

POLICY NUMBER “2018-10-21”
POLICY ON PUBLICATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ENGINEERING SOCIETY

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0. Preface

a. Purpose

This document outlines the journalistic practices to be followed by the publications of the Engineering Society, to ensure that the Society upholds its responsibilities as a publisher.

b. Scope

This policy applies to all Engineering Society's publications, namely the Flrsh Handbook, the Skule™ Agenda, the Skulebook, The Cannon, and The Toike Oike.

c. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the VP Communications to enforce this policy for all Engineering Society Publications. The Editors of the aforementioned publications should uphold the standards in this document to the best of their ability.

1. Standards

- a. Journalistic practices must be followed with accordance to Canadian Association of Journalists ethics guidelines as outlined in Appendix A.
- b. Content depicting crime and illegal activity should follow the BBC's Editorial Guidelines Section 8: Reporting Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour listed in Appendix B. In using these guidelines, any reference to the "Director of Editorial Policy and Standards", "Programme Legal Advice", "Senior Editorial Figure", "Commissioning Editor", and "CBBC Interactive Executive Management Team" shall refer to the VP Communications.
- c. Journalistic practices must be followed with accordance to the International Federation of Journalists' Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists listed in Appendix C, especially with regards to section 7 on discrimination. Note that the grounds for discrimination include but are not limited to the grounds protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act, namely: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, disability, genetic characteristics, and any conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended.
- d. Any content regarding mental illness or the depiction of mental illness shall follow the Canadian Psychiatric Association's Media Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide as outlined in Appendix D.



- e. All content must meet generally accepted standards for grammar, structure, and communications.



APPENDIX A - CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS ETHICS GUIDELINES

(Extracted from <http://caj.ca/content.php?page=ethics-guidelines>)

PREAMBLE

This document – along with the accompanying “Principles for Ethical Journalism” – is intended to help both seasoned professionals and new journalists to hold themselves accountable for professional work. While many specific questions are considered here, it is impossible to capture all potential scenarios in a document such as this. Instead, it seeks to provide examples of the application of our general ethical principles, and to help journalists apply those principles and their best judgment when faced with scenarios not covered here. Updates will be issued periodically as new issues come under consideration by the association’s Ethics Advisory Committee; suggestions for additions or amendments should be directed to the committee chair or the CAJ president.

ACCURACY

- We are disciplined in our efforts to verify all facts. Accuracy is the moral imperative of journalists and news organizations, and should not be compromised, even by pressing deadlines of the 24-hour news cycle.
- We make every effort to verify the identities and backgrounds of our sources.
- We seek documentation to support the reliability of those sources and their stories, and we are careful to distinguish between assertions and fact. The onus is on us to verify all information, even when it emerges on deadline.
- We make sure to retain the original context of all quotations or clips, striving to convey the original tone. Our reporting and editing will not change the meaning of a statement or exclude important qualifiers.
- There is no copyright on news or ideas once a story is in the public domain, but if we can’t match the story, we credit the originating source.



- While news and ideas are there for the taking, the words used to convey them are not. If we borrow a story or even a paragraph from another source we either credit the source or rewrite it before publication or broadcast. Using another's analysis or interpretation may constitute plagiarism, even if the words are rewritten, unless it is attributed.
- When we make a mistake, whether in fact or in context, and regardless of the platform, we correct* it promptly and in a transparent manner, acknowledging the nature of the error.
- We publish or broadcast all corrections, clarifications or apologies in a consistent way.
- We generally do not “unpublish” or remove digital content, despite public requests, or “source remorse.” Rare exceptions generally involve matters of public safety, an egregious error or ethical violation, or legal restrictions** such as publication bans.

FAIRNESS

- We respect the rights of people involved in the news.
- We give people, companies or organizations that are publicly accused or criticized opportunity to respond before we publish those criticisms or accusations. We make a genuine and reasonable effort to contact them, and if they decline to comment, we say so.
- We do not refer to a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender self-identification or physical ability unless it is pertinent to the story.
- We avoid stereotypes of race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status. And we take particular care in crime stories.
- We take special care when reporting on children or those who are otherwise unable to give consent to be interviewed. While some minors, such as athletes, may be used to being interviewed, others might have little understanding of the implications of talking to the media. So when unsure, or when dealing with particularly sensitive subjects, we err on the side of seeking parental consent. Likewise, we take special care when using any



material posted to social media by minors, as they may not understand the public nature of their postings.

- We do not allow our own biases to impede fair and accurate reporting.
- We respect each person's right to a fair trial.
- We do not pay for information, although we may compensate those who provide material such as photos or videos. We sometimes also employ experts to provide professional expertise, and pay for embedded activities. We are careful to note any such payments in our stories. (See TRANSPARENCY, below).
- It is becoming common to be asked for payments in foreign countries, whether it's for guides, to make connections, or to help a source travel to meet reporters. But it's important to question the subject's motives in such cases, and to be transparent in telling audiences what occurred (See TRANSPARENCY, below).

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

- The public has a right to know about its institutions and the people who are elected or hired to serve its interests. People also have a right to privacy, and those accused of crimes have a right to a fair trial.
- However, there are inevitable conflicts between the right to privacy, and the rights of all citizens to be informed about matters of public interest. Each situation should be judged in light of common sense, humanity and relevance.
- We do not manipulate people who are thrust into the spotlight because they are victims of crime or are associated with a tragedy. Nor do we do voyeuristic stories about them. When we contact them, we are sensitive to their situations, and report only information in which the public has a legitimate interest.
- Journalists are increasingly using social networking sites to access information about people and organizations. When individuals post and publish information about themselves on these sites, this information generally becomes public, and can be used.



However, journalists should not use subterfuge to gain access to information intended to be private. In addition, even when such information is public, we must rigorously apply ethical considerations including independent confirmation and transparency in identifying the source of information. (See DIGITAL MEDIA, below.)

INDEPENDENCE

- We serve democracy and the public interest by reporting the truth. This sometimes conflicts with various public and private interests, including those of sources, governments, advertisers and, on occasion, with our duty and obligation to an employer.
- Defending the public's interest includes promoting the free flow of information, exposing crime or wrongdoing, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled.
- We do not give favoured treatment to advertisers and special interests. We resist their efforts to influence the news.
- We pay our own way whenever possible. However, not all journalists or organizations have the means to do so. So if another organization pays our expenses to an event that we are writing about we say so, and this includes when covering industries such as travel, automotive, the military and foreign trade (See TRANSPARENCY, below). (There are some generally understood exceptions; for instance, it is common practice to accept reviewers' tickets for film previews, concerts, lectures and theatrical performances.)
- We do not solicit gifts or favours for personal use, and should promptly return unsolicited gifts of more than nominal value. If it is impractical to return the gift, we will give it to an appropriate charity.
- We do not accept the free or reduced-rate use of valuable goods or services offered because of our position. However, it may be appropriate to use a product for a short time to test or evaluate it. (A common exception is unsolicited books, music, food, or other new products sent for review.)



- We generally do not accept payment for speaking to groups we report on or comment on.
- We do not report about subjects in which we have financial or other interests, and we do not use our positions to obtain business or other advantages not available to the general public.
- We do not show our completed reports to sources – especially official sources – before they are published or broadcast, unless the practice is intended to verify facts. Doing so might invite prior restraint and challenge our independence as reporters.
- We gather information with the intent of producing stories and images for public consumption. We generally do not share unpublished information – such as notes and audio tapes of interviews, documents, emails, digital files, photos and video – with those outside of the media organizations for which we work. However, sometimes such sharing may be necessary to check facts, gain the confidence of sources or solicit more information.
- Columnists and commentators should be free to express their views, even when those views conflict with those of their organizations, as long as the content meets generally accepted journalistic standards for fairness and accuracy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- As fair and impartial observers, we must be free to comment on the activities of any publicly elected body or special interest group. But we cannot do this without an apparent conflict of interest if we are active members of an organization we are covering, and that includes membership through social media.
- We lose our credibility as fair observers if we write opinion pieces about subjects we also cover as reporters.
- Editorial boards and columnists or commentators endorse political candidates or political causes. Reporters do not.



- We carefully consider our political activities and community involvements – including those online – and refrain from taking part in demonstrations, signing petitions, doing public relations work, fundraising or making financial contributions if there is a chance we will be covering the campaign, activity or group involved.
- If a journalist does choose to engage in outside political activity or espouse a particular political viewpoint, this activity could create a public perception of bias, or favouritism that would reflect on the journalist’s work. Any journalist who engages in such activities – including running for office – should publicly declare any real or potential conflicts.
- Our private lives online present special challenges. For example, the only way to subscribe to some publications or social networking groups is to become a member. Having a non-journalist subscribe on your behalf would be one solution, as would be joining a wide variety of Facebook groups so you would not be seen as favouring one particular constituency. (See DIGITAL MEDIA, below.)

TRANSPARENCY

- We generally declare ourselves as journalists and do not conceal our identities, including when seeking information through social media. However, journalists may go undercover when it is in the public interest and the information is not obtainable any other way; in such cases, we openly explain this deception to the audience.
- We normally identify sources of information. But we may use unnamed sources when there is a clear and pressing reason to protect anonymity, the material gained from the confidential source is of strong public interest, and there is no other reasonable way to obtain the information. When this happens, we explain the need for anonymity.
- We avoid pseudonyms, but when their use is essential, and we meet the tests above, we tell our readers, listeners or viewers.
- When we do use unnamed sources, we identify them as accurately as possible by affiliation or status. (For example, a “senior military source” must be both senior and in



the military.) Any vested interest or potential bias on the part of a source must be revealed.

- We independently corroborate facts if we get them from a source we do not name.
- We do not allow anonymous sources to take cheap shots at individuals or organizations. (See FAIRNESS, above.)
- If we borrow material from another source we are careful to credit the original source. (See ACCURACY, above.)
- We admit openly when we have made a mistake, and we make every effort to correct* our errors immediately.
- We disclose to our audiences any biases that could be perceived to influence our reporting. (See CONFLICT OF INTEREST, above.)
- Ø We openly tell our audiences when another organization pays our expenses, or conversely, when we have made payments for information.

PROMISES TO SOURCES

- We only promise anonymity when the material is of high public interest and it cannot be obtained any other way. (See TRANSPARENCY, above.) And when we make these promises to sources, we keep them.
- Because we may be ordered by a court** or judicial inquiry to divulge confidential sources upon threat of jail, we must understand what we are promising. These promises – and the lengths we’re willing to go to keep them – should be clearly spelled out as part of our promise. The following phrases, if properly explained, may be helpful:
 - **Not for attribution:** We may quote statements directly but the source may not be named, although a general description of his or her position may be given (“a government official,” or “a party insider”). In TV, video or radio, the identity may be shielded by changing the voice or appearance.



- **On background:** We may use the essence of statements and generally describe the source, but we may not use direct quotes.
- **Off the record:** We may not report the information, which can be used solely to help our own understanding or perspective. There is not much point in knowing something if it can't be reported, so this undertaking should be used sparingly, if at all.
- When we are not willing to go to jail to protect a source, we say so before making the promise. And we make it clear that the deal is off if the source lies or misleads us.

DIVERSITY

- News organizations – including newspapers, websites, magazines, radio and television – provide forums for the free interchange of information and opinion. As such, we seek to include views from all segments of the population.
- We also encourage our organizations to make room for the interests of all: minorities and majorities, those with power and those without it, holders of disparate and conflicting views.
- We avoid stereotypes, and don't refer to a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender self-identification or physical ability unless it is pertinent to the story. (See FAIRNESS, above.)

ACCOUNTABILITY

- We are accountable to the public for the fairness and reliability of our reporting.
- We serve the public interest, and put the needs of our audience – readers, listeners or viewers – at the forefront of our newsgathering decisions.
- We clearly identify news and opinion so that the audience knows which is which.
- We don't mislead the public by suggesting a reporter is some place that he or she isn't.



- Photojournalists and videographers do not alter images or sound so that they mislead the public. When we do alter or stage images, we label them clearly (as a photo illustration or a staged video, for example).
- We use care when reporting on medical studies, polls and surveys, and we are especially suspect of studies commissioned by those with a vested interest, such as drug companies, special interest groups or politically sponsored think tanks. We make sure we know the context of the results, such as sample size and population, questions asked, and study sponsors, and we include this information in our reports whenever possible.
- When we make a mistake, we correct* it promptly and transparently, acknowledging the nature of the error. (See ACCURACY, above.)

DIGITAL MEDIA: SPECIAL ISSUES

- Ethical practice does not change with the medium. We are bound by the above principles no matter where our stories are published or broadcast.
- We consider all online content carefully, including blogging, and content posted to social media. We do not re-post rumours. (See ACCURACY, above.)
- The need for speed should never compromise accuracy, credibility or fairness. Online content should be reported and edited as carefully as print content, and when possible, subjected to full editing.
- We clearly inform sources when stories about them will be published across various media, and we indicate the permanency of digital media.
- When we publish outside links, we make an effort to ensure the sites are credible; in other words, we think before we link.
- When we correct* errors online, we indicate that the content has been altered or updated, and what the original error was. (See ACCURACY, above.)
- So long as the content is accurate, we generally do not “unpublish” or remove digital content, despite public requests to do so, including cases of “source remorse.” Rare



exceptions generally involve matters of public safety, an egregious error or ethical violation, or legal restrictions** such as publication bans.

- We try to obtain permission whenever possible to use online photos and videos, and we always credit the source of the material, by naming the author and where the photo or video was previously posted. We use these photos and videos for news and public interest purposes only, and not to serve voyeuristic interests.
- We encourage the use of social networks as it is one way to make connections, which is part of our core work as journalists. However, we keep in mind that any information gathered through online means must be confirmed, verified and properly sourced.
- Personal online activity, including emails and social networking, should generally be regarded as public and not private. Such activity can impact our professional credibility. As such, we think carefully before we post, and we take special caution in declaring our political leanings online. (See CONFLICT OF INTEREST, above.)

***Note: For more information on legal implications on journalism practice see [the Canadian Journalism Project's law page at J-Source.ca](#).*



APPENDIX B - BBC'S EDITORIAL GUIDELINES, SECTION 8 REPORTING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

(Extracted from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines/crime/reporting-crime>)

Material Likely to Encourage or Incite Crime

8.4.1

Material likely to encourage or incite the commission of crime, or lead to disorder, must not be included in our services. However, this is not intended to restrict the broadcasting of any content where a clear public interest can be demonstrated. Approval for the broadcast of such content must be obtained from Director Editorial Policy and Standards at the earliest opportunity. Such instances are likely to be rare.

8.4.2

In cases where potential law-breaking or civil disobedience form part of a current news story or public policy debate, editors must consider both their responsibility to reflect the debate or events fully and accurately and their duty not to broadcast material likely to encourage or incite crime. Context and explanation will be critical.

The mere recording and broadcasting of criminal activity will not normally amount to encouragement or incitement, unless it reveals imitable detail. However, we should take care that criminal acts are not glorified or glamorised.

Direct calls or provocation to audiences to commit criminal acts should be robustly challenged.

Illegal activities such as drug use or joy riding should not be portrayed as problem free or glamorous. It may be appropriate to reflect the negative consequences of such activities, over and above the fact they are illegal.

Witnessing and Depicting Illegal Activity

8.4.3

When investigating criminal activity we may, on rare occasions, want to record a specific crime. When that might raise questions about our relationship with the criminal or involves witnessing serious criminal activity, it must be referred to a senior editorial figure or, for independents, to the commissioning editor. Referral must also be made to Director Editorial Policy and Standards



and Programme Legal Advice.

Approval to be present at or record serious illegal activity will be given only if it is clearly in the public interest[1]. Even then we must avoid:

condoning, aiding or abetting criminal behaviour
encouraging or provoking behaviour which would not otherwise have occurred
directing the activity in any way.

Anyone admitting to or carrying out an illegal act could be prosecuted. Our research notes, diaries, emails and other paperwork as well as untransmitted rushes may be obtained by the police by court order. This material may also have to be disclosed as evidence to a court, tribunal or inquest. Care should be taken to ensure that the identities of any confidential sources are protected and do not appear in any notes that might become the subject of a court order.

(See Section 6 Fairness, Contributors and Consent: 6.4.10 - 6.4.12, Section 13 Re-use and Reversioning: 13.4.22 - 13.4.27 and Section 8 Reporting Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour: 8.4.40 - 8.4.47)

8.4.4

We should not normally demonstrate or depict criminal techniques, such as how to hotwire a car, unless editorially justified. Even then it is important to avoid revealing detail that could enable the commission of illegal activity or the ways in which it can be made more effective.

8.4.5

There may be times when in the public interest we may be justified in recording the illegal harming of animals by third parties for the purpose of gathering evidence or to illustrate malpractice, cruel, anti-social or controversial behaviour. Any proposal to do so must be referred to a senior editorial figure or, for independents, to the commissioning editor.

(See Section 5 Harm and Offence: 5.4.31)

8.4.6

We should guard against criminal activity on our message boards and other interactive online spaces. We should be able to implement a swift and robust escalation strategy where appropriate. This may range from temporarily removing a contributor from a BBC space to putting it into 'read only' mode. The individual who has editorial responsibility for the space



should be consulted when, for example, there is an admission of an offence or it appears that illegal activity may be taking place or is being planned or organised.

(See Section 17 Interacting with our Audiences: 17.4.41)

8.4.7

Any incident of suspected "grooming" online must be referred promptly to the CBBC Interactive Executive Management Team (or, for Commercial Services, to the relevant editorial leader) who will be responsible for reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

(See Section 9 Working with Children and Young People: 9.4.4 - 9.4.10)

(See Guidance: Interacting with Children and Young People Online)

Impact on Audiences

8.4.8

We should consider the impact our reporting of crime may have on our audiences.

Our reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour aims to give audiences the facts in their context. It must not add to people's fears of becoming victims of crime if statistically they are very unlikely to be so.

(See Guidance: Crime)

8.4.9

When we interview those responsible for crime/anti-social behaviour or reconstruct/dramatise past events, it may cause distress to victims and/or their relatives. We should, as far as is reasonably practicable, make best endeavours to contact surviving victims, and/or the immediate relatives of the deceased and advise them of our plans. If it is necessary to use an intermediary, such as the police or social services, it is still our responsibility to check the victims and/or immediate relatives have been informed and have the necessary details to contact us.

(See Section 7 Privacy: 7.4.44)

8.4.10



Reporting the facts about criminals may include detailing their family circumstances, but we should avoid causing unwarranted distress to their family. Also we should not imply guilt by association without evidence.

8.4.11

When we report historic crime, consideration should be given to the possibility that some of those involved - offenders, suspects, witnesses, relatives or victims - may have changed their names or addresses in order to re-establish their lives. Should that be the case, the extent to which we identify them or their new whereabouts should be given particularly careful thought.

Archive Material

8.4.12

The use of archive material relating to crimes and to victims of crime requires careful editorial judgements.

(See Section 13 Re-use and Reversioning: 13.4.6 - 13.4.11)

Reconstructions

8.4.13

News programmes may report crime reconstructions staged by the police to gather evidence. They should not normally commission crime reconstructions except for use at the conclusion of a trial. Revisiting the scene of a crime and/or interviewing a victim or witness do not in themselves constitute a reconstruction.

8.4.14

Factual programmes should restrict the use of reconstructions to the conveying of factual information. They should not be used simply to attract or entertain audiences.

(See Section 3 Accuracy: 3.4.18)

(See Guidance: Crime)



**APPENDIX C - INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS'
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON THE CONDUCT OF JOURNALISTS**

(Extracted from <http://www.ifj.org/about-ifj/ifj-code-of-principles/>)

This international Declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information in describing events.

1. Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist
2. In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right of fair comment and criticism
3. The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.
4. The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.
5. The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.
6. The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
7. The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.
8. The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following:
 - plagiarism;
 - malicious misrepresentation;
 - calumny, slander, libel, unfounded accusations;



- acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.

9. Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognize in professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of every kind of interference by governments or others.



APPENDIX D - CANADIAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

(Extracted from <https://www.cpa-apc.org/wp-content/uploads/Media-Guidelines-Suicide-Reporting-EN-2018.pdf>)

Summary

A substantial body of research suggests that media reports about people who have died by suicide, as well as the topic of suicide in general, can influence vulnerable people and is associated with higher subsequent rates of suicide. Emerging evidence also suggests that reports about people overcoming suicidal crises may lower suicide rates. The original 2009 Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) policy paper on media reporting of suicide led to meaningful discussion between mental health professionals and journalists in Canada. This second iteration of the policy paper reviews the most up-to-date evidence relating to media reporting and suicide, and updates recommendations with more direct engagement and input from the journalism community. Recommendations are meant as a guide for all relevant stakeholders, including journalists, editors, producers, journalism educators, researchers, policy makers, mental health professionals, and social media platforms. The paper suggests a framework for approaching suicide related coverage and outlines potentially harmful and helpful aspects of reporting that should be avoided and included, respectively. Recommendations include using appropriate language, trying to reduce the stigma around mental disorders, and providing information about alternatives to suicide. Pertinent resources for people contemplating suicide, such as crisis services, should also be provided and can be directly linked to reports that appear online. Simplistic or glorified depictions of suicide should be avoided, and suicide should not be presented as a way of solving problems. Reports should avoid details of suicide methods, particularly if they are novel or unusual. Recommendations also include that, where possible, suicide should be covered by or with the input of health reporters who are best positioned to contextualize suicide within the broader topic of mental health. The paper also makes preliminary recommendations for social media and suggests collaboration with online platforms to help establish organizational standards concerning the dissemination of information about suicide.

For the full guidelines, please [view the document mirrored on skule.ca](#). Due to issues in converting and formatting the document, it is impossible to include the entire text here.