ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR BROADCASTERS

Views, Tips and References

Ethical Principles for Broadcasters

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Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development

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The authors are responsible for the choice of facts contained in this book. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the AIBD or FES.

Edited by Lutfa Ahmed

Contents

Foreword

In a meeting with news reporters and editors at Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, I was asked if there was a guideline or handbook on the code of ethics in broadcasting. I responded that a standard set of ethical principles per se might not fit into the local culture, environment and day-to-day practices in all societies, although there are some common ethical principles for all broadcasters. I added that besides the common ethics, each broadcasting organization might develop ethical principles that fit into their local environment.

I added, treat others as you wish to be treated. Respect others, as you wish to be respected. Be impartial and independent in telling stories to the public, as you wish to hear impartial and independent news that are not being influenced by any centre of power. Keep distance from the disaster of greed, be it the greed of power or position. Be careful of being corrupted by the power of media. Be careful of falling in love with your own opinion, which may close your eyes to other perspectives. Stay faithful to your public in searching for the truth. Approach stories from the ethical perspective, use power of logic and keep your distance from the logic of power. Learn from the public and respect public opinion. Give the microphone to others to express themselves as you wish to express your own opinions. Give the microphone to those who disagree with you with a view to include them in the decision-making process. Others may be more knowledgeable than you are in some social, cultural, political and economic matter. Add the sugar of kindness to the watchdog role that the media is expected to play. Be aware that the public and history will watch you and evaluate your judgment.

I also added that impartiality and independence would not be measurable when there is no crisis. It is at the time of crisis, election, disasters, war, or a specific story that requires investigation, that broadcasters are being tested for their reporting and whether or not they act with ethical principles.

I continued that, broadcasting is not a job like other jobs that we apply for and get the position. Broadcasters are responsible to the society and mankind. They have two choices – to be attached to a given centre of power or to win People's trust. If we go for the first choice, our employer employs us and we are expected to fulfill our employer's perspective. And, if we choose the second one, we see ourselves before the public who trust us and therefore, ethical principles are a must for us.

At the time, I said to my colleagues at the MBC, that I was not aware if such a publication was available but I promised to come up with some sort of handbook that could help.

So, we requested experienced Broadcasters to share their views and ideas from their

many years of practice in the industry for a variety of views, which we hope will be useful knowledge sharing. The views expressed in the articles and case studies are the contributors' own views and not AIBD's. It is also not necessary that they will fit into the ethical principles in your organization. We have attempted to bring together a wide range of thinking on ethical principles, which will allow individual broadcasters to start thinking and help them find ideas from others' experiences or to develop their own set of principles.

We have also tried to highlight some universal general principles extracted from the common denominators in the existing codes and to provide some tips and process guidelines for creating a set of Ethical principles.

I would like to extend my great appreciation and thanks to all our contributors who have taken time out from their busy schedules to add value to this book. Without their input, this publication would not have been possible. AIBD is truly grateful to all our members and well wishers for supporting us in the endeavor. Our thanks also go to the Friedrich- Ebert-Stiftung (FES) for providing support in making it possible for AIBD to publish the book.

We hope you will find the book useful.

Javad Mottaghi
Director, AIBD

Preface

Tight deadlines and tough decisions are daily challenges for broadcasters in their newsrooms. Broadcasters should operate as trustees of the public, seek the truth, report it fairly and with integrity and independence, and stand accountable for their actions. Consequently it seems rather helpful if broadcasting organisations would compile core journalistic values and ethical practices into a code of conduct to ensure high standards of electronic journalism and maintain public trust in the media through reliable journalistic practices.

Freedom of expression and independent journalism are an essential requirement for the media to fulfill its role as the fourth column in the field of check and balances in a functioning democracy. To enable people to take part in decision-making and engage politically and socially, they need reliable information. Mass media like radio and TV are the key providers for independent and reliable information to their audience. Thus journalism has a great impact on developments in societies.

For the past forty years FES and its partner organisations have been engaged in media development in the Asia-Pacific region and have offered a wide variety of media trainings and workshops to raise the professional skills of journalists and media practitioners. One main topic in this field is core journalistic values and ethical practices.

This book can only give an overview on practiced media ethics by making available memorable experiences of broadcasters in their daily work. Furthermore it provides an exchange of different views and ideas of broadcasters and offers useful links and further suggestions to get a closer look into how other broadcasting organisations set their Code of Ethics.

The final intention of this publication is to inspire the broadcasters thinking on the necessity of a code of conduct for core journalistic values and ethical practices and encourages broadcasting organisations to develop a custom-made Code of Ethics in accordance to the means and needs of their specific organisations. Thus broadcasters could rely on such a reference for taking decisions in conflicting situations and everyday practices.

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Introduction

Media plays an important role in society today. In many countries in the Asia-Pacific region the mass media is a vital tool to keep viewers, readers and listeners informed about issues and to impart basic information about social, political, environmental and economic issues. By doing so, it hugely influences the shaping of values and norms, molding of attitudes and behaviors in society.

The responsibilities of the Media in ensuring fair, independent, accurate, impartial and unbiased reporting or programming is an important aspect of broadcasting and a set of appropriate code of Ethics is essential to maintain standards for Media professionals and organizations.

Before media professionals are able to understand the necessity of a common Code of Ethics, they have to familiarize themselves with individual ethical principles required in their daily work. People often make ethical choices reflexively. In ethically sensitive situations there is often little time to balance the reasons for decisions, especially in the news media business. The best way to support decision-making in such ethical dilemmas is to set an ethical code. This code defines the standards of acting and helps to become a basis for making ethically sensitive decisions. There are often general codes of ethics, formulated by trade unions or professional associations that are available, individual journalists or broadcasting organisations can rely on these to develop their own guidelines and codes.

If Media professionals do not have a good understanding of their own ethical principles, a common code is doomed to fail. Although producers, editors and reporters are usually more concerned with producing/reporting in a manner that is quicker, better and more interesting than their rivals, it is also a part of their responsibilities of managing this within ethical principles and one that they are always struggling with, in delivering their priorities.

If broadcasting organizations set a common code of Ethics, these must be made available to its employees in an easy to follow format that Media professionals can consult in situations where they are uncertain about the boundaries of action.

The ethical imperatives of accuracy, impartiality, responsibility and probity relevant to all type of Media need to be covered within the principles. In defining ethics, there is also a need to distinguish what is ethical and what is legal, and on what to base moral decisions.

There are also many areas of sensitivity where Media professionals need guidelines in order to report and produce programmes fairly and without bias, such as respecting cultural differences, gender, and children's rights

A set of ethical principles should take into account the specific local practices and culture in which the reporter works. It is important to ensure there are processes in place for receiving feedback and complaints from viewers and listeners in cases of breach of such ethics.

The series of articles in the next sections cover many of these aspects through views and experiences from media professionals from all over the world.

Lutfa Ahmed
Programme Manager, AIBD

1
What is Media Ethics?

What is Media Ethics?

1.1 What is Media Ethics?

Robert Beveridge

There is much debate around media ethics, much of which is centred on the claims of universality versus values that are claimed to be culture specific.

In addition, there are questions regarding the applicability to specific cases as opposed to theoretical principles.

Like one person's freedom fighter being another's terrorist, defining media morality is a challenge, but one which is met by public service broadcasters and books such as this one.

By and large, media ethics are co-terminal with human rights and enable media professionals to consider, negotiate and apply ethical values to the sometimes complex issues involved in balancing the needs and interests of different stakeholders increasingly given the distribution of media content in a globalised world- across cultures and jurisdictions.

Ethical values underpin and inform the nature and practice of public service broadcasting but broadcasters need to establish and/or keep under regular review any editorial codes/guideline. These may be internal to a broadcaster or developed by a media regulator to set articulate standards for a number of broadcasters consistent with the need to serve the public interest.

Typically, such codes will address and support the need for broadcasters to take due and full account of different distribution platforms: television; radio; new media – on line; mobile etc and various and varied audiences.

These may require codes and/or policies, which pay attention to the specific contexts, dilemmas and issues in ensuring and maintaining standards of Honesty and Integrity, Fairness and Impartiality, Independence and Confidentiality, Accuracy and Accountability, Decency and Fair Play, Respect for the Rights of Others, Privacy and the Public Interest.

The ways in which these are applied to the following indicative genres and content etc. may need clauses and principles which take account of the challenges which may be inherent in News and Current Affairs, Documentaries and Features, Docudrama and Infotainment, Drama and Arts, Factual and Education and through these

negotiate issues such as cultural, ethnic & religious, diversity, children's right's, gender stereotyping and relations, conducting interviews, phone-ins, democracy and election coverage, terrorism and war Reporting, taste and decency – sometimes termed harm and offence, representations of violence, conflict of interest, freedom of information, contests, advertising. Competitions have become an increasingly important source of income generation in a variety of genres and formats. Advertising, whether via spot advertising between programmes or increasingly via product placement typically requires compliance with consumer and competition legislation.

The existence of legal rules and regulations do not obviate the need for ethical values to be both necessary and valuable. How one deals with breaches of a of Code of Ethics will vary from organisation to profession and country to culture, but overall, any such breaches should be dealt with via a complaints procedures devised such that appropriate processes are put in place to articulate and uphold ethical standards. It is important that these standards and procedures command democratic legitimacy and is not used as a back door to enforce arbitrary power. What media ethics seeks to maintain is authority of voice, not the voice of authority.

Public Service Broadcasting serves the public best, by the maintenance of media ethics to the highest standard.

1.2 Codes of Ethics and Broadcasting – The role of codes of ethics in promoting quality broadcasting

Rhonda Breit

Before examining the role of ethical codes, it is important to position the concept of ethics and distinguish it from morality. Patrick Lee Plaisance (2009, p.3) offers a working definition of ethics as a "form of inquiry concerned with the process of finding rational justifications for our actions when the values that we hold come into conflict". Morality, on the other hand (Plaisance 2009, p. 3), refers to the "set of beliefs that we embrace to help us understand what is good and what is bad in the world". So when we discuss ethical broadcasting we are not defining absolutely what is good and bad; rather we are looking at the ways in which broadcasters can make better (or more ethical) decisions in situations where values conflict.

A conflict of values can arise in many situations. Conflict can arise between personal values and the values of a news organisation. For example, a person might hold personal views about respecting their community elders, yet a news organisation asks them to report an event that could be extremely embarrassing to the community leader. An ethical dilemma arises as the journalist reconciles the conflict between their personal and professional values. Conflicts can also arise between professional and social values or there can be conflict across different sectors of society where the values of a minority group differ from the general community.

In times of such conflict journalists (and broadcasters) often turn to their codes of ethics for guidance. Codes of ethics perform a number of other functions:

- They define the "jurisdiction" of a profession or organization and promote a sense of professional or organizational identity.
- They help define a community of users and set out what these users can expect.
- They seek to encourage social responsibility and advance moral understanding within this community. Therefore there is some attempt to outline a set or core values.
- They can protect consumers of news and the public from irresponsible, antisocial or propagandistic use of the media.
- They provide a mechanism for monitoring relationships and professional behavior.
- They help promote professional legitimacy (see Breit 2007, pp 318-319).

Thus we see that codes of ethics do more than outline values, they help to define the role of broadcasters and describe to users what they can expect from people carrying out these roles.

In terms of values, most codes of ethics relating to broadcasting emphasise truthfulness or accuracy of information; fairness in information gathering and freedom of expression (see Laitila 1995; Berkowitz, Limor, Singer 2004, p. 163). Hafez (2002, p. 228) adds, "Factual, correct and unbiased coverage…can be considered a consensual value of journalism that in all codes forms the core and essence of the journalistic profession and distinguishes fiction from nonfiction". Based on a comparative study into North African, Middle Eastern and Muslim Asian codes, Hafez concludes, "The search for truth is a common intercultural norm". However, Rao & Lee (2005, pp 115-116) qualify this to telling the truth with restraint:

> Although the journalists admit they would not lie, many said that they would not tell the truth if telling the truth would lead to harm, violence, persecution, religious or cultural disharmony.

Other important values include respect for individual privacy (Hafez 2002, p 230-232); tolerance of religious and cultural diversity (Rao & lee 2005, p. 113-115); freedom of expression and independence (Hafez 2002, 232-238; Rao & Lee 2005, pp116-118)). In Australia respecting cultural diversity sees public service broadcasters, such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Special Broadcasting Service, being committed to respecting community values. Often respecting individual rights is contingent on meeting overriding public or community interests.

The inclusion of overriding commitments to community and/or public interest can result in a high degree of cultural and individual relativity in the interpretation of journalistic (and more particularly broadcasting) values. Thus many journalists seek guidance in interpreting public interest. Unfortunately, little assistance is gleaned from professional codes. In fact, a study of UK based journalists concluded there is considerable confusion arising from use of the term "public interest" (Morrison

& Svennevig 2007, p. 61). At the heart of this confusion is distinguishing between what is interesting to the public and what is of public interest. Morrison & Svennevig (2007, p. 63) suggest using the "social significance" of an event as a test of public interest in order to distinguish between what the public is interested and what is of pubic interest.

The capacity of the codes to promote ethical decision-making depends to a great extent on their ability to encourage acceptance of the prescribed professional values. And here, attention must be given to the processes and procedures used to enforce the codes. Breit emphasises (2008, p. 513) the need for a holistic approach to dispute resolution that incorporates:

> Facilitative processes where the third party plays no advisory or determinative role. Instead, they assist in managing the process of dispute resolution. Examples include mediation, conciliation and facilitation (Sourdin 2002, 16; Breit 2008, p. 513);

> Advisory processes where a third party investigates and provides advice on the facts and possible outcomes of the dispute. Examples include investigation, case appraisal and dispute counselling (Sourdin 2002, 16; Breit 2008, p. 513); and

> Determinative processes where a third party investigates and determines outcome of dispute. Examples include adjudication and arbitration (Sourdin 2002, 16; Breit 2008, p. 513).

As mentioned earlier, the capacity of codes of ethics to promote quality journalism depends on their ability to encourage acceptance of professional values and offer guidance on how journalists can resolve conflict between such values. Here, advisory dispute resolution techniques such as independent expert advisors, effective use of newsroom meetings and public criticism form an essential part of self-regulation.

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to position the concept of broadcasting ethics and outline the key role of codes of ethics in promoting ethical decision-making about journalism. Thus it is important that codes define their community of users and the core values underpinning quality broadcasting. But in addition to defining its users and the core values, codes need to be operationalised in a way that ensures broadcasters (and users) embrace the values set out. This is where the processes and procedures adopted to uphold the codes must be carefully developed. There needs to be a range of processes and procedures deployed to encourage critical reflection on and in broadcasting. It is important to ensure these processes and procedures are transparent and help explain to the "community of users" why broadcasters have acted as they have done. Here, advisory methods and reporting to the public play an essential role in promoting ethical journalism (see Breit 2008). In addition, such processes and procedures need to provide mechanisms by which to gauge public perception of journalistic performance beyond ratings.

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1.3 Code of Ethics and its Implementation

Guillaume Chenevière

In our globalized economy, the daily life of citizens in one corner of the world can be dramatically affected by decisions taken at a distance of 10,000 miles by people unknown to them and probably unaware of their existence.

Information is thus an essential tool for survival in the 21st century and media organizations have a unique role to play in this respect.

A media code of ethics is primarily designed to define the journalists' responsibility towards the public interest. It must be based on fundamental values such as pursuit of truth, editorial independence, and impartiality. It must ensure that the information provided is not biased by vested interests, but reflect the facts to the best of the journalist's knowledge and personal judgment.

Once a media organization adopts its own code of ethics, it is equally important to establish operational procedures for its implementation. Journalists must be fully aware of the code's content and of personal risks if they do not abide by its rules.

A code of ethics does not need to be very detailed or very ambitious. It needs to be seriously applied. It must be frequently referred to in editorial discussions as well as during evaluations of a journalist's performance. Unethical behavior, as defined by the code, must be severely sanctioned.

This is why the Media and Society Foundation recommends not only the adoption of a code of ethics, but the implementation of a global quality policy, of which ethics is an essential part.

1.4. Professional Standards –
Introducing codes of professional standards

Christel and Hendrik Bussiek

Journalists worldwide, including most countries of Africa, have formulated and adopted codes of professional standards or codes of ethics. Some were initially hesitant to do so because they feared this would mean an additional, self-inflicted burden of rules and restrictions on their already stressful deadline driven working lives. At first glance, looking at the sheer length of some of these documents, such an impression might be justified.

Remember, though, that such codes are not just yet more regulations, imposed from above. They are the essence of experience gained by practitioners in the field over time, and thus useful and proven tools to improve the quality of one's work. Working to the highest possible professional standards is the most important prerequisite for being able to be bold as a journalist and avoid self-censorship. Lack of professionalism undermines customer confidence and can ultimately put journalists out of their jobs. It invites sanctions from the authorities and litigation from aggrieved parties. A code will not just help to avoid mistakes. It will enhance the standing of the profession and thus strengthen and safeguard media freedom.

Comparative studies of press codes worldwide show that they may vary in scope and amount of detail, but have a largely similar overall pattern. All of them seek to perform three major functions:

• To show that the media are accountable to the public;
• To assure sources that journalists will act responsibly towards them;
• To protect the professional integrity of journalists against outside interference, as well as the status and unity of the profession as a whole.

Before going into some more detail on what exactly such a code should entail, just a few general remarks.

The media's purpose is to get information and messages across. They also need to separate the chaff from the wheat. Space on paper and time on air is limited, so not each and every story can be told. To make their selection, journalists use their professional judgment. Not every private foible, for example, however juicy, needs to be publicly exposed. People's "right to know" is no excuse for cheap voyeurism. If the media are to be successful communicators they must be credible and accountable. Readers/listeners/viewers must be able to rely on them giving them factual and relevant information, clearly separating opinion from fact, correcting inaccuracies or mistakes that may have occurred, reacting to their queries, criticisms and concerns. A set of standards clearly spelt out in a public document is a useful yardstick against which to measure the media's performance.

Contrary to what some like to think, journalists don't pluck their stories out of thin air. Information is sourced – from documents and, most importantly, from people. These people need to be able to trust the journalist they pass information to. Their information must not be distorted or misused. If they give it on condition of anonymity, that agreement must be honored and their identity protected – not bragged about ("by the way, and just between the two of us") to colleagues over a beer or revealed to the authorities under questioning. Similarly, journalists must not allow themselves to be used by sources to plant dubious stories or misinformation. Only those who, in their daily interactions and published work, show themselves to be worthy of the trust of both their sources and their public will ultimately make it in the profession.

Finally: a common code helps to bind the media fraternity – not exactly famous for its fraternal intra-professional relationships, given the highly competitive, often personality driven business it operates in – closer together. Not a bad thing that, especially when the going gets tough, with increasing economic or political pressures. The industry as a whole is more likely to stay in good health if it puts its own house in order - and is seen to be doing so. And the solidarity achieved in the process of working out a generally accepted internal set of rules will give it added strength to fend off attempts by state authorities to impose statutory regulatory bodies, codes, complaints commissions or other measures designed to clip its wings.

2

Do Broadcasters Need Ethics?

Do Broadcasters Need Ethics?

2.1 The Role of Ethics in Broadcasting "Social Responsibility of Mass Media in a Market Economy"

Valerie Ruzin

The transition of mass media in Russia and other CIS countries, from the state, especially in terms of budgets and financing to the market ideology have provoked much thinking and created many problems of media ethics previously unknown in the region.

Existence of mass media without any censorship revealed their vulnerability from the ethical point of view. Nowadays, one can observe unrestricted press freedom and the illusion of the illimitable   power of money. And this, in turn, has resulted in moral degradation of press, which is easily transformed into cynicism, and turning some previously much- respected editions into "yellow press". This is also applicable with regards to some internet-editions and TV channels, where activity is practically not regulated by the law. These media often work as "yellow press", crippling reputations of well-known people. Those who have freedom of speech need ethical norms that limit intemperance and bring responsibility alongside the freedom. Although there is a widespread point of view that the press does not need any laws - whatever the law, they say, only restricts its freedom.

No doubt that this ideology violates and decreases the traditional moral norms and values.   And today's society reveals concern about mass media freedom. The most progressive journalism leaders and TV professionals realize well enough that they have to guard themselves, so that they demand censorship and self-censorship as a means of self- preservation of themselves and the nation and sound ethical principles go a long way towards supporting this.

2.2 Code of Ethics – Not a Luxury but Professional Necessity

Ramesh Jaura

Broadcasters are professional journalists working for radio and television. They are a privileged lot. With their voice – and face – they capture the hearts and minds of audiences. Their speech, expression and gesture serve as tools that are perceived to guarantee reliability and truthfulness. Therefore they owe it to their audiences to observe a code of ethics – and to never go astray.

But can we really expect broadcasters in developing societies to act upon this principle risking their jobs and perhaps lives? Isn't it perhaps a guideline that is relevant for professionals only in the developed – and rich – countries? There the rule of law prevails and press freedom cannot be eroded easily by willful officials. Journalists in the developing countries, on the other hand, are often extremely vulnerable.

No denying that there is more than an iota of truth in that statement. And yet we know that spineless broadcasters – and their colleagues from the print media – willingly choose to crawl when they are asked to bend. They are not a rare species – and it is not confined to the developing lands; it is known to stalk the developed regions as well.

Also when you are a professional broadcaster in a developing region of the world with fragile democratic structures, ethical principles must guide your professional behavior. Here some of the essential tenets that any broadcaster – and a professional journalist of print media – must observe.

1. Always remember that the mass killings such as the ones in Rwanda in 1994 were fuelled by local print media and radio that gave priority to political considerations over professional ethos. Therefore: strictly abide by the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity.

2. Always remember that you are torchbearers for your audiences. Whatever you say in your dispatches, programmes and news bulletins should be beyond doubt about its validity and accuracy.

3. Treat your audiences with due respect and address every issue or story with due attention to present a clear, factual and accurate picture: always remember to give full consideration to the feelings of victims of crime, war, persecution and disaster, their relatives and our viewers, and to individual privacy and public decorum.

4. Always welcome fair and honest competition without allowing it to affect adversely our standards of performance. Do not let the hunt for a "scoop" become an end in itself.

5. Offer your audiences diverse points of view and opinions without bias or partiality.

6. Recognise diversity in human societies with all ethnicities, cultures and beliefs and their values and intrinsic individualities in order to present unbiased and faithful reflection of them.

7. Acknowledge a mistake when it occurs, promptly correct it and ensure it does not recur.

8. Be transparent in dealing with news and news sources while adhering to internationally established practices concerning the rights of these sources.

9. Distinguish between news material, opinion and analysis to avoid the pitfalls of speculation and propaganda.

10. Act in solidarity with colleagues in the profession and offer them support when required, particularly in light of the acts of aggression and harassment to which journalists are subjected at times.

These 10 commandments have been adopted as code of ethics not by a Western broadcaster but by Al Jazeera in pursuance of its vision and mission.

2.3 The role of Ethics in Broadcasting

Venkat Iyer

It is being increasingly recognised in societies which operate, or aspire to, a liberal democratic framework of government that the ideal form of regulation of the media is one which relies both on laws (which have statutory force) and on codes of practice (which lay down broad ethical benchmarks of an exhortatory character). This form of regulation, often called 'co-regulation', involves a healthy partnership between the state and media professionals, and arguably provides the maximum scope for the fulfilment by the media of its social obligations.

The design of ethical frameworks is by no means a simple matter. It is dependant, to a large extent, on the consensus that exists within a particular society about community values and norms of morality at any given point of time. The success or otherwise of codes of ethics is in turn dependant on the willingness of all concerned to 'play by the rules' and on sufficient peer pressure being brought to bear on laggards or defaulters. Even so, there have been some notable success stories in this area over the years.

The importance of ethics to the world of broadcasting requires little elaboration. Given the immense influence that radio and television exert on the masses in most societies, and given the immediacy of impact, which these media possess, it is not surprising that they are seen as particularly deserving of ethical attention. Broadcasting is subject to codes of ethics in numerous jurisdictions: in Australia alone, a recent parliamentary enquiry identified nearly a dozen codes that are applicable to radio and television.[1] Similar codes have proliferated in other countries over the years.

The codes cover a wide range of issues, including: offensive language, swearing, pornography, gambling, inappropriate content for children, violence, sex, drug abuse, consumption of tobacco and liquor, subliminal advertising, religious or racial offensiveness, invasion of privacy, insults to national symbols, hate speech, and anti-competitive behaviour in the marketplace. A common feature of the codes is their

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[1] *The effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice,* report by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communication and the Arts (Canberra: June 2008), para 2.15.

strong emphasis on effective mechanisms for the redressal of viewer and listener complaints: many codes lay down highly prescriptive disputes resolution mechanisms devised and operated by broadcasters themselves.

Codes of ethics are no less beneficial to the media as they are to its consumers. The following prefatorial statement to the US-based National Public Radio's code of conduct brings out this aspect tellingly:

The purpose of this code is to protect the credibility of NPR's programming by ensuring high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and staff conduct. We accomplish this by (a) articulating the ethical standards we observe in pursuing and presenting material through our various distribution channels, (b) setting rules and policies that prevent conflicts of interest, (c) establishing guidelines for outside work and activities that may reflect on NPR, and (d) establishing policies and procedures to ensure that the activities of NPR that fall outside journalism and daily production – corporate underwriting, foundation funding, marketing and promotional activities – do not jeopardise our journalistic independence or involve NPR journalists in activities inappropriate to their roles.[2]

There are, clearly, marked differences in the extent to which ethical considerations have taken root in different jurisdictions. Asia presents a mixed record in this area, but it is a matter of some comfort that, as globalisation proceeds apace, there is a growing awareness among Asian broadcasters of the need to embrace ethical values on both principled and pragmatic grounds.

2.4 The Role and Indispensability of Broadcasting Ethics – Do Broadcasters need Ethics?

Phil Molefe

All media is bound by a set of defined ethics, primarily meant to protect the consumers of their output from harm. In the South African situation, print and broadcasting media are bound by similar ethical codes though regulated by different oversight structures. Broadcasting ethics are enforced by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa, which sets ethical standards and adjudicates on cases. The mere number of complaints that are heard before the BCCSA suggest that there is a need for broadcasters to have an ethical code that is enforceable by a sufficiently divorced body from the operations of broadcasting.

Do Broadcasters need Ethics?
Broadcasters – particularly public service broadcasters (PSBs) – operate what is probably the most powerful and far-reaching medium of interface with society. Their most distinctive element is the unidirectional form, meaning that the audience (the

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[2] "NPR News Code of Ethics and Practices", accessible at <www.npr.org/about/ethics>.

public) has limited form for a return path to voice response to the programming received. This implies that on the most part, the audience relies on the ethical conduct of the broadcaster to bring programming that is neither harmful nor distorting to generally world acceptable societal values, which in the South African situation is enshrined in the Constitution and detailed in the Code of Conduct that is enforced by the BCCSA.

It follows therefore, that there needs to be a binding contract between the broadcaster and its audiences based on the common understanding.

That the broadcaster is a major pillar of a democratic state and that its programming needs to reflect an unbiased view of society's developments. This contract would essentially be based on four important.

Ethical concepts, namely balance and fairness; accuracy; accountability; and credibility.

Why are these important?
Balance and Fairness: The distinct character of the South African public is its diversity, meaning that broadcasters that do not broadcast to a niche market need to satisfy the maximum amount of broadcasting needs of the maximum sector of society. On its own, this appears like an enormous task, near impossible to achieve with limited platforms and airtime. However, a core principle needs to be applied when approaching the challenge of broadcasting for maximum benefit of the greatest number of the public and that is balance and fairness. Allocation of appropriate programming and sufficient time according to audience segmentation and platform positioning therefore allows a broadcaster such as the SABC to use its limited platforms to provide balanced and fair coverage of the issues that appeal to the varying interests of the dynamic South African Public.

Credibility: At all times, it is important that broadcasters, especially the PSB are perceived as credible sources of information that assists the public in critical decision making such as during electoral periods; as well as maintaining a social awareness and consciousness on their immediate and broader surroundings. It goes without saying therefore that the process of gathering news and programmes that must respond positively to society's interests must inherently be a credible process such that it leads to a credible outcome, which is what the public will consume. Importantly, the public must retain confidence in the quality of the information it consumes – e.g. sources of news have to be verifiable, while entertainment content needs to ideally on the most part to be rooted in major challenges that society needs to confront. Accuracy: for any media to retain its credibility, it is important to reflect the accuracy of events as they occur. The notion of accuracy is also a non-negotiable requirement for the media to play an important and meaningful role during electoral process. Because media must help the public make an informed choice, and that choice being largely influenced by perception rather than "truth", it is important to accurately cover political events.

Accountability: Public service broadcasters sell their business as being in the service of the public i.e. the people. Typically a PSB such as the SABC defines itself as existing for the Broadcasting for Total Citizen Empowerment. This represents a commitment that a PSB must be bound by a contract between itself and the public it serves. Essentially this implies a level of full accountability to the public. Careful consideration must however go into the issue of accountability to ensure that there are accounting structures that enable the public to appraise the PSB's performance against its promise. Accounting structures can therefore come in the form of parliamentary oversight, media ombudsman, and broadcasting oversights structures. An innovative approach however, that ensures that the public has a direct mechanism to hold the PSB to account, is seen in the emergence of public consultations that PSBs hold with their clients – the public. Through these consultations, the public is able to directly provide a balanced appraisal of the programming – particularly news and current affairs programming of the PSB and the extent to which such programming promotes the developmental interests of society.

Having argued for the external controls of accountability, it is equally imperative that PSBs develop and maintain sound accountability structures within the spheres of their operations. This would be prefaced by conducting the business of PSB around a common and universally diffusible value system that unites practitioners on a core principle of working for the empowerment and benefit of the public a PSB serves. Strategy must therefore be built on this value system to ensure that business operations of a PSB respond to the needs and requirements of the public. From this, a system of gathering and reflecting news, and commissioning programming that resonates with the interests of the public begins to be ingrained. Should there be self-regulation and capita? In concluding this paper, the concept of self-regulation should be considered. The ethical concepts detailed above appear mammoth for any one broadcaster or a set of broadcasters operating in the business to be able to consistently remove themselves and objectively assess their performance. In a setting such as South Africa, whose broadcasting landscape is characterised by a PSB with the largest audience share; a free-to-air broadcaster whose audience share is gradually increasing as well as a fast liberalising subscription broadcasting segment of the sector, all competing for the same advertising revenue – it would naturally be easy to from-time-to-time to ignore the ethical concepts detailed above as each broadcasting player strives for a leading position. This would essentially mean that a body that is not actively involved in the sector is required to objectively assess the performance of broadcasters against an agreed ethical code of conduct in defense of a public that has very little choice in the bouquet of programming that is aired by broadcasters.

The South African system of a Broadcast Complaints Commission – to monitor broadcasters and deal with complaints from the public – is arguably the preferred method of ensuring accountability and keeping the customers (Public) satisfied.

2.5 Broadcasting and Ethical Behavior

Kumar Abeysinghe

Broadcasting is a value based, value-forming medium of communication. Broadcasting images and sound bites provide the structure and content of peoples understanding and judgment on issues. Along with that power comes the issue as to how that power be exercised. The responsibility that comes with that power is enormous. The way that power is exercised mostly lies in the hands of media people, managers and media owners. There is no dispute over the fact that broadcasting, whether it is sound or image has an important role to play in the contemporary society. Broadcast journalists being members of the Fourth state´, are expected to perform a `watch dog´ function on the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the governments. They are the guardians of good governance. Some even believe that they do have not only a watchdog function but also a `Guide dog´ function as well. These functions in turn vest them with enormous responsibilities requiring ethical behavior of high standing. It is something that cannot be compromised. Broadcasting is a profession. As such it has a role in society building.

Ethical choice: People make ethical decisions not only because they result in personal satisfaction. Ethical decisions are made because they also believe that it can contribute greatly to the profession they belong to. Ethical journalism is accepted as better journalism. It is not only a mode of journalism that sustains reader/ viewer confidence, an important consideration in these days of waning media credibility. However, driven by the need for something to package, journalists look for `events´ to report and to be the first. In the political theatre it is not uncommon that often events are specifically staged especially for Television or for photojournalists. Sometime this event craze´ can lead to serious judgment errors on issues. As a result of overriding interest for events, journalists tend to overlook the historical developments of critical social issues and their future projections. News is reported as a series of discoveries and firsts rather than a process of discovery. The common definition of what is news Includes proximity, timeliness, conflict, consequence, prominence, rarity, concreteness action and personality as criteria of judgment. But if news values are constructed from ethical reasoning, I believe that there should be more weight given to the following aspects when deciding what news is. Accuracy, tenacity, dignity, reciprocity, sufficiency, equity, community, diversity are important considerations. Though this list is not conclusive I believe that it can provide an important continuum within which informed ethical choices could be made. Ethical journalism should set standards by digging deeper, including necessary context, and providing variety of sources without undue regard to any particular set of special interest, including journalist own. People argue that ethics cannot be taught and it is situational. They define ethics as something you have, and not something you do. In that sense it is intrinsic than extrinsic. While it is true that reading about ethics is no guarantee that you will perform your job ethically, thinking about ethics is a skill that anyone can acquire. Each facet of mass communication, whether it is education, entertainment, or news, has unique ethical quandaries. Thinking about ethics is the same whether you make

your living writing an advertising copy or obituaries. Each day at work journalists are compelled to make ethical choices. Some days those choices will have an influence far beyond a single broadcast or one newspaper circulation area. Thinking about ethics won't make many of the choices easier. But with practice, ones ethical decisions making can improve and work as well.

Few people make ethical decisions in public. Though all professionals make ethical mistakes, only journalists, be it print or electronic, have the courage or misfortune to display them to the public. When those ethical decisions are faulty, public reaction is swift and critical. It is an inescapable truth, which reflects peoples' expectation of media and behavior of media people. A classic example for this assertion is the public reaction on media reporting on the recent Mumbai Attack reflected in popular `Twitter´ Blogging site. An unnamed exasperated Twitter called "These idiots on CNN-IBN relaying now that the commandos are combing the 3rd floor. Stop it!" Another twitter posted a reminder" Lets not forget the media have to be more responsible when announcing any sensitive information. We are always being watched. Terrorists are monitoring the media through their blackberries".

Today, for media people and for all of us, the bigger question is how are we shaped by the media? How do images function in a democratic technological and secular world? What impact they have on our thinking and perceptual process. Finally how do they influence our way of life. In addressing these questions one can easily say that our society uses images to construct symbolic world, which represent beliefs and vales. To a striking degree, media construct our interpretation of existence and social reality. We construct our image of the family from media as well as personal experience. TV´s portrayal of family is of great significance and can play a complex role for viewers.

Practical Ethical issues: Journalists face ethical dilemma in their daily life, mostly in news reporting. News reflects certain cultural values and professional norms. Those values and norms are often at odds with the concept of truth. For example one professional norm that plays an important role in shaping the news is the journalist imperative to tell a story to make a point. Sociologist Herbert Gans (1979) studied how stories became news at Newsweek´ and `CBS´ and found that almost all news stories reflected six dominant cultural values of the American society at that time. Ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, individualism and emphasis on the need for maintenance of social order and leadership. These dominant values not only helped to shape which stories that were printed and broadcast but also what they said. Researching American media behavior, Gans found that news stories about middle class and upper class and those who successfully adopt the dominant culture´s values made the news while stories about minorities, blue collar Americans and those who were sharply critical of the government policy got lost in the cutting room. The goal of telling a story also raises other ethical issues. When it comes to electronic journalism these issues are further confounded by the very nature of the medium. Television's video imperative has been found to dominate both story selection and placement. If TV arrives at a disaster before print journalist it is

television that frames the stories for the written word. Photo availability sometimes contradicts the classic notion of objectivity that each story should stand on its own merit. In recent decades critical research has developed an increasing consciousness of the role of media as self-serving institutes. A study of the media industry's political economy and control reveals a shriveled center of power and interest, not human justice and growth in broad human sense, rather economic profit and control tend to dictate the structure and the practice of media decision making. The resulting ideology shaped through media reflects and favors economic profit taking over social commitment, Abstract Corporation over actual workers, consumer markets over struggling populations, negative patriotism over social harmony and opportunism over principles. For example, advertising and consumerism serves these interests in constructing our culture. It is said that advertising industry creates commodity fetishes and false consciousness unimaginable even to Carl Marx. What the advertisers recommend and the messages spread by the media are "if you are in a bad mood go shopping", "If you want status upgrade your car, house and if necessary your mate" The once dreaded seven deadly sins are now the deep structure of a culture of commercials and consumptions. Greed, lust, gluttony, envy, sloth, anger, pride all once presumed lower urges are brought to fore front as a way of life. How ethical this is? I would call those as broader issues arising from unethical approaches of media. The developments in the media industry such as deregulation mergers and acquisitions also have brought about ethical issues. As media organizations grow bigger, and as they are exposed to fierce competition they must satisfy competing policies to survive. On the one hand desire of the shareholders interest has to be balanced with the mandate to keep the audience happy in programming and content decisions. At the same time advertisers who demand large number of viewers for their message make claims on the media as well. The inherent tensions created in trying to satisfy these competing stakeholders create many ethical problems of the media.

2.6 Media and Responsibility on Ethics

Dr. Shahidi Moaddab

Broadcasting is one of the fields, which has benefited a lot from the progress and technological achievements. As soon as modern technology has conquered a new territory the inhabitants of radio and television have been among the first of its new settlers. With the advent of satellite communication television broadcasting has been universalized bringing many more millions of audiences to the TV screens. With such a progress in wave emission and such a great number of new viewers, many more hours of programmes have been made and news times have proportionately increased offering more jobs for young journalists and film producers.

Diversity in production has been inevitable due to the variable taste of the viewers and multiculturalism has been considered regarding the globality of the audience. The question is with such developments has broadcasting been made easier or more difficult? To give a correct answer to this question we should ask what is the objective

or the broadcaster? Pleasing the viewers, getting more money in advertisement, amusing or educating the viewers. One might say that any investor in broadcasting can have all and even more objectives than the ones already mentioned. If we take this for granted we can put the final question and ask how about the responsibility of the broadcaster? Do journalists, film producers and news editors feel themselves accountable for what they are putting on the air and are they familiar enough with the cultural and religious sensitivities of the people for whom they screen their productions? It goes without saying that with the damages caused in recent years in certain countries by making provocative programmes the response to the last question may not positive.

We have to be realistic and not to ignore many hours of good documentaries and other useful programmes people have been viewing this is true. If we only stick to few cases, which have been troublesome and overestimate the collateral damages, we might sound gracious enough.

Regarding the level of universal protests and violent demonstrations we had must confess that the delicacy of broadcasting profession is such that only familiarization of the people engaged in media activities with history and culture of others can prevent deplorable repetitions.

Media broadcasting is a profession the importance of which is not less than that of medical doctors and lawyers. A good Doctor should cure his patient properly and remain his confidante too. A good lawyer must defend the interests of his client but at the same time must respect the standards set by the bar associations. Just as this is the case for a Doctor and a lawyer, broadcasters have to take into consideration the regulations and high standards in the broadcasting profession.

Media people must be accountable for what they produce and screen. A responsible journalist should not sacrifice the truth for other things. A filmmaker is not allowed to impose his taste and personal desires on others. Democracy in broadcasting simply means that one producer cannot dictate his own views mingling it with art and technique. In the globalization era we have to respect multiculturalism, avoiding the satisfaction of a minority to the displeasure of majority. Media cannot be irresponsible and hide themselves behind the slogan of freedom of press or freedom of speech. Media can play a vital role in mutual understanding and decrease the violence by airing programmes, which can contribute to coexistence of people with different cultures and religions. Responsibility and accountability will certainly enhance the role of media and diminish its vulnerability.

3
Should there
be Self Regulation?

Should There Be Self Regulation?

3.1 Broadcasting Code of Ethics and Self Regulation

Haroon Siddiqui

Individually, we are guided by our own code of ethics. So, too, professionally – given the societal impact of what we do as writers and broadcasters. Hence the need for guidelines, self-made and self-regulated, not government-issued regulations, implemented by politicians and bureaucrats. Best are press councils or other complaint bodies, adjudicating conflicts between the public and the media, the most successful being those that are tough on the profession, rather than whitewash our sins.

Broad principles are clear enough: accuracy, fairness and strict impartiality – not always achievable in each news cycle but should be in the long haul. Then there's the need to avoid conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise. The fewer the strings, the greater your independence – the more the dinner invitations dry up, the better you are doing your job. Nothing has given me more satisfaction in the post-9/11 world than to be shunned by the powerful.

In translating principles into practice, it is useful to acknowledge that what we do is subjective. What gets top billing in our coverage, what gets short shrift and what gets left out altogether are all subject to human judgment and frailties. Knowing so makes us that much more aware of our responsibilities; it gets the inner clock of our conscience tick that much louder.

We have to accept the limitations imposed by law. The law at times may be difficult and need changing; but while it exists, it has to be obeyed, unless it is egregious enough to be disobeyed. Even in societies that do accept and practice freedom of speech, there are laws of libel and hate that circumscribe what we do. This is no different for the media than for others; my freedom to swing my arm stops at your cheek.

Third is self-restraint. This is not to be confused with self-censorship: the cowering to the advertiser, the politician or the lobby. I am talking about the lines we readily draw every day. For example, we routinely reject cartoons that may be unfair or unnecessarily hurtful or racist. That's why we no longer show the caricatures of savage aboriginals, fat-lipped blacks, hook-nosed Jews or cross-eyed Chinese. That's why none of the mainstream newspapers in the U.S. and Canada would reprint the infamous Danish cartoons. That's why even Jyllands-Posten, three years before the Prophet Muhammad cartoons, had rejected caricatures of Christ, saying they were offensive to Christians and "will provoke an outcry." In exercising such self-restraint, let's not be hypocritical.

PEN International, the writers' group that is also a leading advocate of freedom of speech, speaks in its charter to the "unhampered transmission of thought." But it also insists "since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends." It calls on PEN members to foster "good understanding and mutual respect among nations to do their utmost to dispel race, class and national hatreds, and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace in the world."

Let's be fearless but also consistent, fair and balanced. Otherwise, we will feed the imperative for people and governments to regulate us.

3.2 Freeing the Airwaves: At what Price?
Broadcasting Policy: Regulation or Self Regulation

Nupur Basu

The Indian broadcast media is presently in the midst of a sharp debate with the government and civil society. The debate revolves around whether the privately run satellite news channels should have their own code of ethics and self regulate or whether there should be an external agency monitoring them. The catalyst for the present furore is the controversial television coverage of the Mumbai terror attacks last November.

Despite the fact that private television news have existed since 1995-96, it was only in October 2008 that a self regulatory authority was set up by the News Broadcasters Association. This has opened up the broadcasters to the criticism that they chose to act only when confronted by a mega crisis of confidence from viewers/audience/ civil society.

The Indian government in turn set up a regulatory authority consisting of eight persons, four from the media and the rest from civil society. But the loopholes were woven into the structure itself. One of the biggest criticisms was that the regulatory authority would not act on its own but would only act on complaints that were filed to them. Meanwhile the rules for filing these complaints had been made both cumbersome and unaffordable for ordinary viewers, with an exorbitant fee to be paid by the complaint. These critics felt would be a disincentive for ordinary citizens who wanted to be proactive on media issues.

The government also wanted to have a media management coordination plan, which would eliminate irresponsible and often unsubstantiated leaks to the media, many of which one saw on television channels post 26/11. With each news channel trying to outdo the other, this regulation clearly never took off.

The News Broadcasters Association promised to self regulate and not telecast visuals

of the dead or material that could compromise an ongoing operation. Images of the dead continue to be shown on television channels.

'It is a mockery," said Akhila Shivadas, founder of the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR), an organization that has been monitoring the media for over a decade from Delhi. "It has flopped even before it has begun. Just look at the number of dead bodies from Sri Lanka being shown on television these days."

It is ironic that having fought hard for four decades to free the airwaves from government control, the private broadcasters have themselves lost their way. With a blind devotion purely to boosting TRPs (viewership figures) the industry has slumped into a serious credibility crisis. The future demands some honest introspection and action on both sides to ensure that we have an uncompromised and credible broadcasting media.

3.3 Ethics: A Broadcaster's Responsibility

Hugh Leonard

Broadcasters in every country have a responsibility to their audiences to maintain high ethical standards if for no other reason than that listeners and viewers have a tendency to believe everything they see on television or hear on the radio.

Unfortunately this is becoming more and more difficult, even for public service broadcasters. There are two main reasons for this – competition and technology. When they are competing for the audience and for advertising revenue, they are forced to keep up with the others in a market where invasion of privacy, breaching of confidences, hijack interviewing, distortion of facts and other unethical practices are rampant.

There is a sense of urgency pervading many of the programming decisions they have to make. This means that they no longer have the luxury of careful consideration, checking and reviewing that they had in the past.

Advances in technology in recent times have contributed to the problem. When it comes to news, immediacy is the keyword and the pressure is on to be first with the story. In many cases the reporter is also the editor and his or her story goes live to air without the intervention of a more senior or experienced person back in the newsroom.

Unfortunately, these things are not going away any time in the near future; in fact, they are certain to become even greater challenges as time passes. So it is up to those in senior management positions to take appropriate action to ensure that high standards are set and maintained.

What can they do?

For a start, every broadcasting organisation should have a written code of ethics, which all staff are required to follow. This should be very specific in setting out what is permissible and what isn't, explaining why it is important for the stations to aim at and achieve high standards and stressing the importance of ethics in everything the organisation does. Every member of the staff, from top to bottom, should be provided with a copy and be required to use it. But that's not enough. They should have the code explained to them in training sessions and made to understand the benefits of always behaving in an ethical manner. Many organisations don't have such a code and even those that do, often just ignore it or don't think it is necessary to inculcate these standards into the thinking of their staff. This is a serious error.

Management vigilance, good training and instilling into new staff the importance of ethics are key factors. Training in these matters should be a priority, not only for new staff but also for the veterans who may have become jaded or careless in such matters. This training should aim at making staff to want to behave ethically. As the famous writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn once said: "Even the most rational approach to ethics is defenseless if there isn't the will to do what is right"

3.4 A Simple Principle for Resolving Ethical Conflicts
Drew McDaniel

There are so many ethical rules governing the lives of media professionals that it can be difficult at times to know which ones to apply. Standards are imposed by national policies, international agencies, religious leaders, and professional organizations, not to mention governments at all levels. The problem with all these rules is that because there are so many, and because they have differing goals, they are often in direct conflict. In this brief essay, I would like to suggest a simple principle through which such ethical dilemmas can be resolved.

Consider ethical rules that apply to news coverage. Media scholars recognize six types of ethical issues that journalists commonly encounter. Ethical questions tend to fall into one or more of these categories: 1) Payment for coverage of specific news stories, a practice sometimes called "brown packet news;" 2) conflict of interest caused when journalists have a stake in the news they report; 3) withholding information in news reports in order to change the interpretation of facts or events; 4) deceit, either in falsifying details of a news story or deceiving news sources in order to gain access to information; 5) invasion of privacy by reporting irrelevant personal details of public figures or any personal information of private figures; and 6) involvement in events that journalists cover.

Conflicts among these ethical conventions are common. For example, journalists frequently become aware of important news stories because of their personal

involvement in an event or activity. If they should cover stories that come to their attention in this way, they risk violating principles both of conflicts of interest and involvement in news. How such conflicts are resolved is obviously important to journalists and to their news organizations.

In general, but especially in professional settings, ethics are about actions. That is to say, ethical judgments are not about persons, but about the things they do. Approaches to such judgments can be divided into two basic types: First are the ethical rules that are shaped by an individual's intention. Here, one evaluates an action by the aim behind it – the merits of the motivations guiding a person's behavior. The problem with this way of assessing ethical merits of behaviors is that it is seldom possible to truly know a person's intentions. Indeed, intentions may not be fully understood by individuals themselves.

The second ethical system concerns the consequences of actions. Rather than assess the purpose of an action, this approach only considers the results of acts. The advantage of thinking about ethics this way is that consequences can be more easily observed and understood. Goal based ethical systems apply ethical principles that were developed in philosopher John Stuart Mill's theory of "utilitarianism," which teaches that good ethics come from actions that produce the "greatest good for the greatest number." This principle applies even when "bad" actions produce "good" results.

Mill proposed that by looking at all consequences – large and small, good and bad – a balance could be found, seeking to maximize good results and to minimize bad results. Hence journalists using this principle might decide on coverage of a story based upon how many members of the public would benefit and the degree to which they would profit. And so, by emphasizing the importance of doing the most "good" for the greatest number of persons, instead of merely stressing rules, media organizations can offer effective ways of managing complicated ethical decision making.

Attributes to a
Code of Media Ethics

Attributes to a Code of Media Ethics

4.1 Deontology, Sound Professional Practices and Public Good

Vladimir L. Gaï, Ph.D.

Most experts concur that the incredible boost in the number of television and radio channels available and thanks to modern technologies with their increased outreach has been accompanied by a flagrant decline in the quality of content.

Ethics is indeed the *sine qua non* for any media despite the fact that many believe or claim that ethical journalism and sound professional practices are outdated and have been overtaken by other "superior" considerations such as commercial and political interests. It's not rare that those in power, particularly in fragile societies, often take journalists and, more generally, media professionals for their mouthpieces. And yet all over the world media and in particular broadcasters do their utmost to adhere to an ethical code of practice to verify, to investigate, to function as watch dog, and to inform citizens for the sake of public good.

Hand in hand with civic society, the international professional community, academics and researchers have not spared their efforts to address the problems of ignorance and misunderstanding (sometimes profound, sometimes intentional) about the role of media within society. Comprehensive resources such as Media Ethics: Issues and Cases by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkinns, Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning by Clifford G. Christians, Mark Fackler, Kim B. Rotzoll, and Kathy B. McKee, The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should expect by Bill Kovach, CBA Editorial Guidelines, and UNESCO's publication Public Service Broadcasting: A best practices sourcebook to mention just some of them, provide important explanations as to why Ethics is part and parcel of broadcasting, why self-regulation is necessary and why Honesty and Integrity, Fairness and Impartiality, Independence and Confidentiality, Accuracy and accountability, Decency and Fair play are crucial for quality media, including broadcasting.

The most recent publication on the subject To Tell You the Truth: The Ethical Journalism Initiative by Aidan White, Secretary General, International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) contains a foreword by Jim Boumelha, IFJ President. He writes: "In every country and under every system, hundreds of journalists try to work to an ethical code… based on a feeling that it is necessary to keep watch on those in power, to inform citizens and to act in the public interest…the act of journalism as a public good will not survive on any platform without commitment to ethics and values".

For the majority of the world population, particularly those in rural, disadvantaged and marginalized areas, broadcasting is vital as it remains the most prevalent means of information and communication.

Regretfully, broadcasting is also used for purpose of manipulation - including from abroad - propaganda, disinformation, and for dominating or denigrating another culture, government or business…such broadcasting certainly violates all ethical or professional standards, but those behind it are indifferent do not care. Images are falsified, stories invented, live interviews cut short, censorship and self-censorship imposed, journalists harassed and killed, broadcasting stations closed, even bombed and destroyed. All of this certainly hinders freedom of expression and obstructs free, independent and pluralistic media.

I wish to close by emphasizing the importance of media and information literacy which enables people to critically make use of the media, to assess media content, and to select the channels they wish to watch or to listen to. Media education helps make people well-informed and responsible citizens, who are able to distinguish between ethical and unethical programs.

4.2 Media Ethics
Mano Wikramanayake

Media ethics broadly deals with the ethical principles and standards of media broadcasts and covers areas such as ethics of journalism, ethics of entertainment and media and democracy. Media ethics should also be viewed and understood in the contexts of the law, the economic reality of the given situation and the prevailing culture of the audience.

Naturally given the above, ethics, their application and their impact will vary significantly from country to country; society-to-society and even at a micro level in some instances from village to village.

However some basic tenets I believe cut across all boundaries. In journalism the commitment to truth is a common and much transgressed fundamental. In entertainment the impact on the young and impressionable and sensitivity to religious beliefs are found in almost all geographies. Sadly media commitment to democracy comes at a great price in many developed and developing nations more so today than at any other time in history.

Media to be relevant, must serve its audience by disseminating news and information, and/or otherwise provide a source of entertainment and escape from the pressures of life. It has to be accepted by its audience and therefore it must be within the ethical boundaries of that society which it serves. Be it commercial or public service, the Media cannot be successful in its endeavors if its audience does not believe in

its relevance and does not trust it to be accurate and above all fit within its ethical framework.

I believe that broadly it can be agreed that a commitment to truth, sensitivity towards race and religion, the eschewing of explicit images of violence and sex and harmful behavior such as smoking and inebriation, fit in with the ethics of any society to varying degrees. Broadcasters need to be conscious of these degrees and also of not erring too far on the side of caution as to be ridiculous in the eye of the beholder. To portray Churchill without his cigar or ignore issues such as aids, child prostitution and drug abuse would soon lead to a lack of credibility and ultimate failure. Hence as one can see, the contexts in which media ethics exist and are applied is of relevance and should be understood if ethics are to be effective. The contextual framework is dependent on the morals of the society, cultural and religious boundaries, and the degree of democracy and freedom of the individual and the media in that particular society.

This can be discussed under three broad headings: The Legal aspect of Media ethics, the economic aspect of Media ethics and the cultural aspect of media ethics.

Media Ethics and The Law

In most countries there are laws that spell out the boundaries of media behavior and prevent the media from doing or saying certain things which could unduly breach another person's rights; for instance, defamation which is a tort and includes slander and libel. A major area of conflict is between the public's "right to know", and freedom of the press, and the individual's right to privacy. This is a problem that arises in the coverage of celebrities, political figures and sports personalities usually to do with their private lives. There are restrictions in most countries on the publication of obscene material, particularly where it depicts nudity, desecration of religious objects or symbols (blasphemy), human remains or violent or sexual crime. The manner in which these laws are policed and in fact enacted and administered varies and is usually through a Media Act or a broadcasting ordinance, which clearly spells out the limitations and the punishment for transgression. Of recent times self-regulation of the media has gained popularity and Independent Media or Broadcast Regulators or Authorities have been set up by enactments to develop, monitor and/or control the broadcast or publication of material according to ethical guidelines. In certain countries election law also includes sections on the boundaries of behavior for media organizations in election situations and specifies punishment for transgression. Media regulators whether Government appointed or from the industry itself are today key figures in the attempt to control or direct the freedom of the 'wild ass'.

The Economic Aspects of Media Ethics

This includes areas such as the deregulation of media, concentration of media ownership such as regulations in the U.S, trade union and labor issues, spectrum regulators and licensing authorities and worldwide regulating bodies. In developing

countries and new emerging economic giants such as India deregulation takes place at a controlled rate and media ownership laws are either non-existent or not yet crystallized. In many such countries private media is held to ransom by government spectrum regulators and licensing authorities, which are used by governments to quell the voice of dissent. Due to the economic implications of non issuance of frequency licenses and such like, private media behavior is controlled indirectly, and ironically the ethics of good Governance is often disregarded in the enforcement of so called media ethics as a tool to bring dissenters to heel. Media ownership in a free market environment is a contentious issue particularly in countries that have recently embraced free market or neo liberal economic theory in an attempt to reap the benefits of globalization. If one person or party by dint of resources dominated the media, is the public being served and is it ethical to permit such a monopoly of news and information? Don't many governments worldwide do the same thing through the dominance of the market by government owned media?

In today's competitive world the pressures are many. Broadcasters fight for ears and eyeballs. Sensationalism and tabloid type journalism is rife and it can be argued that it is successful because the society it serves wants it. If the society it serves wants it, does it not then fit within the ethics of that society? Is the maintenance of a "higher Ideal" then a direct route to failure? What good is a media if it ceases to operate? Can there be a balance between the noble and the crass, which will ensure financial viability and sustainability?

Cultural Aspects of Media Ethics
Cultures and mores vary from society to society and even within a country, society could be multi ethnic and multi religious with differing sensitivities. For national media these are considerations that must be dealt with and with today's increasingly global reach of media even inter cultural considerations apply. For instance the Prophet Mohammed cartoons which were offensive to the Muslim world and at the other end of the scale, Google's self censorship in China. In many parts of the world The Media, particularly Television in developing economies and new media in the developed world, is blamed for changing (deteriorating?) values and standards of behavior. Societies evolve and change with time and are susceptible to influences that may arise from within and outside. What is happening today is that the rate of change and hence the degree of change over a shorter period is more significant due to advances in communication technology and proliferation of satellite Television and the internet.

However, Google's example in China and the awareness of the sensitivities of other societies created by the fall out of the Prophet Mohammed cartoons is evidence that the media is more aware of its global influence and the need to stay within ethical boundaries that may apply outside their home geography. Of course the cynical view would be that such behaviour by the media is motivated by economic considerations and the need to find new markets for their products.

In summation Media ethics is really not much different to other fields of ethics.

The issues of privacy and honesty apply to all fields of ethics and the trade off between economic goals and social values apply to fields like business ethics and medical ethics as well. However there are some fundamental differences. The most important one would be of course the democratic right of Freedom of Speech. This issue lies firmly in the field of Media ethics and is the one right that is constantly under threat particularly in the developing world today. An addendum to this is the issue of taste or aesthetic values, which often the media has influence over, and is perhaps ethically bound to uphold the values existent in its market? Or is it? I think another fundamental difference between media ethics and other fields of ethics are that the disparate nature of media goals and the pursuit of them lead the media into further ethical dilemmas. Simply put Media Goals may include the protection or furtherance of freedom of speech; or the maximizing of profit or market share; or the development of art and culture; Or the provision of factual balanced news; Or the provision of top class entertainment. One can see how these goals could frequently be in conflict and create ethical dilemmas. In the net I believe that ones viewers readers and listeners determine why and whether they consume your media. And they will do so only if they get some benefit out of doing so and you do not offend their values. It is up to us broadcasters to keep a finger on the pulse of our consumers and ensure that while striving to give them the best of what we think they want we do not transgress their ethical boundaries or those we set ourselves.

4.3 Editorial Guidelines for Strengthening Ethical Principles

Pui Hing

A code of editorial guidelines is an important tool to strengthen the editorial autonomy of a public service broadcaster.

Many public service broadcasters are already operating on principles and with practices, which have been well tried and tested over a period of time. These principles and practices support the daily editorial process, and enable editorial staff at various levels to deal with their daily work effectively in a confident manner.

It is not always the case that a code has been promulgated internally for staff to follow, or published for public consumption. A written code helps to smooth problems in the editorial process. The guidelines in the code should reflect what is being practiced within the station, and to that extent, they should represent the consensus view of the editorial staff. A code, which is published, will provide a useful focus in any public discussion on matters pertaining to editorial issues. The public will be able to measure the station's performance against written guidelines produced by its own staff.

So arguably a set of editorial guidelines will help a public service broadcaster to face up to both internal and external pressures. About ten years ago while I was still working for the public broadcaster in Hong Kong, I led a small team to draft a

set of editorial guidelines. We went through a lot of soul searching and put in place guidelines for our producers. The document has proved to be a useful tool for the station in subsequent debates on editorial issues.

Since consulting at the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, I have discovered that the CBA has also published a book on editorial guidelines. I would recommend to any interested reader this publication, which contains a full range of practical materials for any public service broadcaster wishing to put in place guidelines suitable for its operation. An on-line version is available via the CBA website.

4.4 Honesty and Integrity

Matai Akauola

I regard media and for that matter journalism, as a high calling in society, due to that fact it is the *'Fourth Estate'.* Media is so vital to society that it can either build it up or tear it down.

Therefore, those who profess to be the guardian lights of the profession must have foundation stones in place to withstand the winds of change that's shaking every prop that journalists have been leaning on. I therefore believe that honesty and integrity is one of the pillars of the journalism profession and a vital component in the daily life of a journalist. Honesty and integrity are inseparable. However this has become a rare commodity in the last decade with the advent of new technology and the move towards self-gratification. Most mediums today have made content king rather than context. Someone once said, "Reputation arrives on foot and leaves on horseback."

A journalist has to live by some moral values or principles daily to bring integrity into the forefront of an ethical and professional career.

Many today confuse the difference between Freedom of Expression and Media/Press Freedom and thus do not know their boundaries. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this includes rights freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." I interpret this as meaning that you can have a view even though it is not the truth.

Media/Press Freedom deals with the truth and within this context there are boundaries, which relate to factual matters that sets the difference between Media Freedom and Freedom of Expression.

With these distinctive features in mind we will be able to be impartial and restore editorial integrity in the journalism profession and the of-shoot is elevation of professional standards. The dictionary defines integrity as "the state of being complete, unified." So when I have integrity, my words and my deeds match up. We are who we are; no matter where we are or who we are with. Journalists with integrity have nothing to hide and nothing to fear. Their lives become an open book. Integrity is not what we do as much as whom we are. And who we are, in turn, determines what we do. Our system of values is so much a part of us we cannot separate it from ourselves.

In search of notes on integrity I came across these conclusions, which say that:

- Integrity builds trust – means more than the title on the door. Trusted by those following.
- Integrity has high influence value – means your word is your bond. You can be trusted for what you say.
- Integrity breeds high standards – living by higher standards allows followers to operate at the same level. Standards are low when the character of those in the profession is low.
- Integrity results in a solid reputation, not just image – image is what people think we are. Integrity is what we really are.

Integrity also means that we are not always right and must have the courage to admit our mistake. What might have been true yesterday can change due to new evidence. In conclusion- integrity is not a given factor in everyone's life. It is the result of self-discipline, inner trust and a decision to be relentlessly honest in all situations in our lives.

4.5 Can Broadcasters be Decent, Fair and Truthful?

Mr. Nuim Khaiyath

Yes, definitely, more so than, perhaps, other media practitioners, in view of the fact that radio being what it is, personal and intimate, demands of its audience to rely only on their hearing and immediate comprehension. But one can be ethical without being necessarily offensive. Let us marry the Western tenet of telling the truth at all costs with the Eastern custom of "hitting your daughter to send a message to your son-in-law".

Having had to broadcast very "sensitive" news form, first the BBC and then Radio Australia (Indonesian Service), to Indonesia, when it was under the authoritarian governments of the "Old order Regime" of President Soekarno and then the "New Order Regime" of President Suharto, my Colleagues and I have become adept at saying "Red is good but Blue is better."

Indonesians are in love with euphemism. We loathe calling a spade a spade. Hence it is easy (though not always safe) to convey "sensitive" messages readily understood

by the audience, packaged in more "halus" (Indonesian for subtle) words. Yet as broadcasters, bound by the strictest of "without fear or favour" ethical code, we must at all times tell the truth.

Broadcasting from London or Melbourne (Radio Australia) means being confronted by British and Australian style of calling a spade a "bloody" spade. So when translating the English version of the news about the "sacking" of an Indonesian minister or high-ranking military officer, we would use the Indonesian euphemism of "relieved of his duties". The truth is conveyed and the message is understood without offence being given.

During the "New Order Regime" in Indonesia it was a cardinal sin to say anything negative about the military, yet we at Radio Australia were able to convey the truth even if it was critical of the military. One of our stringers in Jakarta once sent a report about the breaking into of a house belonging to a corporal in the Army. The corporal was a lowly paid member of the Army, yet each of the luxury goods that he reported stolen to the police would have been beyond his means to acquire legitimately. How to convey this without incurring the ire of the military? Our stringer reported the market prices of the stolen goods without any comments. Listeners later responded by saying that if the corporal had been honest and relying only on his salary he would not have been able to afford such goods. We abided by the ethics of broadcasting, in reporting without fear or favour, decently and fairly, under very difficult circumstances, the whole truth, without giving offence or even endangering ourselves (especially when we go back to Indonesia for a visit or on assignment.)

Yes, there is more than one way to skin a cat.

4.6 Comply and Create

Gareth Price

The starting point for every broadcaster should be the diverse audiences be/she has to serve in one's own country. Every nation has its own distinct sense of identity, often with very different values. As a Compliance Manager for a TV Company in the UK I know how much the British dislike violence on their screens compared with the Americans but tolerate sexual imagery more than US TV (which excludes Hollywood!). Similarly in Asia the ethics of any Muslim country differs widely from a country such as South Korea. It follows that every broadcasting organisation should draw up its own self-regulating code of contact, which will differ, at least slightly from its nearest rival. Product placement for example will not necessarily be the same for the public broadcaster and his commercial rival.

But there are common values in each country, which take on a democratic mantle as opposed to an authoritarian regime. News and current affairs reporting must be fair and impartial. After all, it is the audience as the electorate, which chooses

its government and requires relevant knowledge from the media in order to make an informed choice. Broadcasters, therefore, have immense power and great responsibility as a prime pillar of democracy. As a BBC producer, I had strong private feelings against Mrs. Thatcher's policies but when at work, I ensured that her policies were presented without bias. In this industry, professionalism is paramount.

The aforementioned product placement is a growing problem in the world as consumerism takes hold of audiences, which respond so easily to advertising. Companies now try to influence broadcasters into advertising products within the programme content by offering them free furniture, free bottled water, free items on making tea or food through using these products and thus avoiding payment for official advertising slots. This is a practice, which is unfair to sponsors, and advertisers who pay their way in dedicated slots.

Audiences are diverse and the biggest challenge is to protect the vulnerable sections of the audience from viewing unsuitable material. Children require special rules, in non-Muslim countries at least, to prevent them from seeing adult drama or Light Entertainment, which often includes sex, bad language or violence. I have yet to come across a better safeguard than the concept of the 'Watershed" which specifies that at a nominated time in the TV schedule (9 p.m. in the UK) there is a changeover of scheduling responsibilities. Before 9 p.m. family programming is the concern of the broadcasters. After 9 p.m. viewing is the responsibility of the parents. In addition, since it is often the older generation who object to modern liberal behavior, relevant warnings should be relayed to viewers before programmes start if the nature of the programme impinges on some viewers' feelings regarding taste and decency.

Taste is often difficult to define. It is easy to rule that the abuse of disabled people or ethnic minorities is distasteful. It is much more difficult when trying to decide on the very cleverly delivered joke which is risqué or how to depict a suicide without actually showing the whole act. Defining boundaries of taste and decency offer broadcasters who are trying to liberalise the values of their own society great challenges if only because values are not always a constant in ever-evolving societies. Sometimes the broadcaster has to follow the changing ethos of his own society. At other times he leads it. That is why it is better to keep broadcasting laws short and the codes of conduct much longer. They can be changed quickly, often on an annual basis as new problems and ideas enter the national psyche, often from external sources. In a globalised world suffering from economic downturn, it is also patently obvious that no broadcaster or his audience is an island in the 21st Century.

Codes of broadcasting conduct offer guidelines to young entrants in a media industry with a high turnover. Every broadcaster should be required to understand the rules of the game as part of initial training. It is just as important that management monitors programme content without stifling the creativity of the programme-maker who has got to be allowed to push the boundaries of the value system from time to time. That is why judging programme material in relation to codes of compliance is effectively dealing in grey areas of debate. Compliance is not about censorship. It

is about serving the perceived values of the target audience. Broadcasting is about balancing creativity with compliance.

4.7 Media Code of Ethics between Idealistic and Proactive Approaches. Respect for others Rights

Saed J. Abu-Hijleh

There is no doubt that the media, in the multiplicity of its formats, is an indispensable means of power that has been used and abused within societies. It is emphatically an integral part of the social, political, and economic structures of the contemporary world and also an essential element in the ongoing process of its development.

Traditionally, the media has been employed to justify the existing socioeconomic and sociopolitical orders despite the structural injustices that characterize them. Those in control of media outlets influence the dissemination of information and consequently affect the formation of knowledge and knowledge structures in a way that usually fosters the hegemony of elites in societies.

Like any other facet of power, controls have to be exercised to protect society from anyone who can employ media to harm public interest, individual freedoms, and collective human rights. The media, undoubtedly, has been used to justify the oppression, dehumanization, marginalization, suppression, and dispossession of peoples and groups the world over. This is of course no small affair and indeed 'power corrupts' if no confines were applied.

The implementation of a 'Media Code of Ethics' is therefore imperative. The question is not if we need a code of ethics or not, but it should be what kind of code of ethics we need and how can we ensure compliance and adherence. Certainly ideology and culture influence the essence of any code of ethics and consequently its applicability and effectiveness in influencing conduct.

Codes of ethics can come with different flavors: liberal or conservative, capitalist or socialist, reactionary or revolutionary. They can also have the most perfect wording and espouse universal values like honesty, fairness, independence, and accountability. Yet it is only the testing on the ground that can verify the value of such codes in shaping the behavior of broadcasters and media practitioners. Nonetheless, it is either the lack of ethics in the media or the non-compliance to existing codes of ethics by journalists and broadcasters that is harming the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged in societies. Therefore it is clear that the people who will benefit most from the implementation of a code of ethics are those who are most adversely affected by its absence.

In reality, what is the point of having a code of ethics when no one truly applies it or adheres to it? Indeed we can have a very good worded media code of ethics

but again the main point is compliance, and how to deal with violators. Of course violations happen for different reasons, and it is absolutely crucial to understand the economic and political contexts in which these violations occur. In the contemporary world violations occur systematically and structurally because of the internal working logic of the international capitalist system: the profit seeking, the competition, and the disparities where 'the weak are seen as the natural prey of the strong'. The way I see it is that the nature of capitalism is antithetical to any code of ethics in general, yet alone a media code of ethics. This is evident in corporate media presenting news in a way that is favorable to business and government interests to minimize the possibilities of lost revenues.

So in real life, if we weigh ethics and profits, which one wins? Actually and unfortunately, those who are ethical, who have integrity, and who speak out the truth, risk being penalized and retaliated against. Many lose their jobs, end up in jail, beaten, and might tragically get assassinated, as evident by numerous cases around the world.

The code of ethics should be linked to, and comply with, international covenants and agreements that call for the protection of human rights including political, economic, religious, and cultural rights. It should be applied equally to all regardless of social or economic class, race, ethnicity, nationality, or gender. Although it might be difficult to speak of a universal media code of ethics due to regional variations in culture and ideology, I believe there is enough common ground of universal ethics that transcend borders and nationalities that broadcasters and media professional can agree on and adhere to.

Since the media affects the lives of everyone in society, the enactment and application of a media code of ethics should not only be an issue for journalists, broadcasters, and media practitioners, but it should be among the priorities of all groups that work for social change and social justice. In other words it should not be treated as a utopian or intellectual exercise but as a matter of practical necessity for the protection of civil rights and the animation of democracy.

Although the freedom of speech should be revered and respected by all, a distinction has to be made between using the media for free expression and the sharing of news and information and between the use of the media to deliberately deceive people, sway public opinion, and aid in the oppression of others. A word can kill like a gun, rocket, or a bomb; not only weapons can do harm, but also news, op-eds, films, and documentaries, etc. This point cannot be over stressed. We must highlight that there is a criminal aspect of breaching a media code of ethics, since certain breaches can result in serious harm to others, reaching to the aiding in the massacring of thousands of people, and in the colonization and oppression of people under different disguises like "fighting terrorism" for example.

A media code of ethics should be applied proactively and should not be left for voluntary whims. It should be dealt with as a social responsibility that requires

participatory approaches to enact it, adopt it, apply it, defend it, lobby for it, and indeed punish those who deliberately breach it with appropriate penalties using legal and other mechanisms.

Finally, without reservation, I stress that the effective application of a progressive Media Code of Ethics in this day and age is a revolutionary task that should be on the agendas of individuals and groups working for true social change and the betterment of the human condition.

4.8 Trust and Ethical Codes in Broadcast Media
Thepchai Yong

Trust is the most important asset that the media can have. A newspaper or a broadcaster may report, inform and scrutinize, but it can gain public trust only when it has accountability and transparency. The public trust in the media lies in its belief that in performing their journalistic duty they are guided by codes of ethics. Ethic codes in general require news and current affairs programmes to be accurate, impartial, and balanced while also dealing with correcting errors. In practice, they commit journalists to honesty, fairness, independence and responsibility.

While ethic codes govern the conduct of journalists, they are particularly crucial in defining the role of the media in societies, especially in emerging democracies, where the system of checks and balances is still weak. Indeed, strict adhere to ethics codes can serve as a protection against political interference. Several countries in the region have seen how politicians in power use their political clout – and in many cases their business influence - to keep the media in line. In extreme cases, either willingly or out of necessity, many media outlets under such pressure have chosen to abandon their fundamental journalistic principles and ended up becoming mere propaganda tools of the power-that-be. Because of their reach and influence on public opinions, broadcast media are more often than not a major target of political interference and thus tend to be among early casualties. But there have also been instances in which broadcasters under those circumstances are able to withstand political and business pressure, and continue to courageously carry out their journalistic duty. They are able to do this through their strict observance of ethics codes that require them to respect truths and people´s rights to know. Time of crisis often offers the best test of how the media observe these fundamental principles. And how the media can win the trust of their audiences also depends on it.

5 Ethics in Genres of Media

Ethics in Genres of Media

5.1 Journalistic Ethics in a Multimedia World

Baqer Moin

At Jadid Media, we take the view that the editorial standards that apply to the traditional media apply equally to journalism on the Internet. But, the online journalist must negotiate a number of additional challenges to ensure that these standards – accuracy, fairness, and balance – are properly adhered to.

The Internet has given journalists a wealth of opportunities. To gather material, to confirm a story and to publish – all these are now much speedier. To get feedback for our work is also now a matter of minutes, literally. Interaction in all directions – vertical and, crucially, horizontal interaction between users – is what makes the Internet democratic. At least for those on the right side of the digital divide, for those who have access to a computer and a reliable, unfiltered connection, the Internet offers unprecedented possibilities for self-expression.

And such expression can be richly textured – not just words, but also sounds, pictures and video. These are, ultimately, the opportunities that Jadid Media takes advantage off to develop a new generation of citizen journalists in the Persian speaking-world and to offer exciting content, from the grassroots, on a modest budget.

Of course, there are pitfalls. Journalists on the Internet are much more exposed to suspect sources that set out to deceive and to anonymous hoaxers. If standards of accuracy are to be maintained, everything needs to be checked – and, sometimes, not just online.

There are new pressures on fairness, too. Popular opinion on the Internet can easily turn into a populist wildfire, fanned by flamers and trolls – how do you avoid being swamped without resorting to, in effect, censorship? And when the distinction between the private and the public spheres is becoming ever more blurred online, how far do you go to protect personal identity? – An issue Jadid Media grapples with every week as we make decisions on which photographs may compromise both our contributors and their subjects.

And, whilst the undeniable pluralism of the Web must make it easier to achieve balance, we must always be aware that nothing is 100% impartial, neutral and value-free – not even the results of the search engines.

At Jadid Media, we may not have all the answers to these new challenges but we hope that we are, at least, aware of the questions. To deal with these questions, our starting point is the traditional editorial values of accuracy, fairness and balance – ultimately, of intellectual honesty. These values we try to instill to our trainees and contributors and, together with them, to work out how they can be practically applied to the world of the Web. Ultimately, the judges of our success are our users.

5.2 Promotion & Protection of Ethics in Cyberspace

M. M. Aboutalebi

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

Helping the world to communicate has never been as important and as relevant as it is today. Working together to provide connectivity as far as it is possible is high on global agenda. All these efforts together have shaped a new world that nowadays we call "Information Society".

As the opportunities opened up by new Information technologies continue to excite all people around the world, it is perhaps timely to pause and reflect on just how the information society continues to evolve in different dimensions.

This article encompasses some important issues relevant to information ethics, viz. access to information, information divide & inequity, delinquencies & crimes, and finally privacy.

Access to Information

We are looking for a human information society based on solidarity and democracy with the basic rights of free access to information and the freedom of communication that embraces all communities.

We need to reach an understanding on the set of legal & ethical principles that define and protect rights of information society members. We need to respect, accept and protect the diversity of cultures and languages. We need to foster media competence enabling everyone to read, write and work in cyberspace. When information competence is both the ability to access/use available information globally and the ability to produce information and content, what can we do both to allow easy access to the global information resources and to move more passive (reading) societies into active (writing) societies?

The continuing globalization of all aspects of production, distribution, and use of information is the main issue facing information ethics. The production of information is based on the need for information and refers to its content & quality. The distribution of information raises the question of information ownership and depends on the information resources in which information is represented and on the design & management of information markets where information can be accessed & exchanged.

The use of information is mainly a question of competence and money, being information literate in order to be able to profit from the information resources and being able to pay for the costs of information use. This is a political question of information equity or inequity or how to overcome information gaps.

Information Divide & Inequity

Many experts are concerned about the growing gap between those who are able and willing to take advantage of modern information and communication technology and those who are not. The problem of information divide cannot be restricted to the difference between developed and developing countries but is a problem in all societies, whatever their technological status.

If access to information and the possibility to take an active part in the exchange of knowledge is the necessary basis for all activities in our public and private life, then it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to support all activities, which aim at establishing an information balance in the information society. A society is information-balanced when information divide can be overcome. Therefore a consideration of information equity seems to be at the center of all ethical discussion. This is not a technological problem.

It cannot be solved by providing everyone in the world with a computer and telecommunication equipment (although the importance of such a program should not be underestimated), but by solving the information problem. Overcoming information inequity does not necessarily mean that global information can be accessed from everywhere by everyone free of charge. The creation of content in an appropriate environment and the exchange of information among those who need it are increasingly important.

The emphasis on information production, distribution and use from an ethical point of view raises many questions and generates many sub issues, such as the following:

• Given the fact that information is cost-intensive to produce and thus demands an economic basis, who/which institution and which level will be responsible for granting access to appropriate information for the use of local actors?
• How can a basic information supply be defined and guaranteed?
• Which models are available that can help us find a fair compromise between market interests in return on investment with a reasonable profit, public interest and in giving everyone the chance to lead his/her private and public life on an information-secure basis?
• What are appropriate models for such information compromises on a supranational level (overcoming gaps between information rich and information poor countries), on a national level (gaps within a country), and on an individual level (gaps in information competence and education)?
• What can international institutions like UNESCO do to prevent modern societies from being divided into the information elite (haves) and the information

underprivileged (haves not)? Is there a chance to bridge the widening "abstraction gap" between the dominant information rich & the information poor?

- Can we play a major role to overcome the language barriers between peoples and nations?
- How can the language rights of the non – English – speaking world which run contrary to economic interests in one – world – one - language markets be protected by international institutions?
- What can world community do to protect the rights of developing countries to represent their own way of thinking, culture, science and economy in regional and global information networks and services?

Delinquencies & Crimes

One thing however is clear: we must seek to use the opportunities provided by the information and communication technologies. But we also need to take a firm stand against delinquencies such as pedophilia, pornography especially child pornography and child prostitution in the media and on the Internet.

The time has come for the international community to mobilize against the violence and perversity whose victims are our children. The cyberspace conveys the best and the worst. Child pornography and pedophilia are entrenched there. We have to dislodge them. We must not tolerate pedophilia, child pornography and child prostitution which perverts these roads of freedom. We must therefore devise ways to make cyberspace useful and interesting, to expand it so as to build bridges between people, businesses and nations.

"Globalization" is a buzzword today. But we also have to ask ourselves "globalization for whom"? Financial Transactions of hundreds of millions of dollars including payments for drugs take place in nanoseconds bypassing governments and crossing borders. Nevertheless, we ordinary human beings continue to exist in the real world of borders, passports, visas, customs, etc. It is important to remember that information is not knowledge and knowledge is not wisdom. We shall need all the wisdom in the world to make the best use of the opportunities, which information society has to offer.

What are appropriate measures to diminish the amount of violence and hatred put on the internet? In my opinion we need to develop a worldwide code of ethics for the information society. There is no doubt that this code of ethics should also address privacy & confidentiality concerns. We should be greatly concerned about children's interest in the Internet. Parents worry that their children will use the Internet to access pornography and other adult material and the companies are collecting private, personal data from children. Some experts are optimistic that the information industry has already developed new software tools for parents and that governments are taking appropriate measures to protect privacy rights. Others are rather skeptical as to whether software lifeguards; filter mechanisms can be adequate or sufficient means to protect us from Internet hate, violence, pornography, and other unwanted messages and images. From an info ethics point of view technological solutions

for social problems may not always be adequate. Other appropriate measures by accredited international bodies and institutions should also be taken.

We probably need additional laws to protect ourselves against hate and other delinquencies in the media and on the Internet. Perhaps there is a need for new codes of politeness (being polite even in an anonymous communication situation).

Information ethics is not a matter of abstract academic (philosophical) discussion, but can be a permanent worldwide process of exchange of positions among people who are involved in structuring the new information world. The global information society is thus a platform for information ethics and for development of an ethos that makes the public aware and sensitive of the need to take a responsible approach towards information, its production, distribution and use.

In its global character this is comparable to ecological questions and should thus be treated on the same level of political and intellectual decision-making and public discussion. There is a real need for a more elaborate and more precisely defined agenda as mentioned in WSIS Agenda for the information society adopted in Tunis, November 2005.

Privacy
Privacy has become one of the most important human rights issues of the modern age. At a time when computer-based technology gives dominant powers in the cyberspace, the ability to conduct mass surveillance of populations, privacy has become a crucial safeguard for individual and even nation rights. According to opinion polls, concern over privacy violation is now greater than at any other time in recent history.

New developments in medical research and care, advanced transportation systems and financial transfers have dramatically increased the level of information generated by each individual. Computers linked together by high-speed networks with advanced processing systems can create comprehensive dossiers on any person. All these achievements in technology weave a seamless web of surveillance from the cradle to the grave, from the bankbook to the bedroom.

Industry continues to pursue models of self-regulation that provide, at best, lowest common denominator protection for consumers. Ever since personal information became a "value added" component of business, few companies have been willing to relinquish the opportunity to amass and process all manner of data. This is what is happening nowadays in the cyberspace that breaches the rights of individuals at a micro level. But what is happening at a macro level in breaching the rights and security of nations and governments is far more dire and harmful. This kind of interference and breaches of international laws has paved the way for increasing inequity between the North and South.

The main question here is: Why this kind of immorality in the media and cyberspace that takes place on a daily basis on a global scale is not under scrutiny of the

international institutions? Why these global-scale delinquencies do not receive due attention of policy makers. I strongly believe that this is our task and we should turn the spotlight on this appalling issue.

5.3 News and Current Affairs: Ethical Principles in International Journalism

Xia Jixuan

With globalization, people suddenly find themselves related, in one way or another, with the once "far-away places". Satellite, Internet and mobile communication have made it possible for instant exchanges of information around the world. More and more people are interested in learning news and information about trade, economic and social events in other countries. More and more media organizations are sending reporters to other countries, reporting "international news" for domestic audience. However, we cannot ignore the fact that faster delivery of news and wider coverage of the world have failed to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings between the nations.

As a journalist myself, I've realized the urgent need to define a new type of journalism – International Journalism. It is new because it is different from traditional journalism in that a) it involves cross-border & cross-culture reporting, and b) it serves the changing needs of a changing audience in a changing world. Thus it needs a different set of guidelines in both professional and ethical principles.

While it is important to come up with a set of media ethical principles for media professionals and organizations to ensure that minimum standards are maintained in the sector, it is impossible to impose a set of general regulations on the media in different countries. I'd like to approach the issue by proposing a couple of ethical principles or rules of thumb in the area of international reporting based upon my personal experience.

Rule One: Self-Regulation
As many overseas correspondents have been trained with principles and skills used in traditional journalism, which basically reports domestic issues, they lack the knowledge and skill in international journalism. They know they have to observe laws of their residence country but forget to respect the cultural and ethical differences. More often than not, they refer to the guidebook of their own media organization when making professional decisions (e.g. on what to report) while neglecting the guidebook when dealing with ethical issues (e.g. concerning method of news gathering). They are less prudent when checking facts because they wont' be held responsible for inaccurate reports as they would be back home. Press freedom is a handy excuse to cover their errors. So self-regulation with emphasis on ethical issues must be in place whenever necessary.

Rule Two: Do in Rome as the Romans Do
Though a cliché for tourists, it is also an important advice for journalists from developed countries doing reports in a developing country.

In many developing countries, the media often works with the government to educate people and to promote development. Developmental reporting is an integral part of the media's daily operation. Unfortunately, many reporters from developed countries often dismiss news releases from governmental agencies as "propaganda or PR material". They tend to shun official sources to avoid "acting as a government mouthpiece". But their seemingly independent hunting for stories may end up in pit-falls set by malicious opinion-makers. What's more, in traditional journalism, no news is good news and news by nature is about the unexpected and abnormal. However, when people read or hear bad news on domestic issues, they can make the balance because they live in the environment. When it comes to international issues, things are not that simple. For example, when you are planning a trip overseas and only to hear stories of robbery and murder in the region you want to visit. What's your decision – to book a ticket as planned or to cancel the trip or change a destination? Bad news about developing countries creates stereotypes and re-enforces prejudices.

In order to present a more realistic picture of the country they report, journalists from developed countries should learn to do some developmental reporting as their counterparts from the local media do.

Rule Three: Guard against Partial Truth
Most international stories are superficial due to the fierce competition among the media, driven to be the first and to provide exclusive stories. Many a time, overseas correspondents jump at a story, which seems worth reporting. It may hold some truth as an isolated case, but lacks newsworthiness when the overall situation is taken into consideration. Yet, the reporters seldom have the time or ability to dig beneath the surface into facts for truth. Without sufficient background material, without necessary knowledge of either the culture or the social values to interpret the phenomena correctly, they fail to present the story in a meaningful context. As a result, fast news generates junk information, to say the least. Some stories are inaccurate, some are biased, and still some are intentionally misleading. The fable "Four Blind People and the Elephant"i is the best illustration of this point.

Rule Four: Do Not Watch Over Others' Doors
The right to know normally refers to the right by the people to know about government affairs and behaviors by public figures, such as politicians, celebrities, and business leaders when engaged in a public function. In many countries, the media plays the role of a watchdog, namely shouldering the responsibility to keep an eye on the government and high-ranking officials. Should the media expose a wrongdoing, whoever held responsible would be punished accordingly. But a watchdog is only good when he takes care of his own yard. When he watches over the door of another household, more often than not, he barks at the wrong time. Even if a story proves to be true, the audience in one country does not have the power to vote on issues of another country. So, the media's supervision should be limited to public affairs of one's own country.

5.4 Code of Ethics in Awards and International Media

Georges Leclere

For a major part of the last 40 years, I was directly involved in Television.
First in Lebanon anchoring the Mexico Olympics, then in France as a News correspondent, specialized in pretty much everything my chief editors couldn't understand: Science, Technology, Energy, Microcomputers, Internet,...all this before 1986 when I went to New York, not to take over Manhattan, but to head the United Nations Television. Then, after 10 years and some stints for again French-TV, I took over the International Emmy Awards and now the Banff World TV Festival Program competition, the biggest in the World with its 1000 entries.

First, learning International Ethics with UN Television

My UN team was composed of 176 people from 64 different countries, each one with a different communication style. Just to go through the day, I had to know the name of about 180 countries with their main cities, rivers and mountains, and also their heads of state and ambassadors as, at the UN, you can meet any of these people anytime in the hallway leading to your office!

These ambassadors had a precise idea of what television should be as they were all watching TV in their respective countries. Go produce a TV show in these conditions! My ethics then were to find positive news about every country, every relevant problem, every culture and political situation, while defending the UN! With my wonderful UNDPI (Department of Public Information, Media Division) team, we managed! And did very well, since some of the shows I created in 1987 are still on in 2008, successfully broadcast around the globe.

These shows were short, precise, no talking heads (A challenge at the UN!) and would address issues of importance for billions of people.

Second, Ethics for TV Awards

When you head renowned TV Awards like the iEMMYs or Banff, you become a role model for all TV producers who trust your awards to enhance their visibility by being recognized as "Excellent in TV". But the rule of the game is that hundreds enter the competition with programs they think are the best, at least in their own country, while only very few of them become Nominees and even less become winners. So you have to constantly maintain the highest standard of fairness, to find processes that are not favoring some shows over others (Also a challenge when you judge only in English!), to gather jurors with the highest level of competence, while keeping the system truly international. Succeeding is my code of ethics!

I hope that everywhere I meet TV people, speak and judge, I can pass on the message that everyone on Earth is entitled to have the right to defend whatever shows they like to watch, in their own culture, their own country with their own level of

development. If, in addition, you make them watch shows, universal enough to impact many viewers, that they never heard about, that's great ethics!

Paraphrasing an 18-century fellow countryman let me conclude: I may not like or not fully understand your TV show, but I will fight to death to give you the right to show it to a maximum of viewers.

5.5 Ethics in Drama and Arts
Dr. Riad Ismat

Do ethics and arts coexist? Isn't dramatic art, in its varied manifestations, a break from the redundant bourgeois values and a revolt against them? Doesn't art cross the limitations of traditional culture in a revolutionary manner both in meaning and form?

In the third millennium, we realize an increasing use of abusive language, shocking scenes and unbecoming conduct in drama, which became the trademark of many fringe theatres, as well as many detective and action-packed movies. Some producers and artists argue that it is necessary for the depiction of a realistic pulse of life. Yet, the laws of advanced societies request "ratings" for all movies. Also, US and UK public channels broadcast modified versions of horrifying and indecent scenes and warn on obscene language or nude and violent images. Some people find excuses for breaking the code of ethics in order to practice their "freedom of expression". Yet, one should not mistake freedom for ignoring the responsibility of artists towards their societies and humanity, in general. One should respect others' believes and avoid insulting them under the claim of "freedom of expression". As a wise man once put it, "Our modern drama is dominated by intelligence." In fact, there are rumors even about intelligence in the age of Shakespeare and Marlow. Intelligence ranges between seeking information and strict censorship, which is associated with totalitarian regimes, although it is inherent in Western institutions that deny it, because there are explicit and implicit forms of censorship. The connotation of intelligence seems to scheme for a clash of civilizations, instead of dialogue of civilizations.

While some level of censorship is suppressing, another springs from a social awareness by the producers and artists. Without it, we deal with anarchists. I wish there was extensive use of "intelligence" against the establishment's "intelligence" that suppresses creativity and distorts truth. In fact, ethics do not contradict with revolutionary art, because who said that revolutions are against ethics? In fact, the main concern of revolutions is just to substitute one set of the code of ethics with another. Censorship had its prime with revolutions; then, great artists suffered from it, tried to broaden its margin and widen its spectrum; there were martyrs of that battle. In the Western world, we should acknowledge that there are certain "taboos", more crucial than using four letter words or nude images. Some themes and political perspectives are banned, because they don't suit the stereotype political thinking.

Only few brave ones dare to say the truth and nothing but the truth. Awareness and balance in drama result in a fusion between authenticity and creativity in great works of art. This demands a great deal of integrity, originality and respect to the historical or current facts. The good work of art is the one that stimulates, maybe even provokes, but does not offend. I am afraid we are witnessing nowadays more offensive attempts, which intentionally betray the code of ethics in drama for commercial reasons.

The code of ethics is more important with historical drama, based on real personalities and events. The scriptwriter isn't a historian; he is an interpreter of history for a modern audience. Historians themselves differ in their perspectives. There isn't one decisive, objective and authentic reading of history. This is why the scriptwriter has a dual responsibility: to be truthful to the facts in diverse references; and to use his imagination to fill the gaps by creating characters and actions that compliment the story. While doing so, the scriptwriter may have in mind a contemporary projection, of course. But here comes ethics to keep him from distorting history in a wild manner to satisfy his own whims and "twist the neck of truth." Those who don't follow the code of ethics betray the very essence of their role as interpreters, to impose upon the facts and transform true characters into fake reproduction – if not metamorphosis – that transcends "political projection" to serve one's own selfish goals. The result of falsifying historical facts is allegorical drama, instead of symbolic.

It is a fact that most producers have come to the profession from experience, rather than from culture, talent or creativity. Naturally, they seek commercial profit. But, those whose aim is to win prizes, or achieve the respect of their audience, try to strike a balance between the ideological and the aesthetic, between the current social concerns and their artistic representation through good plot, solid structure, organic growth, fine characterization and entertainment. Brecht, the most celebrated ideological playwright in the 20th century, stressed the significance of entertainment. The great director Peter Brook has said once: "boredom is the worst enemy of dramatic art." Indeed, to intrigue an audience, whether on stage or screen, is the very essence of art. In drama, no matter how great the subject matter, it is worthless without the vehicle of intrigue. All successful playwrights consider themselves the grandsons and daughters of Scheherazade.

When drama depicts modern history, the problem is sometimes more evident, because public figures and social environments that still live in minds make the comparison partial. Some elderly people may convey the real facts in contrast with the imposed ones. Although the ambiance could be achieved through shabby settings, good costumes, props and accent, the authenticity cannot be maintained without the necessary make-believe element. Many television serials sank into this quicksand and ended with sequels under public demand and commercial investment. Unleashing one's imagination doesn't mean bartering the dramatic with the folkloric and falsifying an environment to satisfy the primitive instincts.

On the other hand, we must acknowledge that the best dramatic works are those

that bridge the gap between the intellectual and the illiterate, not those that address the elite. Only works of art that enjoy a true sense of identity can survive. Identity is not just celebrating heritage as in museums; it is a revival of heritage in a form that addresses our current time, place and new generations. Heritage is not sacred; its modern representations need to reflect the ingredients of authenticity and modernity in one recipe.

Art faces the dilemma between the commercial and the artistic. Some surrender to the strong temptations, especially when they come from the private sector; others cling to the code of ethics. Fortunately, we have works that tackled successfully subject-matters as "AIDS", unfaithfulness, sectarianism, religious fanaticism, political corruption, immoral greed and even the worst evil deeds one could think of, without offending the masses, or getting censored. Their creators managed to walk on the tight rope, or even to cross a minefield on wings of light and fire, proving to be innovative, daring and convincing in dealing with those controversial themes. This is the legitimate marriage between the freedom of expression and the responsibility of the artist, which makes drama transcend itself and be worthy of recognition, public success and awards; this is basically due to respecting the code of ethics.

6

Dealing with
Ethical Dilemmas

Dealing with Ethical Dilemmas

6.1 Dealing with Ethical Dilemmas in Broadcasting

Phumelele Ntombela-Nzimande

Broadcasting is a permanent ethical dilemma, as broadcasters are forever facing the challenge of ethical decisions relating to the inherently emotive issues and material they interface with, ranging from the cultural, religious, racial, ethnic to other realities. Ethical questions apply to the broadcaster, the subject covered, and the audience, hence the theory that objectivity is a mirage.

Being human beings, broadcasters are undeniably creatures of beliefs ranging from the mundane to the deeply ideological. From an ethics point of view their challenge is therefore less of "objectivity" and more of the right ethics. What, though, is the right ethics? Is it the ideological right or the left?

The answer, I would posit, lies in the concept of universality in so far as it refers to world unanimity on some aspects of life. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, cuts across all divides and is embraced by virtually all ideological persuasions, so do other world documents on children, women, the youth, the elderly, HIV and AIDS, and many more subjects.

It is from such shared ideological statements that broadcasters, I would aver, should derive their ethical positions. It does help that these documents are generally born out of pro-poor ideologies, and it behooves any broadcaster to be pro-poor as broadcasting is ultimately about the empowerment of one's audiences, and empowerment is an inherently pro-poor concept.

The perspective here advanced places upon the broadcaster the onus of subjecting all issues to the ethical test of contribution to the empowerment of the broadcaster's audience. Such a test would raise questions pertaining to the general good and the interests of the masses who constitute the audience, and I say this from a public broadcasting point of view, not broadcasting representative of sectoral interests influenced by commercial and funding sources.

It is for that reason that the very question of funding for broadcasters is itself an ethical question. Be it state or commercial, funding has implications for broadcasters as controllers of funds generally expect the broadcaster to be the proverbial piper. The ethical position that broadcasters should take, then, is to negotiate constitutionally and legally protected freedoms tied to the oversight of elected representatives and institutions of the masses.

On its own part the broadcaster has to formulate a mission, vision and values statement which clearly articulates its understanding of its mandate, particularly vis-à-vis the audience it serves. This statement, especially the values it espouses, effectively constitutes the ethical position of the broadcaster. It therefore serves as an instrument for both editorial choices and the adjudication of disputes relating to the handling of various subjects and material.

What some might view as the challenge of dealing with ethical dilemmas, then, is really a challenge of choice – the choice being an ideological position which foregrounds the broadcaster's audience and its empowerment. It is a choice we at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) made quite easily as we located our existence within the transformational paradigm of the reconstruction and development of our society. Our approach to broadcasting is that it is a central aspect of what some in our country refer to as the national democratic revolution, hence our vision of "Broadcasting for Total Citizen Empowerment".

When we deal with issues pertaining to cultural, ethnic and religious diversity; then; and when we interface with inherently sensitive subjects such as children's rights; gender; conflicts and wars; it is to our ethics-based mission, vision and values that we turn for guidance.

Therein lies, in my view, the answer to the ethical dilemmas often faced by broadcasters.

6.2 Ethical Dilemmas – Cultural, Ethnic and Religious Diversity

Abubakar Jijiwa

Underlining issues of ethics are questions bordering on goodness, appropriateness, or rightness of conduct and actions. They are about taste and decency, morality and responsibility in everyday choices and decisions we make. Unfortunately however, decisions on such issues and questions are conditioned mostly by subjectivities and exigencies, and perhaps on the available information and knowledge or future, pecuniary prospects for such actions. For broadcasters, and indeed all mass media practitioners, we are confronted with grave dilemmas because of the reach and impact of the channels – the messages and portrayals.

What should broadcasters report or cover, how should different issues be handled, what weight, depth and airtime allocation should be given an issue against the other, who should be represented or given voice on a particular issue are questions that that the broadcaster has to answer in his programming, content provision and coverage, especially in the challenging world of diversity and multi-culturalism that is also characterized socio-economic polarisations and technological gaps.

But also, the broadcaster is constrained by time, distance, geography and financial resources to navigate through the labyrinth of complex and often conflicting demands of the society he covers. These dilemmas were placed in perspective at the 2007 Diversity Matters Forum, South Africa, where people from different ethnic and religious communities sought an end to stereotypes and encourage more balance from the media. The forum indeed acknowledged that the role of the media in multi-faith societies experiencing tension between different communities is particularly challenging. This is particularly true of Nigeria, with no fewer than 300 ethnic and linguistic groups represented in Islamic, Christian and traditional religions. Studies of Nigerian Press Coverage of National Issues and Crises support the above observation.

A recognition of this challenge informs efforts by different media stakeholders including the Nigerian Press Council, the Nigerian Union of Journalists, the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the National Broadcasting Commission to codify the ethical imperatives guiding professional conducts and practices.

By and large, the broadcaster in its production and content provision is expected be guided by values of integrity, accuracy, objectivity and fairness, authenticity, observe good taste and decency, respect morality and social values and downplay violence, cruelty, pain and horror. This should be in deference to diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion, as well as respect for affirmation rights, protection of children from exploitation and abuses, and most importantly to create the enabling environment for peace, stability and national development.

Solving or dealing with ethical dilemmas ironically goes beyond codification or legal prescription. But there should be enough knowledge and awareness of the ethical landmines by the broadcaster, dictating that he must have a good or qualitative professional education and be well informed of his environment. The bulk of the challenge however is the moral and social responsibility and commitment of the broadcaster to promote peace and development, encourage dialogue and participation and protect the well-being of the society. But the broadcaster cannot do this successfully without entering into the socio-cultural context of the people being addressed. The broadcaster must be sensitive to the their values and aspirations, their challenges, denials and agitations which must be put in perspective without derogation or stereotyping, without sullying or despising their objects of veneration.

In dealing with diversity, the broadcaster must refrain from using one value system as a standard rule to judge another, because that amounts to denying identity and voice; the broadcaster, in this instance, the public broadcaster must be seen as a platform for representation and not suppression.

6.3 Media Ethics and Envelope Journalism

Prof. David Mould

In 2006, Indonesia's Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) launched a campaign against corruption in the profession. Billboards and advertisements showed an envelope in an evil-looking black hand, with the slogan "Stop Bribery: Indonesia For The Better."

The campaign, backed by national media, major corporations, academics, political groups, international organizations and NGOs, targeted envelope journalism-the practice of giving journalists money or presents to cover events and write positively about them.

Why do journalists in the developing world take bribes? There are three main reasons:

- **The first** is economics. Many journalists, especially in provincial areas, struggle to survive on low wages. They realize that accepting payments is unethical but they have to put food on the table and pay the rent. This is why AJI combines its anti-corruption drive with a campaign to set minimum monthly salaries for journalists.
- **Second,** journalists work in societies where corruption is endemic. When politicians, civil servants, police, judges, and business people all give and receive payments for services rendered, why should journalists behave any differently? Even the most scrupulous journalist may need to use bribes to get the job done-to get past a military or police checkpoint or to obtain a copy of government document. Envelope journalism goes both ways.
- **Third,** some organizations that should know better contribute to journalistic corruption. In an increasingly competitive news cycle where government ministries, national and international NGOs, advocacy groups and corporations compete for column inches and air time, some lure journalists with payments, writing them off as "entertainment expenses" on public relations budgets. Their excuse is that "everyone else is doing it."

Stopping journalists from taking bribes is a worthy goal; however, it should be part of a larger program to attack the commercial pressures that shape news. In some countries, news organizations, faced with declining government subsidies or competing for advertising revenue, have come to regard "news" as a commodity, to be bought, sold or bartered. Newspapers contain "hidden advertisements," positive articles about businesses, organizations and individuals. TV stations run sponsored programs masquerading as news. This is the corporate version of envelope journalism, hidden under a respectable business camouflage of invoices, statements and ledger entries. But it still involves the buying and selling of news.

This is not simply a matter of journalism ethics. Envelope journalism-at the individual and corporate levels-jeopardizes the quality and integrity of the news on which we rely to make decisions about our world.

6.4 Ethics for Cultural Diversity

Georges Lory

As a journalist I worked once in a city where I was proudly told: we are the only country in the world with one ethnic group, a single language and a sole religion. That was in Somalia, in the 1980s.

It shows that uniqueness isn't necessarily a prerequisite for a peaceful development. On the contrary, diversity is probably a crucial factor to move forwards. Cultural diversity is a treasure media should dig for: an open attitude clearly enriches the mind, might reduce prejudices and favors the emergence of solutions. Each media has a specific target. But however specialised the audience might be, everyone has to take into account the events happening in our global village. They impact directly on our life now. Curiosity is the key-word for a journalist: looking for facts, checking the information, trying to grasp the underlying forces around a decision, studying both points of view in case of quarrel and also eager to learn what the other media say. Our global village has now a main communication language – English – it's a good point. It doesn't prevent media people from learning other languages, in order to broaden their field of investigation and examining the ethical principles in portraying diversity. Cultural diversity is an endangered species. Every year languages disappear and humankind loses a slice of its heritage. The media can't communicate in every single language, of course, but globalisation means also keeping an eye on diversity. We are facing migrations like never before, amongst others, migrations due to climatic changes. It is an unavoidable effect of globalisation. Which country doesn't harbor today ethnic, religious, linguistic minorities? Media need more than ever now, a multiple level of thinking: within global economic world and within local intricate situations. Both are rich with promises and both need an ethical dimension.

6.5 Ethics and Public Service

Kunda Dixit

When discussing the ethics of media, journalism schools and editors tell rookie reporters to be sensitive about privacy, libel, gory pictures and things like that.

Those are important, but ethics is, or should be, about something much broader. We have to almost start at the philosophical level to figure out the public service role of media.

A radio station that serves only as a money-making venture is not fulfilling its real role of providing the community with information, entertainment and education. A TV channel that dumbs down content so much it loses all its public service function may actually be harming societal values and norms. A newspaper that indulges in gutter journalism just to sell copies becomes detrimental to the public good.

This is especially important vis-à-vis broadcasting. There is a blurring of the line between news and entertainment today. Even in countries with long traditions of free press and democracy, over-commercialised media undermines democracy by wasting the freedom to do in-depth meaningful journalism. Journalists in these countries have to deal with a much more formidable enemy than government censorship: the censorship by exclusion by a profit-driven media owners.

Such self-censorship is much more insidious because it happens in countries where the press is still supposed to be free. Viewers and listeners there therefore anesthetised by escapist entertainment and are deprived of information relevant to the conduct of their daily lives as citizens.

This is where we in the media should be aware of the ethics of broadcasting. If broadcasting serves its public service role, all other ethical issues follow automatically. If we are unethical, we undermine democracy and become a part of the problem.

There is also no point talking about ethics without ensuring press freedom. A shackled press is inherently unethical. It is the first value that we must struggle to preserve. Press freedom is not something that can be partially guaranteed: one can't be half-free. The regulation of a free press can only come from an internally-generated discourse on the codes of conduct and the ombudsman role of a Press Council.

It is in developing countries where the concept of media ethics has an added role of ensuring economic progress and development.

We desperately need to re-invent news content and ask ourselves what is the media's function in a country where poverty, injustice, inequity is rife. The only answer to that question is that TV and radio must strive for social justice, equality and better government so that our citizens can have better living standards. Everything else is just distraction.

There is the entertainment element, and this is also a public service function. Entertainment that also informs and educates have proven their worth in developing countries. To be ethical as a media professional in these countries is to ensure that information saves lives. Knowledge can make the difference between life or death. If that information needs to be packaged in a teledrama or radio jingle format, all the better.

There are many examples of TV and radio stations that have helped reduce national infant mortality rates just by beaming information that is accessible, affordable and easily understandable to the public.

There are only two kinds of journalism: good and bad. Good journalism is relevant, public service oriented and ethical.

6.6 Ethical Principles for Broadcasters with Focus on Children

Dr. Patricia Edgar

An ethical broadcasting business, whether publicly funded or commercial, is one whose leaders look beyond self interest – higher ratings above all else and improved cash returns to shareholders – to see their organisation's goals in the light of the common good of the broader society they serve.

Media today are very influential in setting the tone for society as a whole.

Broadcasting, while it has helped expose the corruption, hypocrisy and cynicism of our economic and political systems has also exploited their excesses. Programs and advertising have pushed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and been so successful in commercialising the seamy and immoral side of life that right and wrong are no longer clear concepts.

In the past decade, we have had to grapple with news images revealing the existence of a brand of terrorism that has no regard for innocent victims. We have been confronted with violence so evil and insane that we don't know how to respond. Our young children have been sexualized in marketing campaigns. Broadcasting pushes such program content to new limits and depths, to titillate audiences and engage newer and younger children as markets in ways we would never have contemplated a decade ago.

And children whose brain development and values are formed in the early years from 0-8 watch these images and watch us as we view and listen to the often confused and ambiguous rhetoric presented in newscasts.

In struggling with these issues we know from experience legislation to regulate broadcasting is necessary but has its limitations. Regulations can require quotas to ensure the provision of local content; they can define the number of hours for preschool and children's programming; they can outline the need for balance in newscasts; set limits on the number of minutes of advertising; classify and censor programs. But it is always possible to find creative ways of getting around the letter of the law and ignore the spirit of the law.

Ethical broadcasting can only derive from ethical leadership. A culture must be developed within an organisation that respects an agreed code of conduct to make a difference.

With children, first and foremost, they need to be acknowledged as a minority audience with special needs that broadcasters have a responsibility to cater for, in the interest of their sound development and the common good. Standards should insist that programs are made specifically for children, which are entertaining, well

produced with sufficient resources to ensure a high production standard, enhance children's understanding and experience, and are culturally appropriate.

The media we produce for children should place educational purpose before merchandising potential; should be trustworthy, putting the interests of the child as citizen and outcomes worthy of the good society above the interests of profit.

These are demanding but essential tasks. An ethical approach to broadcasting implies the ability by leaders to earn the respect of the public they serve.

6.7 Journalistic Ethics and War

Alison Weir

Journalism is intimately connected to wars. It has started wars and ended them; exploited them for monetary gain and worked to stop their carnage.

The media have given us depictions of miraculous bravery and heroic self-sacrifice and have often functioned to glorify warfare, warriors, military campaigns, and the alleged honor associated with organized killing – sometimes to such a degree that the young clamor to participate in these seemingly wondrous phenomena, lying about their age so that they, too, may become heroes.

Some do; some simply become dead, and in return for "giving their life for their country," as the newspaper death notice reads, they receive a military burial, the pure tones of "Taps" played on a gleaming brass bugle, and a flag-draped coffin. American novelist Ernest Hemingway once wrote that if war were not so horrible men would love it too much.

There is one basic ethical requirement in reporting on war: report it fully and honestly. Report the reality, the tragedy, the grief, the mutilation, the death. Report the courage and the fear; the savagery and the heroism; describe the "collateral damage," the cases of compassion, and of cruelty. Show the consequence of "surgical" strikes, detail the devastation and ruin.

Do not let partisanship interfere with reporting; give the statistics frequently, accurately, honestly, and, always, for *both* sides. Report how many have been killed and where. How many were killed on their own land; how many while on the other's land. How many civilians were killed; how many children. Tell the public how they were killed. Give their names, families, the details, the weeping.

Delve into the causation of the conflict; go beneath the surface to discover whether there are underlying agendas and hidden factors. Include the historic context and geopolitical environment. Question the official story; go beyond the military spokespeople and the government press office. Investigate the rationales being offered – are they logical? Consistent? Supported by evidence?

Report the chronological facts and motivations. Who initiated the violence? Who responded? Which side killed first? Why are they using this violence? What is the intention, the larger goal? Derive your analysis from the facts; do not make the facts fit your analysis.

Include international law as it relates to conflict and the treatment of civilians under military occupation. Are human rights being violated? Are war crimes being committed? Investigate rumors of atrocities, indications that prisoners are being mistreated. Be alert to cover-ups. Listen to everyone, not just officials, officers, "experts." What are civilians saying? The troops? Medics? Humanitarian workers?

Try not to become jaded, cynical, negligent. War is not "business as usual" – unless we make it so. Killing is not "old news," suffering is not irrelevant, cruelty is not "routine."

Some ethicists suggest that journalistic principles simply require "balanced" reporting; that by including competing sets of claims a journalist has discharged his or her ethical responsibilities. This is quite false. Ethical journalism consists of considerably more work – of investigating these claims and reporting which are substantiated by facts, which are not.

This is particularly essential for reporting on conflict, where so much of such profound import is at stake. Wars are phenomena in which human beings take the lives of other human beings in numbers often far beyond those lost in even the most devastating natural disasters. While humans are unable to stop a tsunami or prevent an earthquake, it is entirely possible to head off a war – or to promote it. News leaders who make the decision to do one or the other hold countless lives in their hands. I need not say which choice is the ethical one.

6.8 Media Ethics for War and Terror Reporting

Nandini Sahai

Media in India has never been under the scanner as much as it was after its 60 hours of non-stop reporting of the Mumbai terror attack on 26th November 2008. 10 terrorists held the city to ransom for nearly three days.

When they attacked its two landmark hotels- the Tajmahal and the Trident, nearly 200 lost their lives and 300 were injured. If Kargil in 1999 was the first televised war, then in 2002 Gujarat was the first televised riot. 26/11 was the first televised terror attack.

Following these worst ever communal riots, wars and terror attacks media, particularly the electronic media was at the receiving end of much criticism for the way these incidents were covered. Accusations ranged from allegations of repetition

of provocative visuals to lack of sensitivity in reporting. It was even suggested that the incidents spiraled out of control because of irresponsible coverage. One problem with much of the TV coverage – and the principal reason why people were so angry – was the complete misjudgment of tone. At times of national crisis, we don´t need hysterical reporters telling us how bad things are. We can see the pictures for ourselves. We needed calm authority and a sense that even as the horror of the crisis unfolded, the rest of India was still functioning normally. Also it´s not good enough to say, as the TV channels are saying now: we simply did what we were told. The defense offered by the channels is as follows: "The authorities never told us what not to show or where not to go. How were we to know any better?" This is a dangerous argument because it suggests that the media are incapable of any kind of self-regulation and unable to think beyond the next shot unless they are instructed what to do. This is an invitation for censorship or external regulation.

The media of course had its own side of the story to tell. Citing that the electronic medium had made old rules and guidelines for reportage redundant, they defended their portrayal of the news. According to them, it was the `truthful´ telecasting that had contained the riots, not inflamed them.

Terrorism, as we all know, thrives on media coverage, putting media in a catch-22 situation. Incidents like war and terror attacks are thus a testing period for broadcasters. They should provide impartial analysis and offer a range of views and opinions including the voices of the opposition. Matters involving risk to, and loss of, life need handling with the utmost regard to the mood and feeling of the viewers. The broadcasters must be sensitive to their feelings and fears. Many will have relatives or friends involved in the conflict. Thus, the broadcasters need to handle the painful stories sensitively and with care.

Some of the major guidelines for War and Terror Reporting should include:
- Delayed coverage while reporting war and terrorism.
- All live coverage should go out after a delay (this could be as little as 10 minutes and as much as 20).
- That way, terrorists will not get information in real time and authorities could intervene.
- Telecast of anything that might compromise the operation.
- No live phone-ins with terrorists or their hostages.
- Do not air `file footage´ with date and time.
- No `live´ broadcast of `sensitive´ situations.
- Avoid any broadcast that may `jeopardize´ security operations.
- No showing of images of blood and gore on channels.
- The media should refrain from constructing and floating theories.
- Based on rumours and gut feelings.
- Jingoism and display of primitive emotions should be avoided in media especially in cases where foreign identities are involved.
- Those who are propagating war on TV are not going to fight it themselves and don´t understand the `costs´ of a war".

- Telecast of news relating to armed conflict, internal disturbance, communal violence, public disorder and such other situations should be tested on the touchstone of `public interest.´
- While reporting live hostage situations or rescue operations, the channels should not identify the hostages or reveal their number and status.
- Similarly, details of the security operations should not be given out.
- The media should avoid live contact with the victims or security/technical personnel involved or perpetrators during the course of the incident.
- There should be unequivocal separation between news and opinion.
- Competing points of view should be balanced and fairly characterized.
- Confidentiality of anonymous sources should be maintained.
- Accurate attribution of statements made by individuals or other news media, should be done.
- Pictures, sound, and quotations must not be presented in a misleading context (or lack thereof). Simulations, reenactments, alterations, and artistic imaginings must be clearly labeled as such, if not avoided entirely.
- Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- Reports should normally make it absolutely clear where their information has come from, and attribute it accordingly.

All said and done, implementation is the most important link in the process. Media needs to evolve a mechanism for implementation of the above guidelines.

There are so many ethical rules governing the lives of media professionals that it can be difficult at times to know which ones to apply. Standards are imposed through national policies, international agencies, religious leaders, and professional organizations, not to mention governments at all levels. The problem with all these rules is that because there are so many, and because they have differing goals, they are often in direct conflict. In this brief essay, I would like to suggest a simple principle through which such ethical dilemmas can be resolved.

Consider ethical rules that apply to news coverage. Media scholars recognize six types of ethical issues that journalists commonly encounter. Ethical questions tend to fall into one or more of these categories: 1) Payment for coverage of specific news stories, a practice sometimes called "brown packet news;" 2) conflict of interest caused when journalists have a stake in the news they report; 3) withholding information in news reports in order to change the interpretation of facts or events; 4) deceit, either in falsifying details of a news story or deceiving news sources in order to gain access to information; 5) invasion of privacy by reporting irrelevant personal details of public figures or any personal information of private figures; and 6) involvement in events that journalists cover.

Conflicts among these ethical conventions are common. For example, journalists

frequently become aware of important news stories because of their personal involvement in an event or activity. If they should cover stories that come to their attention in this way, they risk violating principles both of conflicts of interest and involvement in news. How such conflicts are resolved is obviously important to journalists and to their news organizations.

In general, but especially in professional settings, ethics are about actions. That is to say, ethical judgments are not about persons, but about the things they do. Approaches to such judgments can be divided into two basic types: First are the ethical rules that are shaped by an individual's intention. Here, one evaluates an action by the aim behind it – the merits of the motivations guiding a person's behavior. The problem with this way of assessing ethical merits of behaviors is that it is seldom possible to truly know a person's intentions. Indeed, intentions may not be fully understood by individuals themselves.

The second ethical system concerns the consequences of actions. Rather than assess the purpose of an action, this approach only considers the results of acts. The advantage of thinking about ethics this way is that consequences can be more easily observed and understood. Goal based ethical systems apply ethical principles that were developed in philosopher John Stuart Mill's theory of "utilitarianism," which teaches that good ethics come from actions that produce the "greatest good for the greatest number." This principle applies even when "bad" actions produce "good" results.

Mill proposed that by looking at all consequences – large and small, good and bad – a balance could be found, seeking to maximize good results and to minimize bad results. Hence journalists using this principle might decide on coverage of a story based upon how many members of the public would benefit and the degree to which they would profit. And so, by emphasizing the importance of doing the most "good" for the greatest number of persons, instead of merely stressing rules, media organizations can offer effective ways of managing complicated ethical decision making.

6.9 Violence on Screen. Ethics and Violence on Television

Henrikas Yushkiavitshus

This year is exactly fifty years, since I came to television. It was my choice. I was sure that this is my place, where I can serve best my nation, my country, even mankind. Today, I hesitate to say, whom I have served – God or devil. The reason for my uncertainty is violence on television. I have looked through my notebooks and here are some thoughts from them.

Television was perceived as powerful medium, not merely a conveyer of news and

information, but a credible one, a visually convincing media. And television has shown is strength in this domain. But if we can believe even the random statistics available to us concerning the high volume of violence found in today's television fare, we must admit, something has gone wrong.

This is not a television we had envisioned in its early days. This is not to say that violence is not part and parcel of reality, but does it have to be transmitted to our dinner tables, to our children, to our young ones? Has something gone wrong with television?

What is violence? Could it be that what is not perceived as violence in one country is considered violent and aggressive in another country? What is accepted as correct or "modern" behavior in one culture might be offensive, degrading and even immoral in other culture? Who are the principal actors and decision makers that bring violence on television, or that keep violent programs away from television? Is it the film or television director? The producer who provides financing? The network managers? The advertisers? The codes drawn up by the film and television industry?

Violence and terror portrayed through the mass media evoke a particular kind of challenge, especially when media fare is not selectively chosen, bought or rented and watched, but is simply "available", on prime time, and most channels, leaving little or no other choice. Violence on television occurs in a social manner that is hardly under any social restraints. Violence on television can thus have other effects on society that empirical research tells us very little about, but common sense tells us they are happening. The chances of examining to what extent we are manipulated is very limited, compared to our ability to look in written text and to see whether somebody is trying to manipulate us or not.

For the last fifty years the link between watching violence on television and violent behavior in everyday life has seemed an open question – embraced by one study, rejected by another.

Today, the correlation between the two is no longer a point of debate, it is established fact. To come to this conclusion we spent the same time as to come to the conclusion that smoking leads to the lung cancer. The difference is that in case of smoking the effective measures are taken and in case of television violence no action is being taken. The guidelines in many television organizations act only as a "fig list", to quieten public and the press, but which are really not implemented. Whether it is news or general programming, violence has come to stay on television, because the whole business has gone to the hands of the accountants. Programmes are now read as statements of accounts and not any more as programme schedules. Broadcasters are told to work as accountants and be solely concerned about profit and loss. Targets are financial and no longer public service ideals. There is a power play between TV managers and advertisers and other kinds of financial sponsors; and related to this magic mix that makes for a high selling, high advertising programme: stardom,

suspense and mystery, excitement and thrills, action and violence-the latter usually lacing through the whole recipe.

How long do we still have to wait to understand that the result is a cancer of our morals, soul and tolerance?

7

**Case Studies
on Media Ethics**

Case Studies on Media Ethics

7.1 Media Laws and Ethics in Thailand

Ladavan Bua-aim

Rights and liberties of the people are the pillars of democratic administration. The 2007 Constitution of Thailand clearly stated the full protection of human rights and citizen rights. The provisions of Sections 26-29 of the Constitution specify the rights and liberties of the Thai people. In the charter, the National Human Rights Commission was formed with seven members to examine human rights violation and the acts that do not comply with obligations under international treaties to which Thailand is a party, and to propose remedial measures. Taking into account that media rights and freedom are as important as respect for civil and human rights, the liberty of expression of individuals and media are specified in two sections. The media play a major part in informing the public and also have an influence on public opinions through their diverse roles as a messenger, a watchdog, an intermediary, a relay, and a gatekeeper.

Sections 56-58 state that a person shall have the right to gain access to public information in possession of a state agency, state enterprise, or local government organization and shall have the right to receive information and lodge complaints. These rights are also contained in the 1997 Official Information Act, which guarantees the "right to know" among the people. However, the exercising of these rights must not violate the "right to privacy," either intentionally or unintentionally.

In presenting news and information in the public interest, members of the media must be ready to take full responsibility for consequences. For instance, they would be punished for defamation of character, if found guilty. They must be ready to face charges under both civil law and criminal law. Violations may take place at any time, if members of the media are not careful about checking their information to ensure accuracy before disseminating it through various media. In particular, they must exercise great caution about criticism, so as not to cause damage to other people.

As the world is now in the "information age," the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand has come up with a new vision of media, information technology, and telecommunication development for human development and a desirable society, to cope with the present situation. The objectives are to enable people to benefit from all dimensions of development on a continual basis and to provide them with greater access to quality information, independently and fairly, so that they will be media consumers with more alternatives and better

able to use information to help solve their problems and develop themselves, their families, communities, and societies. The information and communication technology system must be beneficial to all groups of people in all areas. It will help promote the creative and lifelong learning processes and create social and community awareness, so that people will be happy and have a better quality of life.

As members of the media play an important role in informing people and shaping attitudes, they are considered major elements in pushing for a society of wisdom based on this vision. Their operations under the code of ethics will ensure that they will perform their duties with righteousness and responsibility toward themselves and other people for a society of happiness, without exploitation. This code of ethics should be applied extensively, ranging across all media organizations and practitioners in all media activities, operations, and management, on a full-cycle basis. The reason is that members of the media have responsibilities toward not only themselves and their profession, but also toward other people and the integrity of society. Although the media enjoy freedom of expression, they must use their freedom with accountability. Ethics has, therefore, become a major mechanism to ensure that the media perform their duties with dignity and trustworthiness in the eyes of the public.

The concept of media ethics takes an international approach. Attempts have been made in Thailand to encourage professional organizations to play a greater role in supervising the behavior of professionals. For example, the National Press Council of Thailand introduced a code of ethics in 1998 concerning ethics for professional journalists and personnel in public relations and advertising. Other media organizations, such as the Thai Journalists Association and the Advertising Association of Thailand have also set their own codes of ethics. The 2008 Public Broadcasting of Sound and Pictures Organization of Thailand Act also specifies media ethics, as in the 2008 Broadcasting Act, which promotes and controls media ethics and protects the people whose lives are affected by broadcasting operations.

In Thailand, the promotion of media ethics is found in both the provisions of the juristic system and the supervision of professional associations. Awards have been presented to the media organizations for their good deeds and ethical conduct. However, in the face of great competition in terms of capital, profits, and political influence, it is difficult for members of the media to retain their professional ideals and ethics concerning integrity, fairness, decency, the right to privacy, and the presentation of accurate and balanced news and information, as well as to keep their personal biases, emotions, and other subjective factors out of their reporting and provide citizens with the essential information people need in order to judge public affairs for themselves.

Knowledge societies should be based on a strong commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, which depends on a pluralistic and independent media. Knowledge societies should allow the full realization of the right to education and of all cultural rights. In knowledge

societies, access to the public domain of information and knowledge for education and cultural purposes should be as broad as possible. An important principle of knowledge societies should be to encourage and give expression to cultural and linguistic diversity.

7.2 An Ethical Approach for Sources of Information

Scott Rawdin

Mei-Hua stood stunned. Carrying the newspaper to her father at the breakfast table, she was petrified by the front page article. In just a few words, she realized the journalist was writing about her. Mei-Hua never intended for anyone to read about her HIV status in the National Press! And yet, without her consent, plastered across three columns was her story and an unmistakably accurate description of her physical appearance. Her father sensed her distress.

December 1st, World AIDS Day, during an open house at UNAIDS, Mei-Hua* spoke to the visitors as she has for the last two years as a volunteer in the National Fight Against AIDS. An anonymous person spoke with her. The person seemed worried and needed counseling. Mei-Hua showed compassion and empathy. But now she discovers that the person had in fact played a role and deceived her "to make a lead (story)"… "If it bleeds it leads! But Mei-Hua could only feel her world crashing down upon her.

Her father telephoned the newspaper. But he was brushed off, given no apology. Mei-Hua had only revealed her HIV status to her mother and father: no one else in her family knew. However, because of the portrait the journalist painted, anyone who knew her would be immediately informed. Her aunts and cousins and grandparents and friends and neighbors.

She feared the fear, discrimination, exclusion, accusations she knew would follow. What did she do to merit this?

How can a human being be so inconsiderate to another, especially while wielding such overwhelming power with their pen, and destroy the life/lives of so many people, just to add another writing credit to their unethical career?

Obviously, the Newspaper didn't have the Ethical attitude appropriate in this case. Imagine the damage the newspaper causes with such inconsideration? What does this say of the General Ethics of this newspaper? What are the "Lessons learned" from this sad example?

Are those lessons specific to HIV? To all pathologies? To all information?

If we cannot rely on our sources of information to be scientifically exact and socially

and ethically just and responsible with all the information they report to us, then what is the intelligence of consulting that source of information?

Trampled Ethics infect the message, inevitably reflecting negatively on the perpetrators. Just give it time

* name changed by author

7.3 Ethics and Self Regulation; TVM In The Process of Democratic Change

Ali Khalid

TVM has been a state controlled entity for over 3 decades. With the changes in the democratic values the organization felt the need to adapt to the changing times. It realized the government would not initiate the required changes as the election was fast approaching. However, for TVM to be accepted by the audience and gain a competitive edge in the new and flourishing media industry in the country, it was imperative to make significant changes, to cater to the audience expectations and their constant calls for an immediate end to government propaganda in the news. To whet the ever growing appetite for information and make a deeper impact on the audience and their expectations, we felt the need to change every aspect of our broadcast content and the way we communicate and deliver messages.

We introduced ethical values into our programs and advertising. We put in place guidelines for gender, children and special care issues.

To do this we worked and got assistance from relevant ministries. Once we had the guideline on paper we conducted an awareness program for producers. All producers were given copies of the 3 guidelines, and programs which failed to adhere to the guideline were not approved for broadcast. In the rare event when something slipped from the process and went on air, we ensured that we make an apology. This way we make the public and the producer aware of the mistake. And this helped the producers not to repeat the mistake again.

A vibrant media was an immediate requisite, considering the fast pace of democratic reforms the country was experiencing. As an aspiring Public Service Broadcaster, TVM has a bigger and a more significant role in educating the public about the democratic reform process. With elections ahead, there were messages and civic education programs to run, which could only be done by an experienced broadcaster. There were party elections, public referendum for deciding a system of governance and the first ever multi-party presidential election.

Initially we came up with a set of guidelines to cover the opposition party campaign and their debates. This prepared the audience and the government to the inevitable

fact that the State Broadcaster was indeed, gradually changing its course of direction, ready to assume the role of a true Public Service Broadcaster. Our news also set guidelines on campaign coverage.

With the little experience gained from covering campaigns, our news and program teams had to ensure that they provide a fair and balanced coverage of the public referendum to decide on the system of governance. The government was supporting the presidential system and the opposition endorsed the parliamentary system.

We had the task of giving equal airtime in our programs, and being fair, balanced and impartial in our coverage of news. Guided by transparent rules and regulations and an unwavering commitment to adhere to the highest ethical standards TVM provided complete coverage, which was praised by the Government and the opposition alike. Our journalists and producers derived a lot of strength from this and they felt a sense of renewed motivation to be fair, balanced and ethical.

When we eventually faced the presidential election, there were competitors in the market as well. To avoid speculation and obtain trust we signed an Equal Access Agreement with the political parties on covering campaigns and elections.

The agreement was our savior as the government also agreed that a guideline was essential to give fair coverage and equal airtime. Accordingly we did our best to follow the agreement in giving coverage to the political parties. Also our programs facilitated airtime to the political parties, who then were able to explain their political views and promote their manifesto. When the presidential candidates were officially announced TVM allocated equal airtime to the candidates. Advertising slots were also given at special rates. When prioritizing the order of news candidates were given precedence on a rotating basis, i.e. the no 1 position will drop to bottom the next primetime news. Each news bulletin also kept this rotation. A news item was treated as an exception only if it had higher news value. All the while our producers and journalists kept close contact with the political parties, so only few occasion we were not able to cover their activities, and if there was we were able to find a solution through dialogue. All political parties had confidence in the sincerity of our intention to honor the agreement and our determination to maintain ethical standards. When the first round of election failed to provide the clear majority required to win the election, we found that the political parties as well as independent observers had no complains about our coverage. Most importantly we managed to win the confidence of the public.

The second round of campaigning was more intense and aggressive. Yet TVM maintained the same balance in reporting and allocating airtime.

However, TVM was not ready to deal with the post election euphoria, which brought about a lot of criticism from our viewers.

The only tyrant I accept in this world is the still voice within – Mahathma Gandhi

7.4 Ethics and Social and Economic Impact of Messages
Mia Malan

I once did a television story on three teenage boys in South Africa's northern province, who claimed that they preferred having sex with goats to girls because they were scared of getting infected with HIV. I spoke to the boys on camera, as well as to local community leaders, parents and girls, who confirmed that this was indeed the case. I was careful not to reveal the boys' identities – only their silhouettes were shown on camera.

After the story was broadcast the people from the village that the boys were from were very upset – no one wanted to buy the villagers' goat products any longer. The villagers managed to figure out who the boys were as they recognized their voices. As a result, the boys – feeling under pressure and looking for a way out – falsely claimed that I had paid them to tell me that they had sex with goats. They even got an adult woman to claim that she witnessed how I had paid them.

South Africa's Broadcast Complaint Commission rejected the claims due to a lack of evidence and the fact that I had all my negotiations with them on tape. But the question remained: was it ethical to tell this story if I knew there could be dire consequences for the village and the boys?

I believe it was. I believe the dangers that the boys – and other villagers – faced by being uninformed about HIV were significantly bigger than a temporary loss of income. And, of course, the animals were badly abused.

As a result of the story, the government intervened with an HIV education campaign in the village and the National Animal Protection Agency came up with a plan to protect the goats.

The boys are probably branded for life by the villagers, but they now have access to HIV information that could save their lives. Information that they may not have had, had this story not been broadcast.

I learned an important lesson from doing this story: always record your negotiations with interviewees, if possible, especially when doing highly sensitive or controversial stories.

7.5 Media Ethics and the South African Experience
By Prof Guy Berger

Media practitioners in South Africa take their cue from the country's Constitution, which sets out the values of a non-racial and non-sexist democracy. Adopted in 2006, two years after the country's first democratic elections, the Constitution is also the

benchmark for how media law interfaces with media ethics. Most fundamental here is the enshrining of freedom of expression and media freedom in the Constitution. While these rights are also balanced against other rights (for example, to dignity and privacy), they cannot be annulled by legislation and they should be observed in terms of ethical decision-making.

In this spirit, 1999 legislation on the South African Broadcasting Corporation, acknowledges editorial freedom for the institution within a framework of "national interest" (seen as the values set out in the Constitution) and "public interest".

Also importantly for broadcasters in South Africa the Constitution entrenches an independent regulator for electronic communications. Known as the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa), this body sets out a binding Code of Conduct for all broadcasters, as well as specific regulations in regard to aspects of content during election periods.

In turn, Icasa delegates most of its authority to an industry self-regulatory body called the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA). Most stations agree to the jurisdiction of this structure, which can even fine them for ethical violations. They also frequently publicise the existence of this channel for the benefit of their audiences.

In addition to this, most broadcasters also have their own internal, and more detailed, editorial codes. The most elaborated is the SABC´s one, which was drawn up through widespread public consultation. Responsibility for adherence to this code is the SABC board (nominated to the president by a multi-party parliamentary committee), although the public can also complain to the BCCSA.

The SABC code covers areas of general media ethics (for instance, ruling out intrusions into grief), and also declare specific responsibilities regarding public service broadcasting in South Africa. This second realm deals with items such as covering elections, racism in the media, and making available services in multiple-languages.

There has been some controversy around SABC´s code in terms of its omissions. For instance, as evident in the broadcaster´s own "Sisulu report", the policies did not spell out guidelines for how expert commentators should be selected and identified, and in 2007 the gap was filled by individualised decisions rather than clear policy - leading to the exclusion of some commentators for reasons that conflicted with the democratic values of the Constitution.

Two problems have also arisen in regard to the application of the SABC´s editorial code. First, the document is very lengthy and complex, and not easily remembered by staff. Second, frontline journalists are supposed to "refer upwards" *only* when in doubt and for advice, thereby retaining their editorial independence and integrity.

But in practice, decision-making – and interpretation of the code – has been very top-down. The result has been a sense of cynicism and disempowerment amongst the non-executive staff.

Meanwhile, criticism by the ruling party in 2008 that the SABC was favouring a party linked to the ousted former president Thabo Mbeki, led to the corporation creating an ombuds office to hear politicians´ specific complaints in terms of the code of conduct.

What all this means is that broadcasting ethics are less a matter of decision-making at rank-and-file level, but to do with editorial managers. One result of this situation is a tendency for SABC journalists to "play it safe" and to second-guess what would please their principals. The effect is to downgrade the importance of the content producers keeping top-of mind the interests of their audience and the wider public interest.

The SABC´s code is supposed to be a sword and a shield which could enable top quality journalism practice and fend off those forces who want to manipulate broadcasting for commercial or political purposes. It is a good code, but it needs greater ownership by the non-executive journalists themselves if it is to be effective.

7.6 Ethics in Broadcasting – India

Usha Bhasin

The 26th of November 2008, or 26/11 – as it's now called in India – the day unprecedented terror attacks struck Mumbai – has become a watershed for the Indian news industry. As India's financial capital Mumbai battled terror attacks for over 3 days with hundreds of Indian and foreign guests held hostage, the world watched terror unfold live on Indian news channels and their websites, live coverage that raised questions of national security being compromised.

Analysis after the event even had the international media comment on how the Indian media was allowed close access to the terror sites and highly sensitive information. It has also been reported that live scenes of this battle helped terrorists behind the attacks plan their moves and prolong the operation.

Hence, the ongoing debate on a near lack of ethical broadcasting in India's burgeoning privately owned media industry has become urgent and could change what we in India will watch on television.

Other issues that have caused debate on ethics in media such as sting operations, airing gory and bloody visuals of a scene of blast/crime, coverage of communal violence, the information aired about an alleged accused in a crime including editorial judgments on the police's job have been debated by a committee in the

upper house of Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha's Committee on Petitions. The committee has favoured statutory regulations that would check the misuse of the right to freedom of speech and expression by the media. The Union government's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has already proposed setting up of The Broadcasting Authority of India under an Act of Parliament and to put in place a code of content for the media.

However, implementing a code of ethics would not be easy in a rapidly changing and cut-throat media environment. A set of rules could also be practically difficult to follow by TV channels facing pressures of live news, and therefore, ethics could be interpreted differently in different situations.

Since broadcasting happens in many forms, broad standards are needed not just for the industry, but also in different disciplines of broadcasting and in all spheres of program-making, live news is just one example.

A subject in broadcasting worldwide including fiction and non-fiction programming where ethics still has a very fuzzy definition is health programming, leaving the broadcaster to decide what to show and how.

In one instance, a community brutally beat up a member when they learnt he is HIV positive on a television show. This has happened despite several training opportunities, guidelines and media manuals that are available only for reporting on HIV/AIDS. That means ethical broadcasting requires detailed interpretation of the guidelines and a system to update and refresh the learning is necessary to ensure that a report/story or a television serial is sensitively portraying health issues such as HIV/AIDS, leprosy or STD?

In my experience of running a national health campaign called Kalyani on India's public service broadcaster Doordarshan, where the focus is on stigmatized diseases, a series of initiatives have to be taken to ensure high ethical standards in broadcasting. A fresh approach was needed to shoot a story that began with decreasing the size of the shooting team to not overwhelm the person we are speaking to, each member of the team is sensitized to the emotions of and possible discomfort we would be causing to the person suffering cancer or TB. Pre-shooting visits are needed to prepare the interviewee by being honest about the purpose of the recording, and verbal and nonverbal communication between team members is as important as the questions asked on camera. Moreover, once the program is aired, the person featured must not feel singled out within his/her community, so responsible information to neighbors is to be ensured. With the right information and approach to portray a health issue on national television, several HIV positive people spoke out on their positive status and became part of the campaign.

Therefore, in the final analysis what is required is a combination of the following: Written code of conduct, self regulation, training (event and subject specific) and the credo is conscientiousness for broadcasters.

Dealing with Breaches
of the Code of Ethics

Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Ethics

8.1 Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Ethics

Charles Mabbett

The establishment and maintenance of a charter or code of universally accepted industry content standards is critical to protecting free speech in any society that aspires to be democratic. Free speech is integral to any democracy that claims to reflect the views of its minorities as well as the mainstream public. While in such a media environment, broadcasters and other media have the freedom to report on all matters that they deem of importance or interest to its listeners, viewers and readers, they need to be mindful of the critical need to report events and issues with fairness, accuracy and responsibility.

One of the central features of such an open system will be the inevitable disputes over good taste and decency, discrimination, balance and fairness and privacy need a respected arbiter to stand in judgement. For this reason it is vitally important to have a respected independent watchdog to which members of the public can have avenues of complaint and for there to be a responsive complaints procedure to resolve disputes about broadcast content. A watchdog body is also necessary to sustaining an enduring professional and objective news media.

The watchdog tasked with upholding broadcasting standards would be an independent government institution that in an ideal world is protected from political interference. It exists as a quasi-judicial body whose members are appointed from legal, media and academic sectors. The balance of professional experience represented in the body is an important factor in how its decisions will be respected by the broadcasting industry.

While such a body may be able to impose certain sanctions, perhaps the most common is to force an apology or admission of error from a broadcaster that has been found to be in breach of established industry broadcasting standards.

The complaint process should be a transparent one. There should be a well publicised complaints procedure with a clearly indicated timeline and mechanism by which broadcasters can respond to a complainant. The watchdog ruling when it is made should also be available to the public because it is in the public's interest to know.

The principles that guide any broadcasting standards charter or code should incorporate some or all of the following:

- Good taste and decency
- Law and order
- Privacy
- Balance
- Fairness
- Accuracy
- Social Responsibility

Television broadcasters also need to accommodate other principles which are unique to it. These are:

- Programme classification
- Violent content
- Sexual content

9 Developing Organisational Ethics

Developing Organisational Ethics

9.1 Useful points for Ethical Decision Making

Test for Ethical Decision Making

In Broadcasting, decision making processes should take into account an ethical dimension using a filter/checklist process. This may add in some time element to the decision making but would eliminate the potential risks of post broadcast impacts and would take account of the responsibilities of Media to society.

At key steps in the process of decision making, the decision maker should check his considerations through self questioning on some ethical questions and thereby separate the ethical elements within the decision. This ensures that the ethical issues can be given consideration. Some important generic questions would be

- Is it acceptable under the country's laws and rules
- Does it comply with policies, procedures and guidelines of the organization
- Does it conform to the principles or values the organization follows
- Does it satisfy the decision makers personal definition of right, wrong, good and fair

Others could be added or the above ones expanded or clarified as required by individual organizations.

Staff Communications and Ethical Decision Making

Effective communication with all employees is very important in building ethical principles in an organization so that there is a common understanding of:

- What the organization stands for – the principles or values of the organization
- The organization's policies and procedures
- What the organization expects from individual employees in terms of a set of values regarding sense of right, fair and good so that the organisational values match employee's personal values.

Staff Interpretations and Ethical Decision Making

An organization should also have some sort of mechanism to allow employees access to an interpretation of the policies, laws and values. These could be in the form of providing a

- Formal structure – an editorial policy and a planning type of department within the organization, normally at a head office level, which deals with ethical queries where journalists can turn to if they have queries

- Informal structure – such as nominated experienced staff as mentors or coaches who employees can approach with issues

These sources of information must be clearly identified to all staff, especially to new staff joining the organization through an induction process and access to them should be made simple. Most Broadcasters and journalists work under huge time constraints and unless processes are made simple an efficient they would not be utilized or would be circumvented.

Points to Consider on Ethical Decision Making
1. Define the issue and surface the ethical points. Does the existing situation violate any of the ethical considerations?
2. Decide which category it falls into. Is it related to the policies of the organization? Is it a legal issue? Does it contravene the values of the organization? Is it an Individual issue for the journalist or producer (morals, religion, cultural etc)?
3. Identify possible actions
4. Evaluate the available alternatives. Will the alternative chosen resolve the ethical violations? Will the alternative being considered create any new ethical considerations? Are the ethical trade-offs acceptable?
5. Make the decision and implement it
6. Evaluate the decision and record the outcomes as lessons learnt for future guidance

Using these steps may not guarantee an ethical decision. They are just a guide or reminder process for ensuring all the ethical components of the situation are considered. Ultimately, whether or not the decision meets the ethical standards of the organisation is a matter of personal responsibility, as ethics is about choices.

Complaints on Ethics and its Independence
In order to ensure the ethical principles are followed and there is opportunity for learning lessons for the future, there should be opportunities for

1. Audiences to complain ethical principles used in programming
2. Whistle blowing (or confidential complaints by staff on any unethical activity within the organization)

9.2 Tips on Media Ethics – Fiji
Ken Clark

Media ethics is a huge topic – but simply put, in our view our people must apply common sense to everything they do.

The difficult part is that often common sense seems to be in short supply.

Or our perception of common sense is different from other people's perception of the same topic.

So – what do we do about that?

In our Pacific context, we have simply prepared a set of rules which our people are required to familiarize themselves with, and then we review those principles with employees from time to time to ensure that they apply acceptably well in a modern environment.

The specific Fiji context changes on a regular basis.

My set of principles may not be yours.

Just today at our company annual general meeting one of our shareholders asked that his definition of acceptable programming should be applied to our programme acquisition, production and scheduling principles. This well meaning person was not specific; his comment was simply "Well there are programmes that are not suitable for younger children and they should be scheduled later at night."

What are those programmes? He did not say? Why are they offensive? He chose not to say!

When it was pointed out that for every programme there is a scheduling code applied – Adults Only, Parental Guidance, General – and each programmes carries that disclaimer at the beginning of each show broadcast, he said that the family was not present when the show was being broadcast and it was, in his view then, the duty of the television station to broadcast only shows that he would find acceptable.

Where is the family? Why are the children left alone? What role must Mums and Dads play in the choice of programming that their children are allowed to consume?
In our view the family plays a vital part. It is not the role of the broadcaster to decide what people should or should not be able to view.

Let me hasten to comment that, we, as a matter of policy, stop far short of anything that might be considered even close to being overtly sexy or violent, let alone anything that is x-rated. We just do not even consider its broadcast, so the material to which our respected shareholder was referring was – say "Walker Texas Ranger" or "Smallville" shows that contain a certain amount of adventure and shoot 'em up law enforcement – shows that are extremely popular with our audiences.

Or they may be shows that deal with sexual issues as a part of the story line – or what happens when people experiment with unprotected sex – an issue that is very close to our collective hearts in the Pacific – given the spread of HIV and Aids in our close knit community.

Surely it's up to the family to decide whether they or their children should watch a show that deals with sexual preference as a story line and for families to watch television together so they can discuss the validity of those story lines and what might be learned from them.

Then there is the matter of ethics in news and current affairs production and broadcast. We have very carefully compiled a Manual of Standards and Practices. I'll include some excerpts from it for your consideration.

It is our hope and our expectation that our people will adopt professional attitudes when they are doing our news work and that they will studiously avoid the temptation to be sensational with their reporting.

The document is a confidential one – for our corporate use only and has been carefully developed with legal advice over many years but it is our hope that by including bits of it here, our industry will benefit to an acceptable extent.

Parameters
• Fiji TV journalists must work within the following legal and ethical
• The laws of the land which apply to all citizens and residents of Fiji
• The 1992 Television Decree and license conditions with the Fiji Government
• The Fiji Media Council Code of Ethics and Practice
• The ethics, policies and procedures of Fiji TV News and Current Affairs, including as set out in this manual.

It is important to remember that while we occasionally have special access to places and people, the media has no greater or lesser legal rights than the ordinary citizens of Fiji. This means that in pursuing their work, journalists have the rights and freedoms – of expression, movement, association, and of access to information – guaranteed to all Fiji citizens under the Fiji Constitution.

Check List
Here is a checklist of areas you should be alert to the need to take extra care. Because so often decisions should be based on experience and judgment, the cardinal principle is if in doubt refer up.

Team Leader News
1. Defamation: Any reporting that can damage a person's reputation.
2. Contempt: Material that may prejudice a fair trial or question the authority or competence of a court.
3. Suicide: The general rule is that Fiji TV as a matter of social responsibility does not report individual suicides. However there may be times when a suicide is in the public interest to report.
4. Accuracy, Impartiality and Objectivity: If fairness and balance issues are in doubt.
5. Interviews and Editing: Requests, procedures, editing.
6. Bad Language, Explicit Material: Use of sexually explicit material, gratuitously violent material and bad language.
7. Privacy: Invading an individual's privacy.
8. Trespass: Going onto private property when you are or may be unwelcome.
9. Doorstopping: Taking an interviewee unawares with camera rolling.

These chosen items are a small part of the overall document and are presented in isolated form from the whole document – nevertheless we hope that the content will have value for you.

In recent times we have had concerns about issues of Media freedom in our small island territories – it is expected that we will continue to have to fight the media freedom battle in order to maintain the credibility of media in our countries, but we will do that.

It may also be instructive to visit the Fiji media Council web site – www.fijimediacouncil. com where you will find the Fiji Media Council Code of Ethics and practice, a document that is perceived to be a living document and which is reviewed by both professional media practitioners and interested community members periodically. It provides very useful guidelines to our people and as you see it is referred to ion our internal company set of guidelines as well.

It is my hope that you will find these limited comments of some value – the topic is vital and the points of view differ widely.

9.3 A 7-point Macro Code on Covering War and Terrorism
Savyasaachi Jain

Terrorist attacks and wars are events that are widely watched on television. The first Gulf War in 1991, the first war to be televised substantially and in real time, set the trend. Events such as the September 2001 attacks in the US, the July 2005 London bombings, the 2006 Lebanon war, the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, the 2008-09 Gaza war and the March 2009 attack on Sri Lanka cricketers in Lahore followed, and each represented huge spikes in the viewership and ratings of television news worldwide.

The coverage of each of these has also invited criticism. Expressed concerns range from violations of the ethics of journalism under pressure to reducing death and human tragedy to a televised spectacle. Television news organisations continually address these concerns by revisiting their ethics codes, but as one concern is addressed, another surfaces. If it isn't reporters wearing uniform helmets or bullet proof clothing of one army and thus portraying themselves as partisan, it is the propriety of being embedded with an army unit, or allegations of lack of neutrality and pandering to stereotypes. More serious is the charge that journalists irresponsibly reveal information that could lead to loss of life.

It is now recognized that 24-hour news is here to stay, and that news broadcasts have moved from being observers to key players in wars, conflict and terrorism. It is gripping viewing for audiences as well – the visceral impact of television pictures showing gun battles and explosions live from Mumbai hotels cannot be overstated or underestimated.

Blaming channels for training cameras on a battle that is playing out before them is to blame the messenger. The rawness of the coverage – of which the audience is also aware – is in the nature of the beast. It is the flip side of immediacy; it is raw precisely because it is raw news coverage, not distilled information. Of course, the market imposes imperatives, and often the macabre competition to bring pictures of bloodshed and mayhem to the screen is no more than a compulsion to keep audiences from exercising their thumbs on their remote controls. In a crowded market, channels have to get that story and they have to get it *first*.

However, there is also a case to be made out that in the face of rapidly developing events, television news disregards its own codes of ethics. All codes of ethics inevitably list integrity, accuracy, fairness, balance and impartiality high in the list of desired standards, but the pressure of a rolling camera does not afford the luxury to consider shades of meaning of big concepts such as integrity. In any case, many journalists have only a passing acquaintance with what is written in their organisation's code.

The following 7-point Code has been suggested keeping in mind the nature and imperatives of the broadcast news machine. It is intended not only for the individual reporter in the field, but also for editors, those responsible for the choice of experts invited to studios and for newsrooms as a whole:

1. Pay particular attention to the use of adjectives – they are good indicators of emotional and value judgements. They also indicate stereotyping and the framing of stories in terms of us versus them and good versus evil

2. Be constantly aware that information is often made available to news organisations because it serves someone's interest, and is thus liable to be manipulative

3. Exercise caution with respect to unverified information or speculation on causes, actors/perpetrators, outcomes and consequences, whether in the field or in studio

4. Balance the dominant narrative, vocal groups, or people arousing passions with other viewpoints

5. Extend coverage beyond raw news feeds and instant or superficial analysis to impart clarity and context

6. Refrain from becoming the voice of a cause or advocating a particular course of action, and from dictating or creating a 'public mood'. An obvious and oft-quoted example is jingoism

7. Apply the test of public interest to coverage – does it serve common well-being or general welfare. Public interest is not necessarily the same as what the public is interested in, and it is important to keep this distinction in mind

Importance of Setting Up a System to Uphold Ethical Principles

Importance of Setting Up a System to Uphold Ethical Principles

10.1 Making the code work

Christel and Hendrik Bussiek

Having a code is fine. What then?

First and foremost, everybody must be made aware of its existence - both inside and outside the profession. So the media must do what they know best: communicate it, spread the message. The code will only have the desired effect if practitioners comply with it and are seen by the public to be doing so. As with all kinds of control mechanisms – self-control included – there must be a way to monitor compliance and sanction non-compliance.

Doesn't that mean putting the media in a kind of straightjacket after all? Can they really be expected to curtail their own precious freedom? – Let us be realistic (or should that be honest, rather?): The media cherish their role as a watchdog. When they do their job well, they are indeed a crucial player in the control of those in power, be it in government, the economy or other fields. And that, in turn, makes the media themselves a powerful force. Hugely – and dangerously – powerful at times. They can make or break personalities in the public domain, they decisively influence public opinion, they can even sway elections. They can't expect then to be completely left to their own devices and use that power at their will. And if they don't want others to keep watch over them, they must do it themselves.

There are some who believe this won't work. Politicians mostly but occasionally even media practitioners themselves suggest that there should be a monitoring body established by legislation, a statutory commission. This, they feel, is the only way of ensuring compliance by all. They refer to lawyers or medical doctors who are also supervised by bodies set up by legislation – why not journalists?

Because, as was pointed out earlier, they are a completely different kettle of fish, and many different fish at that. Lawyers or medical doctors go through a prescribed course of study, culminating in an officially recognised academic degree, and they have to comply with other set requirements before entering the profession as fully qualified and accredited practitioners. Not so in the case of journalists. They come into their field with varying forms of training or even no training at all and from all sorts of academic and non-academic backgrounds. How then do you define in law who is a journalist and who is not? Do you accredit some and exclude others, and on what basis? How can you do that without violating their right to freedom of expression?

For a statutory body to function it needs to have a complete record of those under its purview, in this case a list of all individuals and institutions in the media field. This means official registration - also in contradiction to the principle of freedom of expression. If registration of individual journalists is out of the question, a statutory body would have at least to keep a register of publications – if only for the practical purpose of knowing who exactly to contact when complaints are received, findings to be delivered or sanctions imposed. And so we are back to square one: registration. And compulsory registration always implies the possibility of de-registration, banning of publications that is. Lastly but also very importantly: who will appoint the members of such a body? If it is provided for by law, this must be some sort of state authority, usually a minister - at worst through direct appointment, at best by confirming appointments made by other bodies, for example a parliamentary committee or the media fraternity itself. In any case the state would thus have a foot in the door to exercise some measure of control over the media and how they do their work. Whichever way you turn it: Statutory media bodies just don't work and have no place in a democratic society.

In the final analysis, the debate should not be about whether coercion or voluntary compliance are the preferred option, but about what outcome is to be achieved by either. The Banjul Declaration puts the emphasis clearly and pragmatically on the most salient point:

"Effective self-regulation is the best system for promoting high standards in the media".

With exactly this aim of "promoting high standards in the media" in mind, journalists and publishers all over the (democratic) world have introduced self 1controlling mechanisms, sometimes called "media accountability systems". Such mechanisms come in a variety of shapes and forms: in house ombudsmen to receive and address complaints from readers or listeners; peer review – either in dedicated journalism publications or on regular media pages or slots to encourage conscious media use by the public and keep a beady eye on the output of other media; the appointment of members of the public to editorial boards; or monitoring projects run by NGOs. One of the most frequently used institutions is a press complaints commission, in Africa most commonly known as a press or media council.

Objectives of a Media Council
A media council can play an important role in nurturing and maintaining democracy in more ways than one. And, for those less idealistically inclined and with a sharper eye on the bottom line, it also makes financial sense.

It ensures that the media work to the highest professional standards and thus maximises their effectiveness. It takes up complaints from aggrieved parties and the general public and helps to find ways of redress other than costly court action which can easily threaten – or even destroy – the very existence of a media enterprise. It is thus living proof of accountability on the part of those who make it their job to hold

others accountable. It will also register problem areas or patterns of mistakes and be able to suggest suitable remedies, either within the profession or on a broader political/social/legal level. Lastly, a well functioning media council with clearly defined guidelines for journalists will preempt or help to rebut attempts by the authorities to impose rules, for example in one of the most notorious hot-potato areas: that of election coverage. If there is a need to set guidelines for reporting on polls they should be set by the media themselves – under the umbrella of their media council.

The importance and status of media councils varies from country to country, depending on the degree to which all players are familiar with the rules of the game. The more long standing and ingrained the tradition of democracy, professional journalism and a free press, the less grounds there usually are for serious division over fundamentals.

Of course there remains continuous potential friction between the media and those they report on in all democracies, no matter how young or old. Nobody likes to be criticised, especially not in public, and even less for demonstrably good reasons – and that goes for journalists as well. But such friction is healthy and necessary in a vibrant society where matters are discussed and opinions expressed openly and freely. Given that the media are often most interested in what those in authority are most eager not to have disclosed, it would be a very bad sign of them not doing their job properly if they kept everybody happy all the time. But the more politicians and others in positions of power get used to acting in a democratic manner – as opposed to just lauding democratic principles – the more tolerance they will exercise. If attacked by the media, they will defend themselves by way of argument rather than by taking the matter to court – a very rare exception in a mature democracy. It will take time, though, to establish such a culture of mutual respect. Media councils can help to pave the way.

Principles for Setting Up A Media Council
Looking at the experience gained by existing bodies in Africa there are eight major principles on which a successful media council should rest:

1. The primary objective of the council will be to act as a complaints body. It is not just another association of the media but a vital link between the media and the public. It will lose its direction and its bite if is allowed to develop into a general talk shop or lobbying group on all sorts of media matters. Councils with individual membership have also tended to degenerate into a forum for thrashing out individual differences or those between employers and employees. Membership by institutions only has proved to be the best way to go in order to make a council perform its core task successfully.

2. The council must have teeth. If it is perceived as powerless there will soon be demands – even from within the media themselves – for a stronger, that is: a statutory council. If the council finds that there has been an infringement of the code, it must impose the corresponding and agreed sanctions firmly, and the offending media must comply – and be seen to do so. The council will have power

to reprimand and/or oblige the media in question to publish its findings. In some countries councils can also impose fines or damages to be paid to a complainant. An even harsher sanction for repeat offenders could be exclusion from the media council a blow to a media company's reputation which could result in loss of advertising revenue and loss of business generally.

3. The council must be a voluntary initiative by the media to serve as a mechanism for self-control; in modern parlance: it must be owned by the media. Media houses and journalists, after all, submit themselves voluntarily to the jurisdiction of the council.

4. All media – both independent and state owned – must be involved in the council. If some, let alone sizeable parts of the industry stay outside, it will not have enough clout to make a difference. In some countries the worst offenders against ethical journalism are refusing to submit to the council's jurisdiction – for obvious reasons. That, indeed, is a serious problem. It might be addressed by extending the objectives of the council to include findings on complaints about non-members, as well, and to have these published as a form of indirect sanction. Of course this is far from ideal and all possible efforts must be made at inclusivity.

5. The only guideline for the decisions of a media council will be a code of ethics or professional standards. This code must be drawn up in an inclusive process by the profession itself, and all media houses and institutions must agree on it before the council can take up its work.

6. To gain credibility and acceptance with the public, members of the general public ought to be actively involved, as well. Civil society groups should nominate delegates to represent readers/listeners/viewers and thus give consumers a voice on the council.

7. The Council must be as independent and free in its decisions as possible, even from the media. This independence will enable the body to deal with complaints in an unbiased and reconciliatory manner. Its aim is not to punish or divide, but to reconcile the interests of all sides and thus promote good journalism for the benefit of all. It will primarily seek to find an amicable compromise between the complainant – a reader or listener - and the respondent – a paper or radio station. A conciliator, for example the chairperson of the council, will strive for a speedy and friendly settlement of disputes, and the full council will only sit and make a pronouncement if such a solution is not found – as a last resort.

8. All media enterprises must be dedicated to making the media council a success. It should be a matter of course that they all report on findings of the council – within their editorial independence, naturally. Publishing these only as paid advertisements, as is currently the case in some countries in Africa, should be regarded (and treated) as unethical. And all publications should give the council generally all the necessary publicity – provide contact details as well as basic information on complaints procedures. A complaints body that the public doesn't know about is useless

Structures and Procedures of a Media Council

Complaints must be dealt with and decided upon speedily. If it is found that indeed a mistake was made and has to be corrected, such a correction needs to be in the public arena – in print or on air – within the shortest possible time after the original publication and before wrong perceptions settle in the public mind. Structures and procedures therefore should be kept as simple as possible. One could even think of a one-man-show like that of the South African Press Ombudsman, (who is indeed a male and) a respected and retired journalist. One of the more indirect but very beneficial effects of his work - or the mere existence of his office - has been that more and more publications are now rectifying their errors of their own accord, without waiting for the institution of formal procedures. Some, for example, have a little box on page 2 under the heading "Get it right". This does not harm their credibility; on the contrary it increases it. Where media councils exist, they usually adopt a two-step approach. Complaints made to the council will be dealt with by a registrar or a conciliator or an Ombudsman (the title varies from country to country). If there is substance to the complaint, the official will try to arrive at a mutual agreement informally, for example by 32asking the publisher to print or broadcast a correction of the story in question. Where such an agreement is not possible, a finding and a judgement will be issued – for example an order to publish a correction. If the publisher or editor concerned is not satisfied with that decision he or she can appeal to a panel of members of the media council – and they will have the final word. How then to put the structures in place? As a first step you need a body to elect or nominate the members of the council. This could be arrived at in a number of ways:

1. One could convene a conference of the media council, i.e. media institutions such as publications, broadcasting houses, professional associations, media training institutions and the like to elect the members of the council.

2. A committee of founding bodies such as publishers associations, journalists' unions and media pressure groups could form an appointment panel.

3. An electoral body could be established by inviting every newspaper or broadcasting company to delegate two representatives, one each from the side of management and media practitioners.

Either of these electoral bodies will elect media and public representatives to the council – in equal numbers. They will make a public call for nominations of media representatives, hold public hearings with the nominees and then make their choice. For the choice of public representatives they could draw up a list of appropriate organisations of civil society: council of churches, for example, chamber of commerce, trade unions, consumer council, law society. Alternatively, posts could be advertised and candidates selected from individual nominations, making sure that the public members are truly representative of the public at large. Finally, the electoral body will appoint a chairperson who should have experience in press law and must be a person of integrity and high standing in society. When the council and its complaints committee are made up of high calibre members, they are most likely to make a noticeable impact. Take Tanzania for example: Its media council is chaired by the

vice-chancellor of the Open University. The chairman of its Ethics Committee (the complaints body) is a former prime minister and judge, and members include the director of a big media house and the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam. Many defamation cases have been and are now being resolved – without recourse to the courts - by this council, among them two brought by the former state vice-president and the current prime minister.

How to Sustain a Media Council

If the council is to survive, it must be financially self-sustainable. Donors may come up with some initial funding for a public awareness campaign perhaps, or even with running costs for the first year or two – but usually not more. So costs must be kept minimal. A media council does not need a big office with an administrative director, a deputy, secretaries, official cars. What it does need is an address, a room where members meet from time to time, some privacy – occasionally – for talks between complainants, respondents and a representative of the council, a computer to store data and compile the findings. All this could be provided by an existing media organisation at no extra cost. Some money will be needed to cover travel expenses for councillors or for meetings with complainants from outside the capital. To meet these costs, publishing houses should make a financial contribution – according to their economic strength (in South Africa this is done through the Newspaper Association). This should be possible because it is in their own best interest to do so – the council, after all, is likely to save them money by helping them avoid incurring fees for litigation and penalties.

Links to Ethical Principles for Broadcasters

ABC Australia:
Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC): Editorial policies
http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/edpols.htm

Al Jazeera QUATAR:
AlJazeera English: Code of ethics
http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus/2006/11/2008525185733692771.html

CANADA:
Canadian Broadcasting Centre (CBC): Journalistic Standards and Practices
http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/accountability/journalistic/index.shtml
http://www.cp.org/about_cp.aspx?id=104#CP_._._._Our_ethics_

FIJI:
Fiji Media Council web site http://www.fijimediacouncil.com/

GERMANY:
http://www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,8852,00.html

HONG KONG:
Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK): Vision, Mission and Values Statement
http://www.rthk.org.hk/about/vmvs/vmvs_eng.htm

INDIA:
Prasar Bharati/Doordarshan, India (PBI/DI): Citizen's Charter
http://www.ddindia.gov.in/Information/Citizen+Charter

NEW ZEALAND:
The TVNZ Charter http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/826505/823782

PHILIPPINES:
Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP): Vision and Mission Statement
http://www.kbp.org.ph/about-kbp

SOUTH AFRICA:
South African Broadcasting Corporation Limited (SABC): Code of Practice, Editorial
Policies etc. http://www.sabc.co.za/portal/site/sabc

United Kingdom BBC

Editorial Guidelines
http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/edguide/editorialvalues/

Links to other resources on Ethics of Journalism:

Annenberg School for Communication Online Journalism Review.Ethics
http://www.ojr.org/ojr/ethics

International Federation of Journalists
http://www.ifj.org

Learn TV journalism online
http://www.tvjournalist.net/learn/

Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism
http://www.journalism.org/resources/tools/ethics/codes/photojournalism.asp

Poynter Online
http://www.poynter.org

Society of professional journalists
http://spj.org/ethics_codes.esp

University of British Columbia Journalism Ethics for the Global Citizen
http://www.journalismethics.ca/index/htm

BCCSA
http://www.sanef.org.za/download_files/ethics_codes/BCCSA_Code_March_2003.doc

ICASA
http://www.icasa.org.za/tabid/101/Default.aspx

Ombudsman
www.presscouncil.org.za

The Association of Electronic Journalists
http://www.rtnda.org/pages/best-practices.php

Sisulu report
www.fxi.org.za/pages/Media%20n%20ICTs/SABCComplaint
SABCBLACKLISTREPORT.pdf

The News Manual:
http://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%203/volume3_00intro.htm

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- **Guillaume Chenevière** Director of the Swiss based Media and Society Foundation, a media professionals' initiative implementing universal media quality management standards. Also heads the World Radio and Television Council promoting public service broadcasting worldwide. Formerly director general of TSR, the French speaking national television of Switzerland, and executive director of the World Electronic Media Forum.

- **Haroon Siddiqui,** editorial page editor, emeritus and columnist for The Toronto Star, Canada's largest newspaper, director of International Pen

- **Henrikas Yushkiavitshus,** Vice President, Euro Asian Academy of Television and Radio and Adviser to the Director General of UNESCO. Served as the Assistant Director General of UNESCO from 1990 to 2001. Previous to UNESCO, he was Vice Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting.

- **Hugh Leonard,** Former ABU Secretary General

- **Ken Clark** Chief Executive Officer, Media Niugini Limited, Papua New Guinea and General Manager International, Fiji Television Limited, Fiji. Former Secretary and then President of the AAB, Director of the CAB and of the Western Association of Broadcasters. He is a Vice-President of the CBA and a Vice-Chairman of the AMAI.

- **Kunda Dixit,** Founder Editor, Nepal Times. A graduate of Columbia University and started his career as a reporter for the BBC at the United Nations in New York. Served as Regional Editor& Director of Inter Press Service Asia-Pacific and helped set up Panos South Asia.

- **Kumar Abeysinghe,** Former Secretary to the Ministry of Mass Communication in Sri Lanka and currently Governor of MARGA Institute

- **Ladavan Bua-aim,** Executive Director, Foreign Office, The Government Public Relations Department

- **M. M. Aboutalebi** Adviser to President, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). Served as Member of IRIB Strategic Board as well as Member of High Council for Ministry of Education. Earlier served as Vice-President of IRIB for Planning & Research and Vice-President of IRIB for Education & Research.

- **Mano Wikramanayake,** FCMA, started professional life as an accountant and after managing many businesses moved to the media as Group Director Electronic Media Business of the Maharaja Group. Responsible for all media operations of the Group i.e. Four 24 hour Stereo FM Radio Stations and three television Channels all terrestrially broadcast, three Television production companies, an event management company and a Mobile entertainment company.

- **Matai Akauola,** Manager & Training Coordinator Pacific Islands News Association

- **Mia Malan,** Media development consultant and Senior Health Journalism Advisor, Internews Network (Washington D.C). Lead Trainer Writer – Director Film and Television – Documentary, Fiction, Living Arts for Global Health Journalism projects in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Haiti, India, Czech Republic and Thailand

- **Nandini Sahai,** Director MICCI, New Delhi

- **Mr. Nuim Khaiyath,** Indonesian journalist working for Radio Australia

- **Nupur Basu,** an independent journalist and documentary filmmaker, she directed the film'*Michael Jackson come to Manikganj'* which looked at the ten year impact of satellite television on South Asia. This year she directed a documentary *'No Country for Young Girls?' *which was telecast on BBC World. Nupur is the former Senior Editor of New Delhi Television (NDTV).

- **Phil Molefe,** General Manager, International Affairs SABC. A journalist for more than 25 years, working for several South African publications, including SASPU National, Weekly Mail and The Star. Served as Head of Television News, SABC and Head SABC Africa.

- **Phumelele Ntombela-Nzimande,** Chief People Officer, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Served SABC as Deputy Director-General Strategic Policy Co-ordination, Inter-Governmental Relations and International Relations. Prior to that, was Deputy Chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality. Serves on a number of Boards and Advisory Councils including the Human Sciences Research Council, the Council of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Media Development and Diversity Agency.

- **Prof. David Mould,** Professor of Telecommunications (mass communications/ electronic media) and Director, Communication and Development Studies graduate program; international media training and consulting experience with USAID, USIS, UNESCO, Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), and subcontractors, including Internews and IREX/ProMedia.

- **Prof Guy Berger,** Head of School of Journalism & Media Studies, Africa Media Matrix building, upper Prince Alfred Street, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa

- **Pui Hing,** currently consultant for the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association and an advisor to the HK-based Health and Lifestyle TV Channel. Started his broadcasting career in Radio Television Hong Kong, presenting and producing current affairs programmes and pioneering phone-in radio shows. He was Director of Broadcasting and held the position as head of Hong Kong's public broadcaster for nearly eight years.

- **Ramesh Jaura,** journalist with 40 years of professional experience in Europe and India, European Director of IPS-Inter Press Service, Berlin. President of Europe's Forum on International Cooperation (Euforic) in Maastricht, the Netherlands and co-founder and first Chairman of the Global Cooperation Council (North-South Forum), Germany.

- **Robert Beveridge**, Director, Voice of the Listener and Viewer and Lecturer, The Open and Napier University, UK

- **Rhonda Breit,** LLB, PhD, senior lecturer in the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. Rhonda researches and teaches in the field of professional communication ethics and media law. Author of Law and Ethics for Professional Communicators and has published extensively in the field of media ethics and law.

- **Saed J. Abu-Hijleh** Palestinian human geographer, poet, and radio show host, currently working as a lecturer of political and environmental geography at An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine. Director of the Center for Global Consciousness (CGC), an independent media & cultural exchange institute dedicated to building bridges between Palestine and the world.

- **Savyasaachi Jain,** Asia Projects Coordinator, Thomson Foundation. Media Consultant and journalist with many award-winning programmes screened worldwide.

- **Scott Rawdin,** Director, Producer and Write, Film and Television – Documentary, Fiction and Living Arts. Visiting Professor, Documentary and Fiction Workshops: US Africa Regional Services and Consultant in Business Administration: Developing Creative and Relational skills for Chief Executives.

- **Thepchai Yong,** Managing Director Thai Public Broadcasting Service, Thailand's first and only public broadcaster. Was Group Editor of the National Multi-media Group. Served as editor of the English language daily The Nation. Recipient of the Press Freedom Award from the New York based Committee to Protect Journalists and Media Leadership award from Internews 2009.

- **Valerie Ruzin,** Vice-President of Eurasian Academy of TV & Radio, Master of Philosophy and Head of Television & Movie Company SCIP-Media a company dealing with films production and distribution, organization of Television markets and festivals, distribution organization of panoramas, retrospective shows and weeks of foreign films in Russia and of Russian films abroad. Founder and the first Vice-President of Eurasian Teleforum and Editor-in-chief of the monthly professional television edition the magazine "Teleforum", (issued since 1999).

- **Venkat Iyer** BSc (Hons), LLB, LLM, PhD, Barrister-at-Law; Senior Lectuter, University of Ulster, UK, and Law Commissioner, Northern Ireland and Consultant AIBD

- **Vladimir L. Gaï,** Ph. D. Broadcaster and Producer

- **Xia Jixuan,** Vice-President of China Radio International

- **Usha Bhasin,** Dy. Director General, Development Communication Division, Prasar Bharati, Broadcasting Corporation of India