Ethics in the Digital Age

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Hello, I’m Sue Burzynski Bullard

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All Presentations and other material will be posted on http://india.poynter.org
Today’s Agenda

Ethical challenges in today’s digital world
How to help students/journalists understand what’s right and wrong
Resources for teaching ethics
Plagiarism Is Up

Most college presidents say plagiarism in college writing has increased in past 10 years

— Pew Research, 2011
Ethical Lapse: Plagiarism

NPR deleted a story by intern Ahmad Shafi about witnessing a Taliban execution after discovering parts of it were plagiarized.
Ethical Lapse: Plagiarism

Colorado editor wrote a column about firing a summer intern for plagiarizing
Ethical Lapse: Plagiarism

Colorado student newspaper fired an editor

The Criterion
Colorado Mesa University • thecrite.com

LOCATED IN: NEWS
Posted on: October 22nd, 2013 No Comments

Staff report: Criterion online editor fired for plagiarism (UPDATED)
Ethical Lapses

In September 2012, East Valley Tribune in Arizona said an intern plagiarized “several articles”

Student paper Columbia Spectator fired a student after finding both plagiarism and fabrication in her work
Ethical Lapse: Fabrication

Intern Liane Membis fired in 2012 for making up quotes in a story about a bridge

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
Ethical Lapse: Faking Photos

Sun-Times Media fires photographer for using fake names and quotes, company says

BY STEFANO ESPOSITO Staff Reporter sesposito@suntimes.com July 20, 2012 12:06AM

A Sun-Times Media photographer was fired Thursday after admitting she used fake names and quotes in numerous Pioneer Press “Question of the Week” photo essays published this year, the company said.

Photographer Tamara Bell’s “employment with our company has been terminated,” according to a statement from Pioneer Press Publisher Chris Krug.

At least 43 photos and related captions that ran in 11 separate “Question of the Week” features since March were found to be problematic following a company probe launched by a reader complaint, Sun-Times Media said.

The photos and captions ran in some Pioneer Press publications as well as the Lake County News-Sun. The publications are all part of Sun-Times Media, which
Faking Photos

Sacramento Bee fired an award-winning photographer for digitally manipulating photos
Rush to Be First

The Supreme Court has struck down the individual mandate for health care.

Mandate struck down
High court finds measure unconstitutional
Justice's ruling overturns requirement that Americans must buy health insurance. The decision will affect you, generations of Americans and this fall's presidential race.

- Five scenarios: Health care options
- A lot on the line for small business
- Attention quickly turns to Congress
- LIVE: Crowd gathers outside court

WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU: POCKETBOOK

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Need for Verification
Verification, Sensationalism

Feds seek these two pictured at Boston Marathon
Challenges in the Digital Age

Easy to plagiarize
Easy to alter images
Easy to ignore copyright
More Digital Challenges

Increasing pressure to be fast, first
Defining appropriate attribution
Changing idea of objectivity
More acceptance of anonymity
Different expectations of privacy
Blurred Lines
Confusion
Growing Up with Wikipedia

“We have a whole generation of who’ve grown up with information that just seems to be hanging out there in cyberspace and doesn’t have an author.”

— Teresa Fishman, Director of Center for Academic Integrity, Clemson University told to New York Times in 2010
How to Handle Ethics Today

Acknowledge it’s changing, gray areas
Provide context
Make students / journalists think critically
Ask students / journalists to rewrite the rules
Credibility Is at Stake

Society of Professional Journalists

- Seek truth and report it
- Minimize harm
- Act independently
- Be accountable
India’s Ethical Principles

Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility

- **Accuracy**: Unjustified rumors should not be reported as fact
- **Minimize harm**: Avoid derogatory statements about private citizens unless public interest is at stake
- **Act independently**: Maintain objectivity
- **Be accountable**: Publish corrections promptly
Twitter and Truth

When is it OK to retweet information?

CNN's Susan Candiotti names suspect as Ryan Lanza of New Jersey. Here's the likely Facebook page: slate.me/UMm3ni— (@Slate) December 14, 2012

Matthew Keys
@MatthewKeysLive

"That is the face of the young man, Ryan Lanza," WCBS-TV news anchor says as station flashes unconfirmed Facebook photo.

1:46 PM - 14 Dec 2012
Is Spreading Rumors OK?

Is it Twitter’s fault?

Karen Tumulty
@ktumulty

News media not exactly covering itself with glory today. Getting it right is more important than getting it first.

4:07 PM - 14 Dec 2012

86 RETWEETS 15 FAVORITES
Is Facebook fair game?

Ryan Lanza
5 minutes ago via mobile 🙏

I'm on the bus home now it wasn't me

Like · Comment

Ryan Lanza
7 minutes ago via mobile 🙏

IT WASN'T ME I WAS AT WORK IT WASN'T ME

Like · Comment
TV Got Plenty Wrong Too
Crowdsourcing Verification

Andy Carvin
@acarvin


12:52 PM - 12 Mar 2011

3 RETWEETS
Data vs. Privacy

Suburban New York paper published map of gun owners after Newton school shooting
Your Turn

In small groups, what would you include in an ethics code in today's digital world?

- Be specific
- How would you address social media?
- Privacy in age of data?
Resources: Verification
Assignment: Verification

Divide students into groups, have each group read a chapter of the book

- Report on the tips they discovered in each chapter

Post a photo for students

- Have them use tools in the Verification Handbook to determine the source of the photos

Require your professional staff to read it
Resources: Plagiarism

Telling the Truth and Nothing But
Assignment: Attribution

Devise an attribution style for news and information that is curated

Consider recording interviews as a form of verification
Resources: Truth and Trust
Assignment: Corrections

Ask students/journalists to compare the way two news outlets corrected the same mistake CNN/Fox both made the same mistake on the Supreme Court’s health care decision

- Who did a better job and why?
- How would your paper handle it?
Ethics Codes

International social media codes

Ask journalism students to write a code for themselves

Have professionals rewrite codes to account for social media, other new pressures
Temple University Code

DO THIS

Temple University
School of Media and Communication
Department of Journalism

ETHICS CODE FOR
STUDENT JOURNALISTS
NYU Journalism Code

NYU Journalism Handbook for Students
Ethics, Law and Good Practice

Department of Journalism
Faculty of Arts and Science
New York University
*By Prof. Adam L. Penenberg*
Summary

Today’s fast-paced digital environment presents new ethical challenges. Everyone needs help understanding right and wrong:

- The answers aren’t always clear
- Creating your own code might help

Resources for teaching ethics exist.
Teaching Ethics in Digital Age

“Doing the right thing can’t be based on whether you’re reporting in print, broadcast or online.”

— Gene Foreman, author “The Ethical Journalist,” and former newspaper editor
Thank You

Are there any questions?