

EDITORIAL INTEGRITY for PUBLIC MEDIA

Principles, Policies, & Practices

A Working Group Report from the Editorial Integrity Project **Public Media Ethics Never Log Off:** **Guidelines for Public Media Employees in Their Off-Hour Activities**

Introduction

Ethical behavior is not what you do because you are paid to do it. It is what you do because it is *the right thing to do*.

Ideally, one's professional and personal ethics align completely. Such congruity is particularly desirable in the public media domain where societal principles of fair and honest public service warrant, and benefit from, a like-minded workforce.

By living well-integrated personal and professional ethics, public media practitioners better maintain a 24-7 vigil over their medium's most precious and perishable asset: the public's trust.

However, one's personal and professional ethics may come into conflict. For example, a public radio host's free expression at a political rally may cause observers to not only question the impartiality of that host but perhaps that of the host's employer. Similarly, a public TV producer who shares crude humor with friends on a personal Facebook page may unintentionally invite deep embarrassment for a company that prides itself on setting standards for children.

To resolve conflicting ethics and make good choices, individuals need to see the potential pitfalls of their actions and recognize best options. Indeed, their livelihood may depend on it. This has become a matter of considerable urgency given the rapid and vast expansion of social

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media, where our slightest musings online become instantly replicated, globally available and archived for perpetuity.

Employers, meanwhile, need to offer training and guidance in ethical behavior – especially those companies urging staff mobilization into the uncharted areas of social media. These companies need to articulate their expectations and they should have procedures for reconciling ethical conflicts.

For all public media practitioners then, better personal/professional ethics begin with a helpful set of guidelines.

This paper recommends those guidelines. And it asserts unapologetically that ethical values for public media professionals can and should extend into one's personal life.

How This Paper Came About and Who It Speaks To

This is one of multiple papers prepared for the Public Media Integrity project (<http://pmintegrity.org>) to modernize the ethics of a changing public broadcasting system in the United States.

This paper used a “working group” process to discuss and edit the content. The group, comprised of system leaders, provided a variety of views and did not always produce consensus. [A list of group members is at the conclusion of the text].

The original charge was to develop “principles, policies and practices” for public media employers to help express their expectations toward employees when it comes to their off-the-clock activities.

These are not rules. This is not a legal document. Rather, this is an attempt to distill voluntary guidelines that uphold the highest values and best outcomes of an important media service in American society.

These principles and guidelines are recommended to public media employees and employers, and by extension, to their associates, partners and collaborators. In other words, this is for all public media stakeholders, the stewards of that public trust.

What might make these findings seem new or innovative – and potentially controversial for some – is that, in the face of a rapidly shifting media landscape, they call for a stricter, not looser, moral code. They partly borrow from core ethics of traditional journalists and recommend adoption by the broader public media sphere. This is not so journalistic values may pervade public media but so that essential – and voluntary – public service values are better enshrined and protected.

Of course, journalism itself is an important service mode in public media and these guidelines will reinforce that. However, there are other service modes, such as music presentation, science programming, cultural entertainment, community engagement activities and various educational services. All of these abide a common ethos of trust and are no less deserving of high ethical standards.

As in all human endeavors, the responsibility for this trust is assigned to individuals – not just to companies or their brands. The people of public media carry that responsibility day by day. It is the sum of their integrity that makes public media a reliable and trustworthy institution.

Public Media's Enduring Principles

To construct firm guidelines for public media employees, drill down to the core ethics. Build upon the very bedrock of the enterprise.

What makes public media worthy of people's time, trust and financial support?

You have to dig beneath programming quality and past composition of the workforce. The bedrock is *mission*.

This mission is solid in basic concepts: serving the public interest, enriching culture and knowledge, and strengthening the fabric of a pluralistic democracy. (See "Guideposts in a Time of Change" at http://pmintegrity.org/group_guideposts.cfm)

These core values are constant, and have been for decades.

Less constant, of course, are the people who put those core values into action – the thousands of people who staff public media.

That's understandable. These keepers of the core values who turn mission into action are part of an ever-changing society in a rapidly changing world.

Technological advancement, globalization, and other momentous shifts – political, economic, social – change the context in which public media operates. And they raise questions of how core values endure in the midst of such change.

Take social media. This powerful new tool allows any user of the Internet to publish facts or opinions or anything else instantly and globally... available for billions of people to witness forever more. This changes media. And it changes the public.

But does it change public media's core values? No.

If anything, the rush onto the Internet has *increased the need* for a clear set of policies based on core values. Public media can help set standards for trustworthy content and for responsible behaviors to go with it. This is particularly relevant within a new media sphere that, despite its exciting advantages, comes with great excess... i.e., misinformation, chaotic communication, predatory behavior, etc.

Salient Principle Number One: Serve the Public Interest

Public media sprang from the fusion of broadcasting and education. While all broadcasters granted the privilege of using public airwaves owe in return to "serve the public interest, convenience and necessity," noncommercial educational broadcasters, in particular, who are

granted tax-exempt status and qualify for subsidies from public coffers, have a special privilege that calls for a correspondingly special level of duty.

This public service ethos is baked into public media institutions. It is a primary principle: *serve the public interest*.

Some argue that commercial media serve the public interest. This is partly true but private interest in yielding financial return is the primary principle there.

To serve in public media is to put the public interest ahead of self-interest or private interest.

In fact, public media was created to correct for the market failure of commercial media and provide services the private marketplace will not. (This is why, for example, many prominent observers now turn to public media to "save journalism," because its social mission prevails despite collapses in commercial models.)

Salient Principle Number Two: Deserve the Public Trust

The public service principle leads to a second primary principle: *public media relies on public trust*. Public trust is produced through public service.

Public media's endeavor to serve the public interest – free from coercive forces and done honestly on behalf of all people equally – fosters appreciation and confidence in the public sphere itself.

Public trust is social capital. It is the shared sense of purpose necessary for civil society to work well.

Journalists often say 'credibility takes a long time to accrue, and no time to lose.' Public trust is akin to journalistic credibility.

It is a valuable, yet intangible, commodity. It can be made and lost, but it cannot be bought and sold.

Attaining public trust is also a goal because, when attained, it produces healthy community alliances with public media institutions – undergirding fiscal support that enables everything from content creation and delivery to technological advancement and service innovation.

This trust is gained (or lost) day-by-day, story-by-story, and person-by-person. It is a product of public service done well, news done fairly and accurately, human stories told poignantly. It can come from something as simple as learning to appreciate jazz or classical music.

Moreover, intentions matter. Public media, largely comprised of local non-profit organizations, accrue public trust by approaching people not as consumers. Public media's value proposition is its inherent pursuit of human improvement.

For a member of the public to bestow trust on a media source is for that person to feel confident and safe in it – as in finding faith in a guide on a journey. Public media strives to be a good guide.

Gaining trust is not the same as gaining popularity. It certainly doesn't exclude popularity but it may also involve doing unpopular things for the public good. For example, a public media report may yield initial audience resentment after casting a popular politician in a negative light, based on her poor performance. But if this coverage is done impartially, accurately and completely, any momentary unpopularity should give way over time to deeper respect and appreciation for knowing the truth.

As mentioned, the professionals in public media hold the ultimate responsibility for its success. They embody its principles. Without their principled mindset, the system risks the loss of its original purpose. A failure in purpose would be a failure on all levels – for the professional, for the employer, and for the entire public media system.

The Principles in Policy and Practice

The term "public media" in this paper refers to the noncommercial educational broadcast system funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

The core system is organized largely through the institutions governed by CPB. Primarily, those are the 575 local radio and television non-profit licensees who employ some 20,000 people. The stations provide the essential structure between public media's promise and its fulfillment. They amass the resources needed, oversee the content, manage its delivery, organize its funding, and provide accountability.

Upholding the "Objectivity and Balance" Standard

Accountability to the CPB includes abiding by an "objectivity and balance" standard. This standard, built into the legal authorization, is an attempt to lock-in public interest and public trust on behalf of the American people.

This standard has implications for employers and employees in the content creation process where they must abide a methodical approach that seeks truth no matter where the facts may lead. The method ought to be transparent, to account for competing perspectives, and to remain apart from partisan agendas.

The standard also requires some defensive thinking to prevent actual or perceived bias. Public trust is impinged when the medium is misused for partisan purposes.

The objectivity and balance standard does not preclude analysis, interpretation, debate or subjective opinion in content... but it may require those devices be labeled as such.

In many ways, the standards sought in CPB policy are comparable to the accuracy and fairness standards set by journalists, who share a high regard for truth-telling in the public interest and suffer most when untrusted.

Finding a Basis for Combined Personal/Professional Ethics: The Journalistic Model

Professional journalists in the United States have developed ethics codes that guide their personal and professional behavior to assure public trust in the profession. These codes typically espouse fundamental values such as accuracy, fairness, completeness, impartiality, independence, transparency and accountability.

This self-regulation by practitioners imbues the free press with ideals and responsibilities in keeping with its constitutional protection. Individual journalists voluntarily adopt these

standards, often encountered through professional organizations like SPJ, the Society of Professional Journalists. (See SPJ Code of Ethics in Appendix I.)

The voluntary codes reside with the individual and have no enforcement mechanism. Of course, they may also reside with an employer, as most news companies adopt variations on these ethics codes, in which case there is an enforcement mechanism.

All public media professionals would benefit from a detailed code of standards and ethics similar to those of professional journalists. And that includes the professional more of observing them both on and off the job clock.

Employers also are encouraged to convey the same or similar standards.

Acknowledging Journalism's Binding Role in Public Media

Journalism is a high commitment to make and public media companies are increasingly making it.

It's fair to say, those public media companies that define themselves as having a primarily journalistic purpose may wish to note the particulars of their commitment.

This commitment is not insubstantial because journalism requires a significant commitment of resources, but also because news reporting promises to hold its subjects up for scrutiny, accountability and public judgment.

To do this well and with credibility requires a disciplined environment – uncontaminated by self-interest, hypocrisy or other glaring flaws that subvert the ability or credibility of the examiner.

In other words, journalism practitioners must be willing to model the very standards that they'd impose on others.

It's not easy to draw a line between the journalist and the journalist's employer. To some degree, all employees of a journalistic organization are bound by the same commitment.

Public media organizations that do not define themselves journalistically have no less a basic responsibility to serve the public interest, to deal honestly, and impartially, in fostering public trust – even if, say, a classical music station is less likely to be subjected to reverse scrutiny in the process of carrying out its mission.

Setting the Bar in Place: Employers as Ethics Keepers

When it comes to setting guidelines for employees in their off-hours, it makes sense to enlist the support of employers as they provide an ethics "delivery system" through their hiring choices, workplace acculturation and professional development practices. This apparatus is helpful though the standards for off-hours behavior are presumed voluntary.

Of course, model policies with respect to employees' private behavior require a balancing act between the individual's inherent right to free and private action... and the employer's legitimate right to meet its mission effectively.

While some would argue that "personal" and "professional" are separate compartments and should not be conflated, the fact is that they are easily and often entwined. Nowhere is that more true and common than in social media publishing where the line between personal and professional communication seems irretrievably blurred.

And while individuals in U.S. public media are no less free than any American to pursue life, liberty and happiness in whatever way he or she chooses (short of trampling the liberties of others), it must be remembered that there is no right to serve in public media. That is a privilege that is granted – usually by an employer.

Employees are free to step outside the public media sphere and do what they will, but that may be a choice to forsake the privilege of serving.

Employers, meanwhile, tread lightly in governing the off-hour activities of employees, but it is accepted practice (and legally sustained) to provide guidance and admonitions so that the employer's interests (and all of public broadcasting's interests) are protected.

Aligning Professional and Personal Standards

The guidelines introduced here do not assume the force of rule or law. Nothing in them should be construed as abridgement of state or federal law.

Employers do exert control. Overall, this is helpful and necessary to assure the many stakeholders of public media that the system abides by consistent and worthy standards. However, employers must also recognize the limits of their control and should understand the loss of trust that results from any perceived abuse of control. (For example, it would violate a spirit of mutual trust were employers to pursue active monitoring of off-hour activities by employees.)

It's also true that an employee may loosely don a service mentality and its attendant behavior for the sake of a paycheck. But, when the workday is done, there's a catch in public media that all individuals who work in it must consider. The catch is the public trust. This currency is always open to trade... regardless of the time of day.

If you were to abandon public media's basic ethical tenets at 5:00 p.m. or whenever you call it a day, you'd be saying that is okay for all your peers to do so too. The consequences of public media employees shedding their public interest ethos and acting in random ways online or in public would risk damaging the public trust. It would not be in keeping with the keeping of the core values. That would be destructive to public media and all who depend upon it.

Given all of this, a particular ethos is asserted: *public media employees should strive for congruency in personal and professional behavior.*

Managing Ethics in Conflict

Public media may attract idealists, and idealists may be prone to willful behavior. Frustration may follow when idealists are constrained by the principles of public interest, public trust and the “objectivity and balance” standard – unless he or she can harness personal interest for the sake of the greater good.

[Let it be said that strong individual values mightily inform professional values. This is why employers favor diversity in the workforce and reward creativity, leadership and original perspective. Individual values at work, though, are ultimately not primary.]

These constraints may be doubly frustrating when extended beyond the workplace and applied to off-hour activities – especially where ethical incongruities exist.

Some may argue with the professional guidelines as the source of incongruity. Some may assert their personal freedoms regardless of the professional standard.

Examples below show how personal and professional ethics can diverge.

The following are based on actual situations:

- A news analyst for your public media company is invited on a commercial station's air. Despite your hesitation with the other station's editorial practices, you allow it as part of his work duties because it extends your company brand, adds to public issues dialogue and he is eager to do it. Soon he is caught up in the vitriolic debates common on the other station and venturing hyperbolic opinions. When you act to stop his behavior, you are accused of liberal bias and stanching his right to free speech. When you fire him, he is hired by the other station and you take a great deal of criticism for mistreating him.

Ethics rules typically restrict a journalist from appearing in a competing venue unless done with some consideration of the primary employer.

NPR's code of ethics shapes the behavior of those journalists that do appear in competing forums:

"NPR journalists should not express views they would not air in their role as an NPR journalist. They should not participate in shows electronic forums, or blogs that encourage punditry and speculation rather than fact-based analysis."

The employee in the example above may justify his actions as a matter of personal free speech, which everyone is wont to respect. But personal free speech can easily come into conflict with professional norms – especially in the case of journalists for whom credibility requires a high degree of self-control.

Free speech can also come into conflict with an employer's norms – particularly when that speech compromises the editorial integrity of the employer (which this example features).

In the case above, the employee exercises free choice but gives his employer no choice but to distance itself from the objectionable behavior, which is to terminate the employer-employee relationship.

Here's another example of ethics in conflict:

As a busy public media company, you employ young freelance news producers to help meet your journalistic demands. One such producer is drawn to a large protest downtown. She and her boyfriend take a sign to the protest. They photograph themselves holding the sign and send the photo out via social media. The sign goes viral and results in media attention. When she calls an editor to suggest a first-person account of her experience, your company promptly dismisses the freelancer. Critics attack your old fashioned standards of journalistic neutrality and your harsh treatment of young freelancers.

The situation seems rather cut-and-dried. A reporter crosses the line from neutral observer to active participant in violation of station policy. The punishment in this case maybe was abrupt and overly harsh – given the likely naïveté of the reporter – but is the overall policy reasonable?

The policy serves a legitimate purpose. It protects the credibility of the station from real or perceived bias – bias that would be attributed readily to a reporter who takes part in a rally that the station is trying to cover objectively.

Critics of the policy will argue against its defensiveness, its fear of negative perceptions. Managing the perceptions of others, they argue, is a rather impossible task. If someone is determined to see your coverage as biased, there's nothing you can do to assuage that. And thus, the critic would say, you should focus on actual bias, not perceived bias (which, in the case of the freelancer, would be solved by not assigning her any stories having to do with the protest).

The rationale in favor of the policy is its blanket protection. It shows the company is willing to go the extra mile to put an ethical onus on its employees, to prevent any tip-toeing down the slippery slope of reporters as cause-chasers. While this does invite speculation as to whether reporters are disciplined enough to adhere to such a standard, it also makes clear what the company's end game is: news you can trust to be compiled by professionals who don't divide their loyalties between their personal interests and their public interests.

Here's one more case:

Your public media company broadcasts a daily current events program. One host handles the newsy content. Another host handles the cultural content. Both sport active Facebook pages built on their on-air identities but not officially sanctioned by your programming or marketing departments. (There is an official station site for that.) During a contentious political campaign season, the cultural host begins posting links and comments clearly detesting one party's candidate and clearly promoting the other party's candidate. The news director objects and requests disciplinary action by station management. The station manager, despite some angst, sees the host as within her rights to air her opinion on her own time. Still, after some heat from station staff, the host adds a disclaimer to her site and agrees to tone down the political posts to maintain staff cohesion.

This is an interesting case for all of public media to consider. Do we simply say the host was posting on her personal time and that's the end of it? Do we give her a pass on the basis that she is not a news host but a cultural host? And how clear is the separation between work and play when the host is gathering an online following largely due to her work identity?

Like it or not, responsibility for the station's image is shared by all who are associated with it. There is wide-scale credibility to be lost should the daily program be perceived as employing hosts who are avidly partisan. The perception of bias, like an infection, is easily spread beyond any particular host and show. Ethics would advise that it is best to prevent bias from easily taking root. (See Appendix II and IV for examples of social media guidelines established by public broadcasters NPR and BBC.)

While the station manager may have yielded to a fundamental tenet of free speech, she also might have done more to protect the free speech rights of the public media institution that has a stake in how it is perceived. At the very least the manager might have counseled not only the disclaimer (and all other forms of separation from company identity), but invoked the right to reassign the host to a less obvious position perhaps for the duration of the political season. This would be akin to a news manager who insists on isolating a journalist from a story in which the journalist has direct personal interest (albeit reassignments may not be practical for small stations with few alternatives thus raising the stakes over whether to retain the employee at all.)

One of the newest ethical dimensions brought about by the ubiquity of social media is the building of the "personal brand." The Internet introduces a "multiplier effect" that spreads one's presence in planned and unplanned ways. The brand is often a blend of professional and personal dimensions. Where personal/professional ethics are concerned, there would seem to be a shared responsibility between employee and employer, worthy of spelling out.

The previous scenarios involve public media employees who ventured outside the norms established by employers, while bearing no ill intent. Yet, the question of appropriateness pivots on what benefits accrue to the individual, the station and to public media in general. The general conflict, it seems, is when individuals take for granted the public trust in their sponsoring institutions and act in ways that risk that trust – resulting in incongruity and unfortunate outcomes.

Guidelines for Public Media Employees in Their Off-Hour Activities

All public media organizations, by virtue of their mission, hold a high ethical commitment to serving the public interest and earning public trust. Given the CPB statutory requirement on "objectivity and balance," public media's ethos is similar to that of journalists who seek truth and accountability. And, like journalists, this requires voluntarily ethical obligations on and off the job.

What follows are guidelines – somewhat distilled from journalism – apropos to public media employees in their off-hour activities with an eye toward protecting the public trust in public media.

Principles

- Serve the public interest
- Seek public trust

Policies

- Defend the public trust of public media
- Be congruent in personal and professional behavior

Practices

- Separate personal communication from employer communication
 - Use your work email address only for professional correspondence
 - Use work computers and servers only for professional purposes
 - Avoid using company name, logo, call letters or other official identification on personal blogs or personal social media accounts
 - Use disclaimers that identify personal opinions as your own, not those of your employer
 - Avoid divulging internal, work-related discussions, plans, data, etc. Assume business meetings are off-the-record
 - When building an online following, recognize that by using your professional identity, you do so as a shared endeavor with your employer. Otherwise keep separate your personal and professional identities and followings
- Assume all online communication is public, everywhere, forever
 - Manage your online reputation carefully
 - Think before you post

- Understand terms of service may allow distribution and storage of personal information
- Monitor what OTHERS write on your wall or tag in photographs. Request its removal if you find it damaging
- Respect privacy – don't post items or pictures of others without their consent. Err on the side of privacy
- Practice Transparency
 - Don't hide behind a cloak of anonymity. Assume your identity is easy to find
 - If you engage in altering Wikipedia or establishing other reference information online, divulge your interests
- Model integrity and high standards in your personal life, online or off
 - Know and mind the law. Don't use ignorance as an excuse
 - Strive for accuracy and truthfulness
 - Respect copyright
 - Be polite, contributive ("Do unto others...")
 - Resist anger, deliberate provocations or taking things too personally
 - Be proactive – confirm facts before you post, be quick to correct errors, inform others ahead of posting if you plan to mention them
 - Avoid dealing in rumors or gossip
- Protect You and Your Employer's "Objectivity and Balance" Standards
 - If you are a journalist, follow your journalistic code of ethics (for example, see "KQED Editorial Guidelines for Editorial Staff" in Appendix III)
 - If you are not a journalist, but your station is regarded as a news station, you'll need to be equally mindful of the journalistic code of ethics
 - If you are not a journalist and your station is not regarded as a news station, you will still want to abide by ethical tenets that assure public trust in you, your company and the broader public media sphere
 - Avoid bumper stickers, lawn signs, and other displays of partisan preference on controversial or sensitive issues in which you are trusted to engage non-preferentially
 - Similarly don't display online badges, tokens or other insignia associated with an issues agenda
 - Avoid links or "retweets" when they may be interpreted as partisan endorsements on controversial or sensitive topics

- Similarly, avoid joining or participating in online or offline groups with agendas that may give rise to real or perceived bias on matters of public interest or controversy
 - Similarly, be mindful of “liking” or “friending” people and things that imply partisan endorsements on sensitive issues
 - Avoid trafficking in fake news as the joke can backfire (by someone taking it seriously and causing you embarrassment)
 - Encourage sensitivity to journalistic ethics by your spouse or partner. Their political bumper sticker or lawn sign can be mistaken for your own.
 - Always be mindful to differentiate fact from opinion, and label accordingly
 - Exercise journalistic privilege – such as use of press passes, press access, press credentials – only in bona fide ways with appropriate personnel
 - Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment so as to avoid any real or perceived influence by those with an agenda or with whom you need detachment and impartiality to assure public trust in your work
- Be sensitive to conflicts of interest – real or perceived – and take measures to minimize their negative outcomes.
 - Avoid political involvement or running for public office
 - Tread carefully in joining community organizations especially if they are likely to be major subjects of news coverage
 - Having more than one employer can put you between conflicting interests. Discuss your primary employer’s policies and concerns first. If you have no primary employer, discuss both employers’ policies and concerns up front
 - Recuse yourself from situations where you have a conflict of interest
- Proactively communicate with your employer/supervisor.
 - Bring to your supervisor’s attention, as early as possible, any situation that raises ethical questions or has the potential for diminishing public trust in you or your company
 - Use a vetting process to define ethical demarcations by noting and weighting key factors and striving for consistency across time and among all employees
- Implement the guidelines!
 - Introduce them in the hiring process
 - Reinforce them through professional development opportunities
 - Incorporate them into individual work plans
 - Post them online

- Transmit them through the company culture by drawing upon them frequently in relevant situations
- Be careful not to undermine them

Disclaimer: Nothing in these guidelines should be interpreted as prohibiting communications protected by federal or state statutes.

Conclusion

What's at play in this paper is a search for strong wording that speaks – and sticks – to public media employees when it comes to activities outside their “official” duties in public media.

This has to be carefully calibrated. This is not to impose rules. This is not a legal exercise. This is an attempt to articulate voluntary ethical guidelines. It imagines that professional norms may bind with personal ideals and become integrated. It is hoped these shared personal/professional ethics become the norm across the public media system.

The guidelines proceed from fundamental notions.

The notion of a public service ethos as a shared bond is deep-rooted. Being individually mindful of the needs of others – being group-minded – is a normative value anywhere you have a group of people who pool their hopes and mutually agree to help each other.

The principle of public trust – an intangible but indispensable societal asset – imbues the entire public media ecosystem with legitimacy and purpose. The pursuit of authentic trust is ultimately what the guidelines are after.

This edition embarks upon the rapidly shifting sands of social media and finds firm footing in the traditions of objective journalism. Partly this is because the values of "objectivity and balance" are stapled to the licenses of all CPB-supported public broadcasters. But also the traditions of objective journalism fit nicely into the public service/public trust ethos of all public media – especially as they relay a voluntary code of behavior.

The question, in practice, quickly becomes what things might one avoid that are damaging? What if my intentions are good but my employer finds them inappropriate? This requires spelling things out clearly in practical terms. These guidelines should help. Yet individuals and companies need to refine the guidelines through practice.

If applying voluntary guidelines to ALL public media practitioners – in both their work and off-work lives – seems a rather tall commitment with wide boundaries (especially if you are only a part-time employee or if you are far from influencing what gets on the air), it is indeed both tall and wide. It behooves anyone entering the U.S. public media sphere to think about the commitment implied, to think about the mission and the promise made.

Does this mean you check your personal beliefs at the door? No. It means your personal beliefs should help serve the public to whom you've committed your talents. This alignment of purpose is what every mission statement of every public media outlet hopes for in practice.

Having a personal mission corresponding to a group mission corresponding to a societal mission makes for clarity in shared purpose.

At the end of the day, a public media employer may look like any other employer, measuring employee value according to a set of goals or outputs. Similarly, a public media employee resembles any other member of the workforce hoping to take home a decent paycheck. But if the system is truly working as one would hope, the employer and employee are both measuring success in terms of public good achieved.

And if any of this sounds like a call for dehumanizing conformity among all practitioners, then we are not making ourselves clear. In fact, public media employers must be adamant in promoting diversity, creativity, conscientiousness, growth, leadership and all the traits of self-actualized individuals – in the service of a mission. This search for a talented and spirited workforce is a hallmark of public media and completely consistent with its calling to reflect American democracy and promote its enlightenment. It would be a terrible thing if public media were seen as standing for a lesser definition of a great society.

Working Group Participants

This paper is based on discussions in late 2011 and was completed in January 2012. Participants were members of a working group that included:

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Stewart Vanderwilt, Director and General Manager, KUT, Austin

Michael V. Marcotte, MVM Consulting, Santa Barbara, CA, facilitated the discussion and wrote the report.

APPENDIX I

SPJ Code of Ethics

Preamble

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility. Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

Seek Truth and Report It

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

Journalists should:

- Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.
- Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.
- Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.
- Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.
- Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.
- Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.
- Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story
- Never plagiarize.
- Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.
- Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.
- Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.

- Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
- Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

Minimize Harm

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

- Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.
- Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.
- Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

Act Independently

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Journalists should:

- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

Be Accountable

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Journalists should:

- Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.
 - Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.
 - Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.
 - Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.
 - Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.
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The SPJ Code of Ethics is voluntarily embraced by thousands of writers, editors and other news professionals. The present version of the code was adopted by the 1996 SPJ National Convention, after months of study and debate among the Society's members.

Sigma Delta Chi's first Code of Ethics was borrowed from the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1926. In 1973, Sigma Delta Chi wrote its own code, which was revised in 1984, 1987 and 1996.

APPENDIX II

NPR Social Media Guidelines

Posted October 15, 2009

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter have become an integral part of everyday life for millions of people around the world. As NPR grows to serve the audience well beyond the radio, social media is becoming an increasingly important aspect of our interaction and our transparency with our audience and with a variety of communities. Properly used, social networking sites can also be very valuable newsgathering and reporting tools and can speed research and extend a reporter's contacts, and we encourage our journalists to take advantage of them.

The line between private and public activity has been blurred by these tools, which is why we are providing guidance now. Information from your Facebook page, your blog entries, and your tweets - even if you intend them to be personal messages to your friends or family - can be easily circulated beyond your intended audience. This content, therefore, represents you and NPR to the outside world as much as a radio story or story for NPR.org does. As in all of your reporting, the NPR Code of Ethics should guide you in your use of social media. You should read and be sure you understand the Code.

What follows are some basic but important guidelines to help you as you deal with the changing world of gathering and reporting news, and to provide additional guidance on specific issues. These guidelines apply to every member of the News Division.

First and foremost - you should do nothing that could undermine your credibility with the public, damage NPR's standing as an impartial source of news, or otherwise jeopardize NPR's reputation.

- Recognize that everything you write or receive on a social media site is public. Anyone with access to the web can get access to your activity on social media sites. And regardless of how careful you are in trying to keep them separate, in your online activity, your professional life and your personal life overlap.
- Use the highest level of privacy tools available to control access to your personal activity when appropriate, but don't let that make you complacent. It's just not that hard for someone to hack those tools and make public what you thought was private.
- You should conduct yourself in social media forums with an eye to how your behavior or comments might appear if we were called upon to defend them as a news organization. In other words, don't behave any differently online than you would in any other public setting.
- While we strongly encourage linking to NPR.org, you may not repost NPR copyrighted material to social networks without prior permission. For example, it is o.k. to link from your blog or Facebook profile to a story of yours on the NPR site, but you should not

copy the full text or audio onto a personal site or Web page. You may accomplish this through the NPR API or widgets that NPR provides to the public under the same terms of use as apply to anyone else.

- Remember that the terms of service of a social media site apply to what you post and gather on that site. The terms might allow for material that you post to be used in a different way than you intended. Additionally, law enforcement officials may be able to obtain by subpoena anything you post or gather on a site without your consent – or perhaps even your knowledge.
- Remember the same ethics rules as apply offline also apply to information gathered online.
- Journalism should be conducted in the open, regardless of the platform. Just as you would do if you were working offline, you should identify yourself as an NPR journalist when you are working online. If you are acting as an NPR journalist, you must not use a pseudonym or misrepresent who you are. If you are acting in a personal capacity, you may use a screen name if that is allowed by the relevant forum.
- You should always explain to anyone who provides you information online how you intend to use the information you are gathering.
- When possible, clarify and confirm any information you collect online by later interviewing your online sources by phone or in person.
- While widely disseminated and reported, material gathered online can be just as inaccurate or untrustworthy as some material collected or received in more traditional ways. As always, consider and verify the source.
- Content gathered online is subject to the same attribution rules as other content.
- You must not advocate for political or other polarizing issues online. This extends to joining online groups or using social media in any form (including your Facebook page or a personal blog) to express personal views on a political or other controversial issue that you could not write for the air or post on NPR.org.
- Your simple participation in some online groups could be seen to indicate that you endorse their views. Consider whether you can accomplish your purposes by just observing a group's activity, rather than becoming a member. If you do join, be clear that you've done so to seek information or story ideas. And if you "friend" or join a group representing one side of an issue, do so for a group representing the competing viewpoint, when reasonable to do so.
- Realize that social media communities have their own culture, etiquette, and norms, and be respectful of them.
- If you are writing about meetings and gatherings at NPR - always ask first if the forum is on or off the record before distributing information or content about it.

And a final caution - when in doubt, consult with your editor. Social media is a very dynamic ecosystem so don't be surprised if we continue to revise or elaborate on our guidelines at a later date. In the meantime, we welcome your feedback.

APPENDIX III

KQED Code of Ethics Guidelines for Editorial Staff

This statement of the KQED Code of Ethics Guidelines is intended to underscore the values of KQED to ensure integrity, impartiality, and independence, and to maintain the highest standards of conduct by KQED staff, avoiding conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts. It is also important that we maintain standards consistent with NPR, PBS, and other news organizations to which KQED contributes.

KQED Public Media represents the core values of public media: trust, fairness, integrity, and quality content. Our listeners and viewers depend on KQED for objective and accurate information. As stewards of public media, we have an obligation to avoid conflicts of interests, personal bias or undue influence.

- The Code of Ethics Guidelines apply to all KQED senior content management and editorial, programming, and content staff (hereinafter "Editorial/Content Staff"). Editorial/Content Staff in Television, Radio, Interactive, and Education, including TV and Radio: executives in charge of productions, programming managers, executive producers, senior producers, senior editors, managing editors, news editors, program hosts, newscast hosts, announcers who present newscasts, reporters, producers, associate producers, assistant producers, content researchers; Interactive: associate producers, producers, senior producers, executive producers, directors, executive directors; Education: director, associate directors, project managers. KQED senior management, including the President and CEO, will also comply with these guidelines as it relates to content responsibilities.
- All Editorial/Content Staff shall avoid activities that would give rise to conflicts of interest, real or perceived, with the programming and services of KQED. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include:
 1. Political Activities. Editorial/Content Staff should avoid situations which would call into question their impartiality on political matters. The Code of Ethics Guidelines are not intended to discourage Editorial/Content Staff from expressing their views at the ballot box. In their public life, however, Editorial/Content Staff members need to refrain from activities that might give rise to an improper appearance of partiality. Editorial/Content Staff may not, for example, contribute to electoral candidates or electoral campaigns, or serve in a publicly elected office.
 2. Marches or Rallies. Editorial/Content Staff should avoid active participation in marches or rallies concerning controversial issues of political importance to the extent that their participation may call KQED's objectivity on a particular issue into question. An example: participating in a rally to support animal rights and then reporting, writing or producing a segment on this topic. If in doubt, or to

seek clarification, the Editorial/Content Staff member should discuss with his/her supervisor in advance of a particular activity.

3. Associations. KQED does not seek to restrict Editorial/Content Staff from participating in community, labor, civic or professional affairs organizations. However, Editorial/Content Staff shall exercise care to remain free of associations and activities that may compromise KQED's integrity or damage its credibility. For example, Editorial/Content Staff should not sit on the boards of organizations that are engaged in significant lobbying or political activity, or are actively involved in controversial issues of public importance where participation by Editorial/Content Staff may call KQED's objectivity on a particular issue into question. Editorial/Content Staff should disclose to their supervisor their membership in any organizations where there is a likelihood that continued service will create an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest concerning an issue the Editorial/Content Staff member is working on.
 4. Activities of Associates. When a spouse or immediate family member is involved in a political activity that may create a real or apparent conflict of interest or otherwise call KQED's objectivity on a particular issue the Editorial/ Content Staff member is working on into question, he/she should disclose this to his/her supervisor so that KQED can determine whether the staff member should be recused from particular assignments.
- Acceptance of Gifts and Gratuities. To avoid the appearance of conflicts, Editorial/Content Staff shall not accept or solicit business-connected gifts or free services from vendors or news and content sources, with the exception of nominal courtesies. Other items received should be politely returned. Travel reimbursement for KQED related and approved business by an outside organization may be acceptable in certain cases; however, such travel arrangements need to be disclosed and approved in advance by the staff member's supervisor.
 - Outside Employment. Editorial/Content Staff may not engage in outside employment that would create an actual conflict of interest. Any employment outside KQED must be approved in advance and in writing by the staff member's supervisor.
 - Speeches and Presentations. A member of the Editorial/Content Staff who has been asked to make a speech or presentation (outside the normal course of KQED hosted or planned activities) should obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor. Such approval will not be unreasonably withheld.
 - Commercial Endorsements. Editorial/Content Staff may not endorse commercial products, companies or services, whether or not payment is received.
 - If there is any question on the part of an individual regarding a potential conflict, it should be disclosed to his/her supervisor in advance.

APPENDIX IV

BBC Guidelines on Personal Use of Social Networking, Microblogs and other Third Party Websites

Summary of Main Points

- The personal use of the internet by BBC staff must be tempered by an awareness of the potential conflicts that may arise.
- There should be a clear division between "BBC" pages and "personal" pages.
- On Social Networking sites, you should be mindful that the information you disclose does not bring the BBC into disrepute.
- For example, editorial staff should not indicate their political allegiance. Non-editorial staff should make their role clear if they wish to engage in political activity.
- It may not be appropriate to share BBC-related photographs, comments and videos. Offensive comment about BBC colleagues may be deemed a disciplinary offence.
- BBC staff are free to edit online encyclopaedias (such as *Wikipedia*) but should be transparent about doing so. You may respond to legitimate criticism of the BBC but not remove it.
- Blogs, microblogs and other personal websites which do not identify the author as a BBC employee, do not discuss the BBC and are purely personal would fall outside this guidance.
- New and existing blogs, microblogs and other personal websites which do identify the author as a BBC employee should be discussed with your line manager to ensure that due impartiality and confidentiality is maintained.

Guidance in Full: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/page/guidance-blogs-personal-full>