy on whether and under what conditions the Medium itself, or its journalists, will be able to tweet or post information that has been disclosed by another journalism Organization or another reporter. They can only do so, if they know well the reporter this information came from. Or perhaps only if the source is indicated and reliable. Also, they can only do so, if the Medium they work for has already used this information in coverage.

In most cases, it makes sense for the journalist to reproduce the information coming from a public figure's post. However:

‣The journalist must be sure that the account is original. The best approach is that the reporter asks a representative, whether the account is real/original (and having done this, before the story is out).

‣When the journalist confirms the authenticity of an account, they must learn everything they can about who manages it. They must take better decisions if a celebrity or if an employee of theirs, for example, is the one who actually tweets. The journalist must be very careful of the indications suggesting that an account may have been compromised, such as unusual posts, unexpected grammar mistakes or strongly worded political views.

Regardless of what kind of media the journalist represents, they will have to consider safety issues that may arise from their decision to tweet or post something on social media. Sources, ordinary citizens, reportage protagonists or fellow journalists can be jeopardized by a careless tweet or post, for example to indicate someone's exact location in a war zone or to disclose the identity of a source risking their life to provide information to them. When the reporter is in any doubt as to that, they should not do any post.

In any case, social networks should not be used for the journalist to "cut their way" to a reporting, as other methods, such as getting a phone or hit a door, can provide more reliable and complete information. For example, when a key question on a topic occurs only partly or indirectly from a government official's tweet, the journalist should not compromise or be limited to this: we need to find the very official and learn more.

It is permitted for a journalist to add as a friend or follow a source, however, they have to try to follow or, at least, to attempt, to add friends from both sides of a controversial issue, in order to avoid being accused of bias. At the same time, they should think carefully before adding as a friend or following someone who can provide information anonymously -because this movement might reveal the identity of the source. The journalist must ask the source whether they agree with that, and whether they have doubts; if so, they should avoid it.

Journalists should not assume that anything posted on a social network is public material. Journalists wishing to cite, word for word, a post shared to a very small number of people, it is advisable that they contact the one who made the post, and, at least, to inform them that they intend to cite this post as a reference.

It is recommended that they first confirm that the post they share reflects the general tone/style of that user's posts. In any case, when citing content from posts on social networks, they should clarify that this comes from a social network and which that is.

MISTAKES AND CORRECTIONS

Journalists must do everything possible to avoid mistakes in their posts. A mistake in post on social media should not be considered less serious than a mistake published in any other way.

Given this, mistakes will be made and should be corrected. The best practice on social media is for the journalist to make a new post with the correct information, stating that they correct a previous post and quoting (e.g. with a screenshot) what exactly went wrong. The original post should not be erased for reasons of transparency, unless it can raise questions of slander, insult, or be proven, by any means, legally problematic.

Facebook allows editing a post after publication, and gives readers the possibility to view the history of edits easily. One has to decide whether and how to use such a tool.

A good approach is to edit any post requires correction, and make a complementary post or a comment explaining what has changed and why.

<u>Practices</u>

-Avoid expressing an opinion on social media on topics that raise controversy. Even personal posts, or posts on topics unrelated to the reportage covered by this reporter, can be associated to the Medium and injure its profile as an objective medium.

-The journalist should not consider any of their posts on social media to be personal, as any type of privacy can be violated. Therefore, τhey remain committed to the code of ethics of the Medium they represent, throughout all posts, on all topics, and all day long.

-In the event of reproduction (retweet, repost, reblogging), the journalist must add a comment, setting the context, otherwise simple reproduction may imply endorsement or consensus with the original post.

-The journalist should avoid engaging themselves in online arguments and angry conversations with other journalists or members of the public. They should always address with respect, not exceed the limits of decency in public discourse, and not drift themselves into insulting remarks. Ardent, yet civilized, conversations are not prohibited for journalists whose main job is to express an opinion, such as columnists, commentators and bloggers.

-The journalist who has a presence on social media acts always eponymously, indicating their name and the Medium they work for.

-Proper indication of the journalist's identity is not sufficient to create trust. Their credibility on social media is built with perseverance and interaction.

- The journalist shares rumours, only if they specify it is a rumour, or if the story has a general journalistic interest, e.g. the person affected will react publicly about it.

-They share news from other media but under some conditions: provided that it is compatible with the policy held in this regard by the Medium they work for; provided that they know well the reporter who made the disclosure; provided that the source is indicated, or provided that the news item has been used in a Medium's coverage.

-Before making an interaction, or retweeting, or reposting a public person or organization, they should make sure that the profile is authentic. They are not content with the special symbol certifying authenticity, but ask if it is an official account.

-Before posting a news item, they consider security issues that may arise; e.g. by this means, they are revealing the identity of a source which in that case would be in danger, or the location of someone who is in a war zone.

-The journalist shall not use the information found on social media, in order to "gain ground" in the story. They get triggered, but they further seek direct contact by phone/email, or in person, for more reliable and comprehensive information.

- They shall add as a friend sources, but they shall make sure that they come equally from both sides in a matter. They shall avoid friend requests to anonymous/hidden sources, as this move could betray a confidential relationship.

-Connection via social media for colleagues in the same medium or newsroom is encouraged, especially when this is done on social networks that do not require acceptance or return (e.g. twitter). Though, this is avoided by supervisors to subordinates.

-If the journalist quotes another person's tweet or post, they inform that person, in case this has been shared to a few people (observing privacy policy), and confirm that this post reflects the general style, or, in other words, is representative of said person's views, and they always indicate that it comes from a social network and which that is.

-When a mistake is made, the journalist is obliged to make a correction in a new post, explaining what the correct information is and how the mistake occurred, without deleting the previous one for transparency reasons, unless ethical and legal issues are raised.

User-generated content (UGC)

In modern times, the ability to gather news content -material- from social networks and other sources, such as social media is an indispensable tool for the journalist. In any case, however, the use of this tool is to be made in such a way to ensure the validity of the information provided.

User-Generated Content (UGC) is defined as any form of content such as blogs, wikis, discussion forums, posts, chats, tweets, podcasts, digital images, video, audio files, or any other form of audiovisual structure that was created by users of an online system or service, often made available via social media websites or provided for use to the Medium".

According to the Associated Press Stylebook, UGC is the term commonly used in the news industry for content with news or editorial value that has been produced by anyone who isn't working as a professional journalist. The term is often referred to as citizen journalism, when members of the public capture news events on their own devices, either by chance or by pursuing a story. UGC may be found via social networks, but could equally be given to a reporter on the scene of a news event.

Cooperation with the public/readers enables the journalist, using important information and spectacular images, to add a new dimension to news covering, and sometimes to such an extent, that otherwise it would either unnoticed or treated as of minor importance.

In some cases, the public is the one who covers 100% of an incident. At the end, this material, after being processed and composed, is incorporated in an online Medium news report in the form of text, pictures, video and virtual products (VR).

However, UGC raises a general concern with moral content: how accurate and valid is ultimately the content shared by users and what about the protection of both personal data and intellectual property?

• Our journalism organizations, while encouraging journalists to use UGC, however, they can't help but warning them that publishing inaccuracies, which would lead to public misinformation, must be avoided at any costs.

• Additionally, protection of informal colleagues' personality, security and personal data in a journalism Agency must be guaranteed.

UGC ACCURACY AND VERIFICATION

‣ Verification must precede any other action. The news Organization controls every UGC, using all available technological and human resources, to confirm the accuracy of information. If the story cannot be verified in a satisfactory manner, it should not be used.

‣Transparency is a tool that can be used to verify a story. As long as a UGC has a satisfactory level of plausibility, its quick spreading (indicating that the information is not fully ascertained), and at the same time calling the public for additional information, can lead to confirmation. The more details collected by the journalist, the better. If, in the end, it is proven that the news item is incorrect, and the reporter realized that they are dealing with unreliable material, they should explain themselves what happened. However, this approach involves the risk of spreading false information and misinforming the readers, even temporarily.

‣Recourse to the help of others, including other news organizations or colleagues from other media, etc. is also an instrument that can be used to verify an UGC.

‣ Today, technology provides all necessary tools to verify the content validity from users. It also gives the possibility of verifying the truth through UGC, as it was proven in the case of the 2011 London riots (Guardian).

AUTHORISATION, COPYRIGHTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCES

‣Authorization for publication before using any UGC is a process followed by several media, as it is considered important to let the creator know in which way their material is going to be used. Authorization may be written or oral, formal or informal (some consider a simple "ok" to be sufficient in terms of using websites).

‣The UGC origin should be indicated in a prominent position on the site (with a hyperlink or the magazine/newspaper in which it is used, or mentioned by the journalist in case it is broadcast, unless otherwise instructed by the content creators themselves).

‣Journalism organizations shall use an UGC once it is verified, in accordance with the applicable standards, with or without authorization for publication. Indication relates to the Media incorporating UGC into a website or in a mobile app, as this is permitted by a social network terms and conditions. Motivation for such "loose" attitude towards copyrights may be the fact that some news is so valuable that makes you forget any legal consequences. This approach can sometimes be vindicated in a court, but it raises serious questions in terms of morality.

‣While using UGC, one shall describe as thoroughly as possible, using extra texts and captions, where a piece of information was found and how it was verified. This is imperative, considering it is a content generated by non-professionals.

SECURITY AND SENSIBILITY MATTERS

‣When a reporter gets in touch with an ordinary man who is in a dangerous area - such as a crime scene, or an accident or a natural disaster place, or a war zone - they should encourage them to remain in a safe place. Non-professional journalists should never be asked to gather information in a place where their safety may be compromised.

‣Sometimes, even simple contact must be avoided with people who could give any information, if this could put them at risk, or reveal their being in the place, or because even the mere act of communication can distract them, resulting in relaxation of the applicable security measures. In such cases, it is better to wait until the risk is gone.

‣Journalists must be able to understand a "citizen-journalist" 's emotional state, and to remember that they can still sow panic, being the first to give alarming information to people with whom they communicate. Special sensitivity must be also shown when contacting people who have just went through a significant personal loss. In such situations, it may be necessary to avoid collecting UGC.

‣Special care is required when using images, as revealing identity of people who appear in images and video, possibly not to their knowledge, may put them at risk. Therefore, the people's consent must be sought, before uploading-viewing this type of content, otherwise one should either crop these images, or cover their faces. This means that an editing should take place before publication to guarantee that there the people appearing will not be identified.

REFERENCE TO UGC:

When a journalist uses or refers to UGC, they should be clear as to how the content is referred to. Particular attention shall be paid to the matter of attributing properly the information to the source, whether it is a photo caption, an audio clip, a video, or even a chart.

DIGITAL TEXTS DELETION

Post corrections

In online media, where the speed is a necessity, and with the frequent lack of supervision on the content, there is fertile ground for errors, which creates a significant need for clarity. Our own Media have the courage to admit their mistake and convince the public thanks to their sincerity.

In *Regret the Error* Craig Silverman writes in this regard:

We will always make mistakes. The process of gathering, packaging, editing and publishing/broadcasting news is rife with opportunities for things to go wrong. Every part of the process has potential points of failure. Preventing mistakes is of huge importance, but so too is setting the stage to correct them quickly and fully by taking advantage of the networked news environment. Doing so not only meets our obligations to the public, but can in fact build trust and help us feel better about our work as journalists. Bottom line: corrections are important.

These guidelines attempt to provide options on how we can set rules for online correction of errors: First of all, digital media must adopt the CTA "correction button". This will allow users to recommend corrections and strengthen ties with the public. Any post correction is recommended to take place in a new post, stating clearly in the title that this is correction. The corrected post must be detailed as to the false publication, while in both, links should be added, at the beginning and at the end of the text. The same classification must be kept in the same post field, as well the same keywords and tags. In any case, the correction must be honest and generous and show the Medium's strength, acknowledging the mistake.

With regard to other online media platforms, including digital news websites, twitter, face book, personal blogs and others: When journalists commit errors in tweets, which can be corrected, they have the possibility to simply delete this tweet, but this method does not acknowledge the error and leaves a bit of misinformation without correction, allowing it to spread. But how can we stop the spreading of false information? Silverman suggests that news organizations and journalists try to spread the correction on the same platform, which shared the original hyperlink and/or content. This technique helps to disperse the correction and contributes to correct information. Journalists carry the responsibility for what they publish, and this even includes helping the public to realize any subsequent corrections. When there is an error in a text on the site, and this is corrected, they need to add a note saying the text was corrected.

Silverman proposes that correction be indicated, if the original mistake was a factual error or if it created certain confusion to the reader to such extent that clarification is required. This way, the Editor shows their commitment to accuracy and responsibility towards the public, and helps to build the trust.

False or misleading material should be corrected with material of greater or equal effect, without having a passive aggressive attitude towards criticism. The correction must be done in an efficient and timely manner, so that it does not strengthen the wrong material. A correction needs to be clear as to what it is requested to correct, but it should be concise and not repeat false or misleading material for long.

In conclusion:

The time needed to consider correction rules, either at institutional or individual level, must come before committing a major mistake. Every possible care should be taken to avoid mistakes, but applying a stable framework of rules may help to build trust and help journalists to feel better about their work.

Deletion of files

The deletion of published texts raises not only ethical, but also moral questions. News groups often receive requests for deletion of reportages posted, especially after judicial and police cases. The journalism organization and the author should examine the validity of the requests, assess the need to intervene afterwards in the text and to act respecting the principles of the journalistic profession, but also caring for those involved in the reporting, to whom damage from publicity may have been caused.

The general guideline is not to delete texts, but to add the newest data from the reported case and change the title, under the explicit condition to include a note stating and justifying the changes made to the original publication.

The positive or negative response to a request for data deletion on published texts lies at the discretion of a journalism Organization. The half way between absolute refusal and deletion is updating the publication, only if there is data from the final result of a case.

Journalists must tend a listening ear to those who said that their research caused them moral damage and had negative consequences. Provided that there is a reference to serious consequences caused by the reportage, the journalist must be sensitive and consider alternative ways of treating their text.

The rules of ethics one must apply in such cases are based on principles, such as covering facts truthfully, minimizing side effects, transparency and responsibility towards the public. If, however, there is a contradiction between some of these principles, then one needs to resort to policy regarding matters made by the Organization the journalist works for and ask for at least some directions.

Practices

Some of the cases involving a matter of deletion or editing of texts from a website are:

ARRESTS, CRIMINAL CHARGES

Many times, the Media are often requested to change the content in a news report that have published, relating to arrests and criminal charges. A very basic principle is that the reporter shall not delete published content from digital files, but they can be more precise, by updating and completing the text, even the titles thereof. An important parameter that must be taken into account when deleting files from texts that have become public, is the public's interest for a serious case. So, if one wavers between a request from a person involved in the case and the public interest, one should take note of the circumstances. These will determine which way the scales are tipped.

Some special conditions that must be borne in mind for the final decision are:

•ELIMINATION: If there is complete and documented evidence that an arrest was removed from the criminal record of a person involved in a serious case, then the journalist must bear this in mind.

An exception to the above may be that criminal charges are against a prominent and well-known member of the society, or that there is the suspicion of an intervention from above to clean the criminal record. Also, if a conviction is removed from someone's criminal record due to good behavior, then the journalist can decide not to delete this report from the file of the Organization they work for.

• WITHDRAWAL: If charges are withdrawn based on evidence, then the journalist can go back to the text and add the development, though without erase the case history. Updated can be also the title, if this mentioned the name of the person who had been originally charged. It would be good to add a note specifying that the text has been updated and contain the original title. An URL change is examined based on the case.

• ACQUITTAL: Where there is a proven acquittal of the accused, it is again recommended to update the original report and not withdrawing. For the title, the previous cases model can be followed: changing, but indicating, and reference to the text with the original title. The acquitted person's name can only be deleted from the list of criminals, if it had been included.

• INACCURACY: If the news report contained some inaccuracies, the preferred approach for the journalist is to admit and to mention the error in the same text rather than in a new one. Only if the text causes serious harm to the person mentioned, it can be deleted. But even in that -last resort- case, the journalist should leave a brief note in the URL, explaining what happened and why the article was entirely removed.

• SAME NAME: In case of confusion due to identical names, it is recommended to make a clear distinction on who is involved in the charges.

DELETING MATERIAL FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

General guidelines on corrections on Social Media suggest editing or admitting the error in following posts. The guidelines are the following:

Twitter: Tweets cannot be changed once published. It is better, however, to correct one wrong with a new one, rather than delete the tweet. However, as the original tweet appears often in the users' timeline either individually or via retweets, rather than in an apparent sequence in which the corrected tweet follows it, the question of deleting it arises in the following cases:

‣If there is an evident error

‣If it may be considered libelous

‣If the account has been hacked, and false tweets are posted

‣If offensive tweets are sent by an affected worker

‣If incorrect information is being spread

For transparency and ethical reasons, when someone deletes a tweet, they would better explain why, even if at that time no response or reproduction has been made, especially when it contains incorrect information. A note: in the post correcting a tweet that could be considered libelous, it is recommended to avoid that adjective and use the term "inappropriate" as a public explanation for its deletion.

If a spelling mistake is spotted, the post can be deleted only if spotted seconds after it was published and while there is no response or retweet yet. Of course also in that case, it is advisable to admit one's mistake and to indicate it in the newest post. If they do not see in time, they must not delete the tweet, but use a little humor ... if necessary, in a replying or subsequent tweet.

Facebook: One can correct all their posts. If it is something more serious than a misspelling, a clarification should be added with the changes made. If a serious question is raised, such in similar cases as the above mentioned for twitter, then after the deletion a new post should be made, stating that there has been a previous post deletion.

Photos and video: The main reason for deleting a photo or a video is their being proven to be forged. However, even in this case, an explanation should be given on the decision to delete it. Also, in cases where a person who is shown in a photo accompanying a text, becomes a target of comments on social media, and therefore asks to delete the photo in question, the creator of the text must show understanding. If anyone has doubts about what to do and how to handle each case, they may consult an ethics council of a journalism organization or a professor who teaches ethics in journalism departments. An important parameter is that the author can document their decision, because, if they cannot justify it to the public, it was probably not the right one!

Practices

-In general, deleting an original text is not recommended.

-One must examine all possibilities before deleting a text. For example, one can update a title that will be accurate and properly come out on a Google or another engine search. Alternatively, one can choose not to make the text accessible to the search engines, but to continue to exist within the Internet platform that posted it.

-The author must bear in mind that if they allow their personal acquaintances or contacts to influence the decision, their credibility is at risk. The main factors one should focus on are whether the information is accurate and whether a person is harmed, no matter what person that is.

-In cases of acquittal, withdrawal of charges and similar judicial developments, once a request is placed by the people involved, the journalist can make additions and updated without erasing history.

-The title may change, if it is proven the the person involved has been acquitted; however, the journalist had better write a note including the original title.

-The author is entitled to refuse to add developments on a court case, if they have evidence that the acquittal of the person involved in the case or withdrawal of charges was due to intervention "from the above" to clean their criminal record.

-Photos and video shall only be erased, if it is proved that they were false, or they depict persons to whom the post caused moral damage.

-Particularly for social media, the same rules apply, and it is the author's obligation to inform on a later post why they deleted the older one.

-In the event of correction of a post, it is advisable to indicate clearly what the correction is.

COMMERCIAL POLICY

News and Advertisement: where and how the limits are set

Advertisers are looking for new ways, other than traditional entry or advertising banner to get their message across. They want their ad to look "intrinsic" - i.e. as if it is an integral part of the journalistic content - because this increases the reliability of the advertising message.

Up to the point where professional journalistic independence and dignity begins to be under threat.

The evaluation of the content should be done before publishing and should observe the internal code terms on advertising, and other criteria. Any variation should immediately be reported to the head of the competent department of the Medium (the establishment of quality control department of the Medium is recommended), and to keep records.

News reports, referring to companies and their products, to services or events, shall not exceed the limits of indirect advertising.

Exceeding the limits is particularly likely to happen, when publications exceed justified public interest or the reader's right to information. The credibility of the Press as a source of information requires particular care in public relations material management, and in elaborating journalistic directives by the respective Editorial. This also applies to unrevised promotional texts, advertising images and promotional design.

Integrated advertising can include articles written by the editorial staff, but that have clear specific viewpoints, or that contain references to a specific product, as determined by the advertiser. Also, the advertiser can provide the entire text and ask the media to appropriately edit it in terms of journalistic stylistics. The advertiser may also want to promote the material through the Medium's platforms on Social Media.

However, any content that exceeds the limit of advertising should be labeled, i.e. labeling language should be included.

The danger lurking is to give the public the impression that, since the Editorial is willing to make concessions for a brand today, it can, theoretically, repeat it tomorrow at the behest of a political party.

The Medium should also avoid gaining the reputation of publishing articles very often "upon payment", thus losing its readers' trust and not being able to attract high standards journalists.

In any case, every Medium of ours must develop a specific policy to reduce risks, by establishing an internal ad code with clear regulations, in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts, and to reduce the financial and human cost resulting from any mediation or lawsuit.

This ad code will ensure transparency as a critical quality standard in journalism. Administration will specifically describe the relationship between the Organization and advertisers.

In conclusion, each Medium will decide and determine only the policy to be applied on the matter of advertising, depending on its inviolable principles of journalism, but also on its economic self-efficiency.

A general principle would be to acknowledge the ad as such somehow and separate it clearly from the journalistic product.

Entries must be configured so that the advertising is clearly distinguishable as such to the reader, and, therefore, distinct from each journalistic content. For paid entries, advertising rules apply.

<u>Practices</u>

-Advertisers can request special on-demand sections, in order to integrate them in their advertising, and the Medium is permitted to produce them. Advertisers, however, are not legitimized to have a say on the content of reports and photographic material, or to generally involve in the content produced by journalists.

-If advertisers want a text in the form of reportage to be included to a special session, it should be expressly stated that it is promotional text. Recommended terminology for these cases: "Content sponsored by that company." If the text is much like reporting, it should be accompanied by an explicit statement that the article was written by the advertiser, and that the Medium's editorial staff had no involvement in it.

-In order to ensure that the advertising content is clearly distinct from the journalistic one, some indicated ways is to use another color for the background, another font, or to separate it from the journalistic content with bold lines.

-Even tweets or posts published on social media via the media accounts, sharing at the same time a hyperlink into promotional material, must bear a clear indication that it is sponsored or advertising content.

-The Medium management should have adopted separate policies that ensure clear distinction between information and advertising content.

-The Management should have set up Control and Competitiveness Mechanisms to ensure the independence of journalistic content from advertisers, as well from every other interest.

-The relations between the media and advertisers should be transparent and based on clear procedures for the presentation of advertising. For example, comparing advertising to ethical codes, advertising pricing and distribution to advertisers of information relating to the public, are examples of the procedures to be made public by the media.

-It should be noted that some advertisers have their own codes of ethics and their own views about the media and their quality. They see advertising not only as an opportunity for economic growth, competition, innovation, and employment challenges, but also as a tool that supports sustainable development, social responsibility and corporate governance.

-All publications should include a link to the Advertisers and Promoters Commission Code of Conduct, as well as link to the EU Directive on Cookies (2011).

Journalists should prevent the development of any public distrust, by not enabling the influence of third parties on the content of publications: journalistic material and advertising cannot be correlated. Particular attention shall be paid in the following cases:

‣When third parties offer ideas and make suggestions, including some kind of favour in return.

‣When free or heavily subsidized trips or benefits are offered.

‣When promise is sought for publicity in advance.

‣When products or services are presented as information to consumers.

‣When third parties, for example, public relations agencies or organizations act under communication terms. This applies, in particular, to areas where advertising is in the bounds of the law, for example, pharmaceuticals, tobacco, alcohol and advertising aimed at children.

‣In case of publicity on business and organizations products, so that there is no unfair promotion.

‣In case of publicized sale of the Medium's goods or services.

‣When it comes to trade cooperation, one should explicitly state what this is and which the conditions for this are.

‣When products or trademarks are presented with product placement indication.

Finally, attention should be given to determining the general principles regulating the relations with advertisers:

‣Ad entries are related to the promotion of goods, services and ideas.

‣Advertising is an economical tool for attracting and engaging consumers and "users", and the media are advertising agencies.

‣For those media that have both journalistic and advertising content, it is important that they understand the expectations and needs of interested people, especially civil society, on the one hand, and advertisers, on the other. These two may not coincide.

‣The public expects to find in the content of the media reliable and transparent information that will allow freedom of opinion and freedom of choice.

‣Advertisers aspire to a positive projection, with an impact on sales, and on the reputation of the products, services and ideas they are promoting. The advertisement can be informative, but this is not necessary.

‣The public should be able to make a clear distinction between advertising and other content of a Medium, because it has different goals and interests.

‣For those Media projecting only advertising, consumer promotions, events or brand news, none of the above is applicable.

‣The necessity to publish each time, not only the Advertisers and Promoters Commission Code of Conduct, but also the EU Directive on Cookies (2011) is pointed out again. Furthermore, with regard to notifying whether policies on Cookies are accepted or declined, the text should be detailed, legible, and placed in a prominent position.

OBLIGATIONS OF JOURNALISTS – THE MEDIUM

Corporate Transparency and Accountability

It is at the discretion and intention of the Media, but also at the established trust that it shows to its reporters/colleagues, to let the latter, for the sake of their article, to make self-referential publications on the medium they work for. However, confidential content publications concerning the Medium shall be avoided.

Sometimes, it is necessary for a journalist to make reference to the media group they work for. When the news is good, there are rarely problems, unless the reporting praises the role of the news to an excessive extent, in comparison to the actual role they play. However, when the news is referring to bad/adverse events, then practices differ.

Our media assign the story to a journalist and let him to do the research, and get in touch with the company executives. The story is then made public, like any other story, and is not checked by the senior management of the group. The integrity of new reports depends on the clear news line the Agency applies, without intervention from above.

A compromise solution is to have stories in the Organization approved by an experienced author or editor-in-chief, but not by the editorial director or editorial managers of the group. Under this authority, this author has the ability to grant the story the proper perspective, but without engaging in this, business or administrative issues, which may drive them away from the necessary information the story should transmit to the public.

In conclusion: Journalism must have no limits. A condition for the journalist's independence should also be (when required by the subject of their work) their freedom to refer to publications of the medium they work for.

‣The news organization a journalist works for, should clarify, from the beginning, to the employee the limits within which they are "allowed" to act.

‣The journalist, when making reference to their employer Organization, shall do with contemplative discipline, knowledge, and consciousness, so that the article published does not injure the Medium.

Employment relationships

To the basic question whether employees are, in principle, permitted, under dependent employment relationship, to enter into partnerships with other journalistic organizations, there are two approaches to test the possibility of conflict of interest and freedom of choice of part-time employment at leisure time.

A. PROHIBITION OF PARALLEL EMLOYMENT

A strict approach totally excludes employment mismatch, because it considers that there is, by default, a conflict of interest, whether they are widely recognized competitive Media, or not. Publishing Organizations do not hire as freelancers, journalists from competing media, not due to the ideology the other media serve (difference of views and ideas, equity capital, shareholders), but also due to the remotely opposite perception of journalism they serve (concept of objectivity, neutrality, viewpoint, etc.).

PARALLEL EMPLOYMENT UNDER CONDITIONS

Employees should be free beyond their basic obligations, provided that no conflict of interest occurs, i.e. that the journalist's name is not linked to the Medium in which they are mainly employed. In any case, the journalist's independence shall not be compromised, while a primary task is the freedom and objectivity of information. In these cases, it is recommended that every Medium has established an internal Control and Competitiveness Mechanism, to identify a conflict of interests situation; and, when assessed that there is competition, the journalist should not work for a competitive medium.

Also, their other employment should be reported, and more specifically, to the Control and Competitiveness Mechanism officers, in order to ensure continuity in the transparency of relations.

Articles should be signed by the journalist, so that their activity is clear to readership. The use of aliases, or appropriation of the Medium's name, both during research and contacting of sources, and final processing of the product, must be avoided.

It has been observed that some journalists work for the medium that hires them on full-time basis, and at the same time collaborate with a competitive Medium using an alias to avoid being noticed by their main employer. In this case, the journalist, in violation of ethics, not only forges their identity, but also alters the product content, creating the suspicion to the readership, both about their own reliability and objectivity and the Medium as communication gatekeeper. Similarly, the journalist must not appropriate the main journalism Organization’s name, in their other activities, and ensure transparency and separation of all activities related to the subject. The Medium must ensure the reliability and objectivity both of itself, and of the employees towards the readership.

A matter of ethics is also the employee's availability and priorities as to their main job. In the event of breaking news or increased obligations, the journalist should be fully available for their main position/job, and may have to end their cooperation with other media.

A news report is the journalist's intellectual product, with the prior consent of their Organization. So, the above requirements are met (information, transparency and signing of the article), one can write a story for a Medium, and, subsequently, give an extension of the story in another Medium (of the same Group) they collaborate with.

The responsibilities of the internal Control and Competitiveness Mechanism include identifying cases of incompatible work and provision of services.

A journalist is absolutely forbidden to exercise parallel activities in case they are employed at communication and personal relationships companies, or they work as scientific associate for politicians and MPs, at Press Offices of Ministries or other institutional bodies.

Personal Codes of Conduct

Journalists caring for ethics and transparency make increasingly more personal self-regulation and ethical statements, to build a kind of trust with their readership.

However, it is difficult for a journalist, working in an organization, to stick to an independent code of conduct. However, the reporter observes the codes of conduct of the Association of Journalists concerned.

DEFINITION OF THE JOURNALIST'S PROFESSIONAL SELF-REGULATION:

The term identifies the journalist's commitment to work consciously, spread the news, serving the Duty of Truth as the ultimate principle, to serve the public interest.

In general, journalists should acknowledge that a personal declaration must stay within the framework of a corporate code, and generally operate within the broader context of the guiding principles laid down by the respective codes of ethics and conduct for journalists (e.g. ESIEA code of conduct and editorial codes of media themselves).

There are three mutually complementary fields in terms of morality and journalistic ethics:

1. The general principles of the journalistic profession (e.g. the ESIEA Code of Conduct, the Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Journalists - Paris 1972, etc.).

2. The corporate code of conduct and ethics (e.g. the code of ethics of the newspaper Le Monde)

3. A personal statement/commitment based on the concept of professional self-regulation of journalists or a personal code of ethics

At a first level, a general code such as Poynter's "New Guiding Principles", is a fundamental statement that informs any act of journalism and leverages its core values. The journalist must seek the truth (Truth Duty) or also be transparent.

1. A journalist searches for the truth and transmits it as fully as possible:

‣ is active on the search of accuracy

‣ is honest, fair and courageous in what concerns collection, transmission and reproduction of information

‣ gives voice to those having no voice, documents what does not seem

‣ exercises control over the powerful, especially those exercising power over the freedom of speech and expression

‣is accountable

2. A journalist has to be transparent:

They should show the way the story was made and why people should believe it. They need to explain about their sources, leads and choices they made. They must disclose what they may not know. They should be guided by intellectual honesty, and their asset must be humility (and not false omniscience).

‣ A journalist must clearly articulate their journalistic approach, whether fighting for independence, or because they approach information from a political or philosophical point of view. They should describe how their point of view has an impact on the information transmitted, including the choice of topics covered and the sources that provide information.

‣ They should acknowledge mistakes and errors, correct them quickly in a way that encourages people who gained false information to finally learn the truth.

3. Their end, not their means, is mobilizing the community, the public and society:

‣ They should try to understand the needs of the community, which wants to serve, and create strong mechanisms to allow other members of community to communicate with them and each other.

‣ To seek and disperse competitive perspectives, without being unduly influenced by those who would use their power or position against public interest.

‣ To recognize that good ethical decisions require individual responsibility enriched by synergy/cooperation.

‣ To seek alternative ways of publication, to minimize the damage caused by their actions and show sympathy towards those affected by their work.

‣ Finally, the journalist is obliged to allow and encourage community members to self-inform. To turn journalism into an ongoing debate, where everyone can responsibly participate and learn.

At a second level, corporate codes of conduct are essentially a set of expectations expressed by each Medium for manifesting specific behaviors. At the third stage, personal ethics code describes a journalist's professional mission and reveals the most important conflicts of interest they have to face.

The key on how corporate code of conduct differentiates from a personal declaration or a personal code of good professional practice, is to understand the latter as an extension of the former. In no case, can Personal Code undermine the values regulating a newsroom.

Freelancers and Fixers

Journalism Organizations, through their regular journalists, often work with freelancers, independent correspondents, stringers (paid per publication) and fixers (people who fix transport and all kinds of support to correspondents, arrange interviews, translate, etc.), a kind of journalists - mediators. Their work is very important, but after completing their work, most of the times, do not maintain any further relation to said journalism Organization.

Practices

-It Is necessary before the beginning of any cooperation with an independent journalist, freelancer, or even fixer, to have an express agreement or even a contract that explicitly lays down each party's obligations and rights.

-Apart from the contractual obligations of an Organization towards its freelancers, there are moral obligations resulting usually from, inter alia, long and fruitful cooperation with some of them.

-The most important thing for a Medium is to indicate that the security of these outside partners is of high importance. They should not risk their lives, or even their health, just to cover a story or take an impressive picture.

-What is required is to describe clearly to independent correspondents, either permanent or under contract, what are their obligations and benefits within a mutually constructive working relationship.

Appearing in other Media

Reporters writing articles and appearing frequently on radio or television news bulletins as panelists, should be encouraged to do so. Journalists should inform the news manager before accepting honors and/or covering of expenses, because they deliver speeches or participate in college and university seminars, or other educational activities, which use the name of the Medium the journalists work for, or the employee represents themselves as an employee of that Medium. The journalist should not accept payments from government boards or any group that would create a conflict of interest. All appearances should be primarily be approved by the head of the department, in which the journalist works.

DATA JOURNALISM

Data and Infographics

THIS IS THE MOST TEMPTING ASSET FOR PLAGIARISM.

ESPECIALLY INFOGRAPHICS

Making journalists familiar with "data journalism" proves to be very important, as they can use it as a tool for approaching the truth. Journalists, however, must be careful, both regarding reliability of graphics and numerical sources, and regarding the way they present their stories in the form of numbers and images. They must preserve accuracy in data journalism, assess their sources and be aware of the risks in the way of displaying data.

Accuracy is perhaps the main concern of journalists working on all formats of data. Numbers, charts and diagrams bring an air of "unquestionable truth" authority that is often missing from other types of information, which, however, are equally subject to the risk of manipulation.

Since a large percentage of journalistic sources use data, numerical illiteracy turns out to be very important. If someone confuses percentage increase with the increase of one percentage point, this would be as embarrassing as misspelling someone's name. Authors should be as specific regarding language data, as they are when describing events, where there is no room for ambiguity and confusion.

The journalist who deals with data and wants to do it correctly, asks themselves the same questions as the ones they would ask any other journalistic source:

• What is the legal interest of the person who gives me this data?

• How has this information been collected, and what time or location may be missing from them?

• How were the questions phrased?

• Can I get a second, independent source for the same information for the same, or a different interpretation?

• What is the margin of error?

• Do I have the knowledge to do the right questions to all these sources?

But during presentation of the data, the key lies in content: Mere numbers do not say absolutely anything about when these are greater or smaller than what they should be, or whether they are the best/worst in a region/country in the world. Presenting them in a historical context, per person or per day, helps them to obtain more meaning.

Personalization, however, i.e. attributing a more personal character to a set of numbers and data, can be just as problematic: if you want to tell users how something affects them on a personal level, it is equally important to have at the same time a sense of the bigger picture.

Visual representations of data can be manipulated by both the source and the journalist. In a diagram, for example, if the base lines used for comparison, do not start from zero, they can be very misleading (a bar may appear twice in height from another, when in fact it is only greater by one percentage point). Besides, there are many cases where the sum of percentages in a poll is greater or less than 100%.

Also, in a pie chart, a piece in the background, can, due to distance, appear to be smaller than an identical piece lying in front. For this reason, the use of three-dimensional effects in the charts should be avoided, as it can cause distortions in proportions, unless the measurement unit is distinguishable.

Questions should be asked regarding the journalist's role in the provision of content, continuous updates and corrections about a topic, when required. More specifically, to what extent, in fact, are details necessary in order for the journalist to tell the story they are supposed to present as news?

A sum of -less personal- information can bring to the surface the general trends of a phenomenon, whereas random checks on the validity of the data can reveal errors in such publicly available information.

Sometimes, when publishing unprocessed data, journalists may not be able to control each column and each row. In this case, it is up to them to decide on the procedures relating to the "right to response" on the behalf of the source or individuals affected by the publication, as well as on the language accompanying the information published, providing guidance to readers and users regarding the degree of credibility of this information.

Journalists must also be very careful regarding the protection of their sources when publishing data from leaks. Metadata stored in files, such as the date and location of access, computers and accounts that have been used, etc., can be used to identify the source (e.g. the case of Lagarde list USB).

QUESTIONS

Journalists must take into account the following questions when dealing with data:

1. What controls can ensure that a data-based publication is accurate?

2. What other sources are sought and what should be sought more regularly?

3. Furthermore, how is data placed in a frame of reference?

4. Is it better to present data in relative terms (e.g. per person) along with historical trends that accompany them?

5. Is it checked how it is collected?

6. Are there ethical issues related to privacy, accuracy and context, to be taken into account, before publishing the data as a whole, or does their publication take place in an automated way?

Thoughts concerning the editors are also related with data upon payment. Is the information provided influenced by financial incentives? Or is it completely unprocessed? Could it be obtained by other means? Some news Organizations, although they have a strict policy against "paying for news", are willing to cover the costs of production and formatting in order to access data (see Guardian's datablog).

Questions also arise with cooperative ventures. Are all parties clear and honest about ethics, values and the roles they share?

And, finally, how can reporters ensure that they are choosing the most important elements, which also may require more work than those which are simply available?

INFOGRAPHICS

The journalist ought to use graphics from reliable sources. They shall not do projections, assumptions or estimations in a graphic. Instead, they create work only out of what they know. The reporter creates maps according to visually perfect and appropriate standards, in order to give an accurate representation of data. The information must be clear and concise. The journalist does not distort or alter data to suit the needs of their visualization. In addition to that, the journalist indicates the sources in each graphic they create, even when it comes to graphics created by journalists in a database.

Practices

-When a reporter gets in touch with public services and bodies, in order to ask for information, they should always request it in spreadsheet format.

-The source of data should always be indicated.

-Numbers, data, are to be frequently updated, and random tests should take pace.

-3D use can distort the proportions in a chart. It adds "fuss", for it had better be avoided.

-More comprehensive and less personal details should be given in a story to make it clearer.

-When publishing unprocessed data, journalists may not be able to control each element, each row or column. In these cases, they must decide for themselves the practices to follow, in order to give the right "to response" to the source, and the language surrounding the information and guiding users regarding their reliability.

It is recommended to enable users to inform journalists about any errors in data needing further checks. In these cases, it is advisable to have a separate and distinct publication on data errors.

RESEARCH-COMPOSITION

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This study was carried out by a research team at the QJNT* Postgraduate Programme of ECI** (Athena Research Center - ARC), and includes definitions and recommended practices for each New Media newsroom. As far as methodology is concerned, the best practices found in the major online Media around the world are set out as a comparison. AP Stylebook editorial rules, which is the reference guide worldwide for web-based media, and the Code of Journalistic Ethics Integration Program, were used as database, within the framework of Online News Association, edited by Associated Press head of Standards , Tom Kent ***.

The purpose of this project is to point out relevant issues, dialogue, and practices optimization around international trends relating to New Media. This process is of evolutionary nature, and editorial rules will be constantly updated.

* Quality Journalism and New Technologies (Donau-Universität Krems - ARC - Botsis Foundation - Media Communication and Technology Research Laboratory - NTUA) ** European Communication Institute. *** Tom Kent is a deputy managing editor and standards editor of the Associated Press.

APPENDIX:

Hellenic Code of Journalistic Ethics

The Code of Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility of the journalists-members of ESIEA (Journalists’ Union of Athens Daily Newspapers) has the purpose to:

-Reaffirm and ensure the journalist's social role in the new circumstances, shaped by gigantism, ownership oligopoly, increased media range and influence, and globalization of communication.

-Discourage and resist to any attempt of state or other influence on self-determining the rules of responsible professional operation.

-Guarantee freedom of information and expression, the journalist's autonomy and dignity, and to shield the freedom of press for the sake of democracy and the society.

TO THIS PURSPOSE, JOURNALISTS COMMIT THEMESELVES TO PUT INTO PRACTICE AND SAFEGUARD THE FOLLOWING FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES:

Article 1

The human and citizen right to inform and be informed freely is inalienable. Information is a social good and not merchandise, or a means of propaganda. The journalist has the right and obligation:

A. To consider as their foremost duty towards society and themselves, the disclosure of the whole truth.

B. To consider as an insult to society and degrading act for themselves, the distortion, concealment, alteration or falsification of facts.

C. To respect and observe the distinction between news, commentaries and advertising message, the necessary correlation between title and text, and the exact use of photographs, images, charts, and other representations.

D. To convey information and news without being influenced by personal political, social, religious, racial and cultural views or beliefs.

E. To investigate in advance, with responsibility and knowledge of the facts, the accuracy of the information and news to be conveyed.

F. To correct, without delay, with a similar presentation and appropriate emphasis, inaccurate information and false assertions, which offend the human and citizen honor and reputation, and to publish or broadcast the opposite point of view, without a necessary rejoinder, which would place them in a privileged position towards the affected person.

Article 2

Journalism, as a profession, but also as a social service, entails rights, duties and obligations. The journalist has the right and obligation:

A. To treat citizens equally, without discriminating against nationality, sex, race, religion, political opinion, economic or social status.

B. To respect individuality, dignity and inviolability of man's and citizen's private life. Only when imposed by the right to information, can the journalist use - always in a responsible manner- data from the private life of persons exercising public functions, or having a special position in society and power, and are subject to social control.

C. To respect the presumption of innocence and not to anticipate judicial decisions.

D. To respect the protection of minors and persons with special needs and serious health problems, guaranteed by international conventions.

E. To treat with tact and sensitivity citizens, when they are in a state of mourning, mental shock and pain, and those with obvious mental problems, avoiding asserting their specialty.

F. Not to disclose, directly or indirectly, the identity of rape victims, who suffered the criminal act.

G. To monitor and document the information referring to the sensitive field of health, where misleading information and sensational projection can cause undue inconvenience to the public.

H. To collect and verify the information and ensure their documentation (documents, photos, audio, video images) with journalistically legitimate methods, always showing their journalistic identity.

I. To observe professional privacy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.

J. To respect off the record information rules, as long as they took this commitment.

Article 3

Political equality and pluralism, the oxygen of democracy, are negated under conditions of state monopoly control of the media and undermined by the concentration of ownership in gigantic speculative corporations, treating public opinion as consumers and trying to manipulate their beliefs, habits and general behavior. Therefore, the journalist has the right and obligation:

A. To strongly defend democracy, which guarantees freedom of press and unhindered exercise of the journalistic profession.

B. To reject and condemn manifestations of state authoritarianism and arbitrariness by the media owners, especially by oligopolies.

C. To defend journalistic independence in the workplace and to refuse to execute a project, which conflicts with the principles of journalistic ethics.

D. To refuse to write news, commentaries and articles, or broadcast, at the instructions of their superiors or their employer, if their content does not reflect reality, and to condemn alterations and distortions of the journalistic product made their knowledge.

Article 4

The surplus of labor in the area of journalism accentuates the preconditions for the manifestation of exploitation phenomena, such as: unsalaried or symbolically paid work, violation of contractual obligations and rules ethics etc . For this reason, the journalist has the right and obligation:

A. to support and strengthen the activities of the trade union organization, to improve payment and employment conditions in media.

B. to reject any attempt of reduction in workers' rights or violation of rules of conduct, in the workplace.

C. not to exercise nor accept any form of discrimination against their colleagues' gender or age.

Article 5

Transparency in financial relations is an essential element of credibility, prestige and professional dignity of the journalist, who has:

A. to neither pursue nor accept remuneration for journalistic work from secret state service and public or private organizations funds.

B. to neither pursue nor accept sinecure or remunerated position related to their specialty in press offices, public institutions or private companies, which puts into question their professional autonomy and independence.

C. to neither pursue nor accept the promotional use of their name, voice or image, except for charitable purposes.

D. neither to report nor to self-interestedly utilize exclusive information influencing the course of the Stock Exchange and the Market.

E. to neither pursue nor accept any benefits in cash and in kind, injuring their credibility and dignity, and affecting their independence and impartiality.

Article 6

Corporate solidarity and mutual respect among journalists contribute positively to collective professional objectives and to the social image of the journalistic profession. For this reason, the journalist has:

A. to respect the personality of their colleagues. Not to accuse them of groundless allegations, and to avoid personal recriminations, publicly and in workplaces.

B. to consider any plagiarism to be serious unprofessional practice.

C. not to appropriate the work of their colleagues. To always mention the name of the author whose texts or extracts uses. To cite the source of the information already published or broadcast.

Article 7

Media gigantism and communication globalization significantly increase the educational and cultural role of the electronic and printed media. Assuming additional responsibilities under the new conditions, the journalist is obliged:

A. to contribute to the upgrading of journalistic discourse, avoiding grammatical, syntactic and semantic violations.

B. to avoid vulgarisms, vulgarity and linguistic barbarity, observing, even in satire and caricature, their professional ethics and social responsibility.

C. to protect the Greek language from the excessive use of foreign words and terms. D. to creatively contribute to the protection of our national tradition and the safeguarding of our cultural heritage.

Article 8

The journalist's obligations under this Code do not constitute a restriction of freedom of expression. Violations of these obligations are controlled by the two Disciplinary Boards.

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