

Journalism

Rodrigo Zamith

University of Massachusetts Amherst

“Journalism” is not an easy
thing to define

Journalism as Product



Source

Journalism as People



Source

Journalism as Institutions



Source

Journalism as Practices



Source

Journalism as Service



Source

Journalism as Occupation

Society of Professional Journalists

CODE of ETHICS

PREAMBLE

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. Ethical journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair and thorough. An ethical journalist acts with integrity.

The Society declares these four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media.

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT

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

Journalists should:

- ▶ Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible.
- ▶ Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.
- ▶ Provide context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.
- ▶ Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story.
- ▶ Be cautious when making promises, but keep the promises they make.
- ▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected by news coverage. Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent. Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.
- ▶ Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.
- ▶ Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.
- ▶ Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.
- ▶ Balance a suspect's right to a fair trial with the public's right to know. Consider

Why Definitions Matter

- Journalism is **fluid and contested**
 - Changing social, cultural, economic, political, and technological conditions change how people understand it
- Understandings impact how **symbolic resources** are **translated** into **material rewards**
 - Those who are seen as “journalists” may get press passes, special legal protections

Journalism is often granted a special social status as the authority on “news”

Legitimacy, Expectations, and Power

- People are more likely to defer to news organizations they see as being “legitimate”
- Higher **perceived** legitimacy also typically translates to higher expectations from audiences
 - Expect to see more “good” journalism
 - Less forgiving of “bad” journalism
- Perceived legitimacy thus **translates into power**
 - “Most legitimate” news organizations come to be seen as the primary definers of “news”

Journalism isn't a monolithic thing though

We can also think about
“journalisms”

Each with different symbolic associations, material rewards,
and social expectations

Key Takeaways

- Journalism can be defined in many different ways
- Journalism is, in many parts of the world, associated with certain occupational values
- How “journalism” is understood matters
- There is a plurality of journalisms