

What's NEW in the 2014 SPJ Code of Ethics Revision

All sections quoted below are taken from the first draft of the 2014 Code of Ethics revision, available at: <http://blogs.spjnetwork.org/ethics/2014/03/27/ethics-code-revisions-our-first-draft/>

Letters indicate where in the draft new sections appear: Seek Truth (T); Minimize Harm (H); Act Independently (I); Be Accountable (A). Sections in italics below indicate new language added to an existing section. Note that some new sections below cut across lines of topics and media identified.

BROAD COVERAGE OF THE CODE

Responsible journalists from all media, *including nontraditional providers of news to a broad audience*, should strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. (Preamble)

The purpose of this code is to declare the Society's principles and standards and to encourage their use in the practice of journalism in any and all media. (Preamble)

NEW GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Recognize that legal access to information differs from ethical justification to publish. (H)

A journalist's highest and primary obligation is to the public's right to know. (I) [previously, section stated the public's right to know was the journalist's only obligation.]

Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not. Distinguish news from advertising and marketing material. Shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two. (I)

Avoid publishing critical opinions by those seeking confidentiality. (T)

ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of online publication. Provide updated and more complete information when appropriate. (H)

Admit mistakes and correct them promptly *and prominently wherever they appeared, including in archived material.* (A)

Aggressively gather and update information as a story unfolds and work to avoid error. Deliberate distortion and reporting unconfirmed rumors are never permissible. (T)

NEWS AGGREGATION

Journalists, not sources, are responsible for the accuracy of stories. Verify information from sources before publishing. Information taken from other news sources should be independently verified. (T)

Never plagiarize. *Always attribute information not independently gathered.* (T)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Remember that neither speed nor brevity excuses inaccuracy or mitigates the damage of error. (T)

Recognize the harm in using photos or information, including any photos and data from social media forums, for which the source is unknown, or where there is uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the images or information. (H)

TRANSPARENCY

Clearly identify sources; the public is entitled to as much information as possible on source's *identity*, reliability and *possible motives*. (T)

Disclose sources of funding and relationships that might influence, or appear to influence, reporting. (A)

CHECKBOOK JOURNALISM

Do not pay for news or access. (I) [previously, section said to "avoid bidding for news."]

PACK JOURNALISM

Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity. *Avoid following the lead of others who violate this tenet.* (H)