Media Ethics: issues and cases.
Edited by Philipp Patterson, Lee Wilkins, 3rd edition.

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Foreword: Clifford G. Christians
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The concept of circles of intimacy
CHAPTER I: AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize the need for professional ethics in journalism.
- Work through a model of ethical decision making.
- Be familiar with five philosophical principles, i.e. moral standards applicable to mass-communication situations.

**Making Ethical Decisions:** Ethical choices – to sustain confidence, set a standard including context, provide a variety of sources. Therefore you should make ethical choices systematically – ethical decision making should be consistent and result in action that can be rationally justified.

Professional ethics have these questions:
- What duties do I have, and to whom do I owe them.
- What values are reflected by the duties I’ve assumed.

**Ethics** – a rational process founded on certain principles. *Ethics begins when elements within a moral system conflict* – ethics is about the conflict about between equally compelling values and the choices that must be made between them when elements within a moral system conflict, ethical principles can help you make tough choices.

**A Word about Ethics:** The concept of ethics comes from the Greeks, who divided the philosophical world into three parts. *Aesthetics* was the study of the beautiful and how a person could analyze beauty without relying only on subjective evaluations. *Epistemology* was the study of knowing, debates about what constitutes learning and what is knowable to the human mind. *Ethics* was the study of what is good, both for the individual and for society. The Greeks were concerned with the individual virtues of courage, justice, temperance, and wisdom, as well as with societal virtues, such as freedom. Two thousand years later, ethics has come to mean learning to make rational choices between what is good and bad, what is morally justifiable action and what is not. Ethics also means distinguishing among choices, all of which may be morally justifiable, but some more than others. *Rationality* is the key word here, for the Greeks believed, and modern philosophers affirm, that people should be able to explain their ethical decisions to others: rationality is ability to explain and rationally support ethical choices.

For ethical *decision-making* is helpful *Bok’s Model* that provides a framework which is based on two premises – that we must have *empathy* for the people involved in ethical decisions and that maintaining social *trust* is a fundamental goal.

In ethical decision-making should be analyzed three steps:
1. consult your own conscience about the rightness of an action. *How do you feel about the action?*
2. seek expert advice for alternatives to the act creating the ethical problem: *Is there another way to achieve the same goal that will not raise ethical issues?*
3. if possible, conduct a public discussion with the parties involved in the dispute. The goal of this conversation is to discover *How will my action affect others?* and attempt to hold a *public ethical dialogue* with all parties involved.

Journalistic *responsibility* – tell the truth, not to harm, restore public trust, rationally support an ethical choice, conduct the ethical dialogue in advance of the event.

Journalistic technique – the pursuit of alternatives.

**Guidelines for Making Ethical Decisions:** in most ethical dilemmas you will need principles to help you determine what to do amid conflicting voices. For that ethical theories provide five standards.

1. **Aristotle’s Golden Mean**

For Aristotle happiness i.e. flourishing was the ultimate human good: happiness is to flourish in professional performance, extending our vision of what is possible. Therefore the moral standard are *people and their acts, not particular sets of rules.* That is ethical theory called *virtue ethics.*

According to Aristotle to behave ethically means that:
1. you must know what you are doing,
2. you must select the act for its own sake,
3. the act itself must spring from a character.
According to Aristotle to learn ethics is to select heroes and to try to model your individual acts and ultimately your professional character. Standard for choices is golden mean – virtue lies at the mean between two extremes. But to determine that mean for yourself you have to exercise practical wisdom. Virtue is a range of behaviors that varies individually, while avoiding the undesirable extremes, but individual acts are not disconnected from one another.

2. Kant’s Categorical Imperative
is moral standard according to which an individual should act on the premise that the choices one makes for oneself could become universal law: You should act so that you treat humanity always as an end and never as a means only. Categorical means that these are not subject to situational factors. This is similar with Golden Rule – Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Kant – the act itself, rather than the person who acts, is in which moral force resides – i.e. people could act morally from a sense of duty even though their character might incline them to act otherwise. For Kant, an action was morally justified only if it was performed from duty. While Kant’s view is that the moral worth of an action does not depend on its consequences, those consequences are not irrelevant – to take into account probability – to learn from our mistakes. The test of a moral act is its universality – whether it can be applied to everyone. Kant’s view reminds you of what you give up when you make certain ethical decisions.

3. Utilitarianism
Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill claim: The consequences of actions are important in deciding whether they are ethical – it is ethical to harm one person for the benefit of the larger group. Utilitarianism – the greatest good for the greatest number. For Mill utilitarianism was a profoundly social ethic – the good of an entire society has a place in ethical reasoning. Mill was a valutational hedonist – pleasure is the only intrinsic moral end. Therefore same act can make some happy but cause others pain. Within utilitarianism there are two trends: act utilitarianism – moral is act that furthers the general welfare, contributes more to human happiness than it extracts in the pain it causes some individuals; rule utilitarianism – approves particular activities while rejecting specific acts: No one’s happiness is any more valuable than any one else’s – quantity and quality being equal. Utilitarianism suggests that moral questions are objective, empirical. Utilitarianism promotes a universal ethical standard that each rational person can determine. Utilitarianism may bias you toward short-term benefit.

4. Pluralistic Theory of Value
William David Ross – there is often more than one ethical value simultaneously competing for preeminence in our ethical decision making. These competing ethical claims are duties. These duties do not gain their moral weight from their consequences, but are already there before making concrete decision:
1. Those duties that rest on previous acts of my own – duties of fidelity, based on my implicit or explicit promise, and duties of reparation, arising from a previous wrongful act.
2. Those duties of gratitude that rest on previous acts of others.
3. Those duties of justice that arise from the necessity to ensure the equitable and meritorious distribution of pleasure or happiness.
4. Those duties of beneficence that rest on the fact that there are others in the world whose lot we can better.
5. Those duties of self-improvement that rest on the fact that we can improve our own condition.
6. Negative duty of not injuring others.
7. The duty to tell the truth, veracity.
8. The duty to nurture, to help others achieve some measure of self-worth and achievement.
Ross’s typology of duties works well for professionals who often must balance competing roles. Ross’s concept of multiple duties allows the ethical decision maker to appreciate and consider important aspects of a situation without losing the value of following some rules. These facie duties seem to be right because of the nature of the act itself. And in a case of conflict you should decide which of these is your duty proper, i.e. actual duties that are paramount given specific circumstances. Arriving at your duty proper from among the prima facie duties requires that you consider what ethicists call the morally relevant differences.
5. Communitarianism
Communitarianism has its roots in political theory
- seeks to provide ethical guidance when confronting current political and business activity,
- society is understood holistically and dynamically,
- focuses on the outcome of the individual ethical decision, analyzed as the impact of the sum of the choices on society,
- a journalism is committed to justice, covenant and empowerment,
- social justice is the predominant moral value,
- recognize the value of process, are concerned with outcomes,
- measure individual acts against the normative standard of their impact in creating a more just society,
- one of the foundation stones of community is cooperation,
- emphasizes responsibilities to the conditions and elements we all share, to the community,
- individual participants are members in the community, i.e. not just what they have, but also what they are,
- community is not a relationship we choose (as in a voluntary association) but an attachment we discover,
- journalism is part of the political and economic system,
- to evaluate performance against shared societal values,
- is a philosophy of ideals.
The best example is in the ethic of the Internet – equality of access, cooperation and sharing, global communication, decentralized control and a fierce devotion to communication as an activity between equals in which all have chance to participate and benefit, i.e. the Internet is axiologically and ontologically prior to its individual members.

Conclusion
No principle and therefore no moral standard is markedly superior to the others, although you may find that one of these points of view has more explanatory power for you than do the others.
But all the ethical principles is a plea for empathy, a compassionate understanding of one’s fellows, and the capacity for rational, principled moral action.
A systematic application of these principles will help you make better and more rational ethical choices.
Main ethical theories that differ from each other according to the moral standard for evaluating morally relevant are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHICAL THEORY</th>
<th>PHILOSOPHER</th>
<th>KNOWN FOR</th>
<th>POPULARLY KNOWN AS</th>
<th>MORAL STANDARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>virtue ethics</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>Golden mean</td>
<td>Virtue lies between extremes.</td>
<td>The actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deontological (and contractual) ethics</td>
<td>Kant</td>
<td>Categorical imperative</td>
<td>Act so your choices could be universal law. Treat humanity as an end, never as a means only.</td>
<td>The action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilitarianism</td>
<td>Mill</td>
<td>Utility principle</td>
<td>An act’s rightness is determined by its contribution to a desirable end.</td>
<td>The outcome</td>
</tr>
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</table>
CHAPTER I ESSAY

The purpose of an ethics discussion is to teach discussants how to ‘do ethics’, this is, to teach them processes by which they can practice and improve their own critical decision-making abilities.

MYTHS OF MEDIA CASE DISCUSSIONS:

Myth 1 – Every opinion is equally valid.
In ethics discussion the best opinion (conclusion) is the one that best addresses the morally relevant factors of the case. An action has morally relevant factors if it is likely to cause some individual to suffer an evil that any rational person would wish to avoid, or if it is the kind of action that generally causes evil.

Myth 2 – Since we can’t agree on an answer, there is no right answer.
It may be that there are a number of acceptable answers...then it is time to reflect on all of the agreement that exists within the group concerning the actions that would be out of bounds.

Myth 3 – It hardly matters if you come up with the ‘ethical thing to do’ since people ultimately act out of their own self-interest anyway.
Acting ethically means to refrain from causing unjustified harm. Free-market pragmatism, as well as ethics, dictates that it makes little sense to ignore the expectations of consumers and of the society at large.

A MAP FOR AN ETHICS DISCUSSION

1. What are the morally relevant factors of the case
   a. Will the proposed action cause an evil, that any rational person would wish to avoid
   b. Is the proposed action the sort of action, that generally causes evil.

2. If the proposed action is one described above, is a greater evil being prevented or punished

3. If so, is the actor in a unique position to prevent or punish such an evil

4. Would you be an exception to a rule or applaud the action if another person did the same

5. If the proposed action seems justified, consider the reason for causing harm. Are you ready to explain and defend the proposed action in a public forum.
CHAPTER II: INFORMATION ETHICS - A PROFESSION SEEKS THE TRUTH

By the end of the chapter, student should be able to:
- Define both the enlightenment and pragmatic constructions of truth.
- Understand the development and several criticisms of objective news reporting as a professional ideal.
- Understand why truth in ‘getting’ the news may be as important as truth in reporting it.
- Begin to develop a personal list of ethical news values.

A Philosophy of Truth Emerges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>TRUTH EQUALS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Greeks</td>
<td>What is memorable and is handed down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plato</td>
<td>What abides in the world of perfect forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>What the king, Church, or God says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton</td>
<td>What emerges from ‘marketplace of ideas’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightenment</td>
<td>What is verifiable, replicable, universal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatics</td>
<td>What is filtered through individual perception</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

News stories reflect 6 cultural values: ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, individualism, social order, leadership.

News: analytic, not anecdotal, proactive, not reactive, contextual, not detached

News – proximity, timeliness, conflict, consequence, prominence, rarity, change, concreteness, action, personality and mystery, drama, adventure, celebration, self-improvement, ethics.

Ethical News Values

Accuracy – using the correct facts and the right words and putting things in context.
Tenacity – knowing when a story is important enough to require additional effort, both personal and institutional.
Dignity – leaving the subject of the story as much self-respect as possible.
Reciprocity – treating others as you wish to be treated.
Sufficiency – allocating adequate resources to important issues.
Equity – seeking justice for all involved in controversial issues and treating all sources and subjects equally.
Community – valuing social cohesion.
Diversity – covering all segments of the audience fairly and adequately.
CHAPTER III: PERSUASION ETHICS - WHAT’S FAIR IN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

At the end of the chapter, the student should be familiar with:

- The balance and cognitive dissonance persuasion theories and their role in advertising.
- The pro-social and antisocial aspects of advertising.
- Why the relationship between the media and public relations is both symbiotic and strained.

Behavioristic theory – stimulus-response model: audience is unresisting.

Cognitivists – people strain toward cognitive balance, symmetry.

Balance theory – attitudes, information and actions are in harmony.

Cognitive dissonance – a message and an action give conflicting signals.

Sincerity – claims are made within a context clearly understood, a persuasive message is ethical, when it makes a claim that the consumer can check; consumers need information in a context they can understand to reach a rational decision.

Defenses of Advertising
1. it provides financial support to the media
2. it fuels the economy
3. it provides needed information

Controversial practices:
- Allowing ads or commercials to look like editorial copy.
- Favorable mentions of products and advertisers in articles.
- Sending stories to advertisers for approval before publishing.
- Using staff members to create “advertorial” sections and flagging sections on the cover of the magazine.
- Contests linking the medium and one of its sponsors.

PR practitioners justify their profession:
1. the stories they attempt to tell are the unreported or the underreported stories
2. the rules are set by media – if the media would ever agree that good news is news, the duplicity might diminish
CHAPTER IV: LOYALTY – CHOOSING BETWEEN COMPETING ALLEGIANCES

By the end of the chapter, the student should:
- Understand why the articulation of loyalties is important in professional ethics.
- Know Royce’s definition of loyalty and at least one of the major problems with that conceptualization.
- Understand how journalists’ role in society provides them with an additional set of loyalties to consider.
- Be familiar with and able to use the Potter box as a justification model for ethical decision making.

Loyalty as Part of the Social Contract: A decision is to decide to whom to be loyal - competing loyalties, but loyalty is a social act, is the core of the agreement that allows people to form the social contract that is the basis of political society.
Problems: loyalty can be bias or prejudice and how to distinguish among competing loyalties, because in a mass society there is no face-to-face loyalty.
The basis of modern democracy and journalism – free and unfettered political discussion. But – who the others are and how to balance majority notions against minority views – adherence to the status quo or strict majority rule.
When making ethical choices, it is important to consider what your loyalties are and how you arrived at those loyalties.
Loyalty is not a fixed point but a range within a continuum. There are 2 extremes of loyalty: minimal – do not betray me, maximum – be one with me.

Journalism as a Profession: Loyalty is linked to role – a role is a capacity in which we act toward others, roles provide others with information about how we will act in a structured situation. Roles help us to know what to expect from others. A professional role adds ethical responsibility – certain standards of conduct that go beyond the norm for others. Professionalism among journalists will provide them 2 responsibilities because of the role journalists play in modern society:
1. greater responsibility to tell the truth than most professions.
2. greater obligation to foster political activity than the average person.
Role expectations carry over from one situation to another. Loyalty to the profession means loyalty to the ideals of the profession.
Most ethical decisions are about reciprocity. Reciprocity requires that loyalty should not work against the interest of either party. Therefore remember that: Virtually no situation in media ethics calls for inhumane treatment or withholding the truth.

The Potter Box
This decision-making model incorporates articulation of loyalties into the reasoning process. Potter constructed procedure for such a decision making and that is called Potter Box – you go through four steps to arrive at an ethical judgement.

|----------|-----------|---------------|-------------|

1. understanding the facts - ethical choice how much of facts you are going to print.
2. outlining the values inherent in the decision - value means you are willing to give up other things for it (truth versus privacy) – articulation of all the values in particular ethical situation and make compromises.
3. applying relevant philosophical principles - principles are utilitarian, Ross (pluralistic), golden mean, Kantian or social justice (communitarian) to be able to explain why your judgement is this.
4. articulating a loyalty as a social commitment - loyalty: what you choose to be loyal to should be capable of inspiring a similar loyalty in others.
Journalists are most highly criticized because of idiosyncratic loyalties - loyalties are not subject to popular opinion (unpopular loyalties).
Models assure that your choices are grounded in sound ethical reasoning.
NB loyalties are also facts

**Conflicting Loyalties**

Layers of loyalties:

1. Loyalties arising from shared humanity:
   - Demonstrate respect for each person as an individual;
   - Communicate honestly and truthfully with all persons;
   - Build a fair and compassionate social and cultural environment that promotes the common good;

2. Loyalties arising from professional practice:
   - Fulfill the informational and entertainment mission of the media;
   - Understand your audience’s needs;
   - Strive to enhance professional development to self and others;
   - Avoid the abuse of power and position;
   - Conduct professional activities in ways that uphold or surpass the ideals of virtue and competence;

3. Loyalties arising from employment:
   - Keep agreements and promises, operate within the framework of the law, extend due process to all persons;
   - Do not squander your organization’s resources or your public trust;
   - Promote compassionate and humane professional relationships;
   - Foster policies that build a community of ethnic, gender and socioeconomic diversity;
   - Promote the right of all to be heard;

4. Loyalties arising from the media’s role in public life:
   - Serve as examples of open institutions where truth is required;
   - Foster open discussion and debate;
   - Interpret your professional actions to renders and viewers;
   - Serve as a voice for the voiceless;
   - Serve as a mirror of society.
CHAPTER V: PRIVACY – LOOKING FOR SOLITUDE IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

By the end of the chapter, the student should:
- Appreciate the difference between the right to privacy and a need for privacy.
- Be able to distinguish between the law and ethics of privacy.
- Understand the concepts of discretion, right to know, need to know, want to know, and circles of intimacy.
- Understand and be able to apply Rawls’s veil of ignorance as a tool for ethical decision making.

The Need for Privacy - without some degree of privacy, civilized life would be impossible, i.e. we need privacy to develop a sense of self – a certain degree of privacy is needed to develop personality apart from observation, without cognitive control.

Society needs privacy against the power of the state: totalitarianism – absence of privacy to create uniformity. So privacy is a necessary component of a democracy upon which many of its values such as freedom, individual dignity, and autonomy rest.

Invasions of privacy are troubling, but standards are changing and privacy is both a legal concept and an ethical concept - what the law allows and what your conscience permits.

Voyeurism is the “safe sex” of the 1990s.

Stereotypical notions about journalism: 1.journalists will do anything to get a story; 2.audience will willingly consume anything the journalists deliver.

Legal and Ethical Definitions
Privacy is guarded legally in 4 distinct ways:
1. Intrusion upon a person’s seclusion or solitude, or into private affairs, such as invading one’s home or personal papers to get a story;
2. Public disclosure of embarrassing private facts, such as revealing someone’s notorious past when it has no bearing on that person’s present status;
3. Publicity that places a person in a false light, such as enhancing a subject’s biography to sell additional books;
4. Misappropriation of a person’s name or likeness for personal advantage, such as using Michael Jackson’s likeness to sell Pepsi without his permission.

The claim for privacy is different for different categories of people: public figures, “limited” public figures and “accidental” public figures.

Because the legal remedy of invading privacy occur after the fact therefore ethical thinking prior to publication is preferable to a court battle.

The ethical basis for privacy – we all possess it by being human: Privacy is a right – a way of protecting oneself against the actions of other people and institutions, has connotation of control and limited access.

The Continuing Conflicts
Privacy is a prima facie right – may be negated by more compelling rights: for the survival of the entire political community, the government demands that its citizens provide it with certain information that is otherwise private. Then disclosure of private information is one-directional.

Distinguishing between Secrecy and Privacy
Secrecy – blocking information intentionally to prevent others from using it – that information is kept from any public view.
Privacy – to determine who will obtain access to the information, i.e. an individual has control over what information becomes public and to whom. Privacy can and should be balanced against other considerations, secrets are something an individual decides to keep.
Privacy is ability to control one’s own circles of intimacy, because privacy is seen as a series of concentric circles: you, you and one another, you and close friends, you and casual acquaintances.
Invasion of privacy – your control over your own circles of intimacy is wrestled from you by others.
Journalists sometimes do invade circles of intimacy, but invading privacy may constitute usurping an individual’s control and stripping them of individuality and human dignity.

**Discretion – Whether to Reveal Private Information?**
Discretion – the intuitive ability to discern what is and is not intrusive, demands moral reasoning where the interests of more than one party are balanced. (Look Ross’s list of prima facie duties – what is my duty to a source.) Ethical decision should be consistent.

**When Right to Know Is Not Enough**
Right to know – a legal term, based on the philosophy that government runs more honestly in the open, is a form of counterbalancing government power.
Need to know – one of the functions of the mass media is to provide information to citizens for them to get along their daily lives in society; it leads to making known information that others wish to keep private and demands that journalists present the information in a manner that will make its importance evident to lazy citizens.
Want to know – the least compelling rationale for acting – want is not equal with need, is not a good basis to invade privacy.

**John Rawls and the Veil of Ignorance**
Rawls – the social contract theory of government, theory of distributive justice is utilitarian and its premise is that justice should be equated with fairness.
To achieve justice as fairness Rawls recommends the “veil of ignorance” - before making an ethical decision that affects others take an “original position” behind a veil of ignorance – everyone starts out in the original position as equals. Then we have 2 values: we will act so that individual liberty is maximized and weaker parties are protected. The liberty of all will be valued equally: freedom of the press is equal to freedom from unwarranted intrusion into private life and the weaker party should be protected – to weigh the actual and potential harm to less powerful.
**It is important to note that consensus is not required, and maybe even not expected, behind the veil.**
The ethical decision maker arrives at reflective equilibrium where some inequalities are allowed, but these inequalities contribute to the betterment of most individuals in the social situation. Reflective equilibrium summons as “considered moral judgment” – decisions are based on the principles we are most unwilling to give up because we believe doing so would result in a grave wrongdoing for all. This will enable you to justify your choices rationally, to make decisions systematically and to understand what went wrong when mistakes occur.
CHAPTER VI: THE MASS MEDIA IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY - KEEPING A PROMISE

By the end of the chapter, the student should:
- Appreciate how a society’s media are shaped by the form of its government.
- Be familiar with many of the criticisms leveled at the U.S. media cover government and elections.
- Be familiar with why the media should be concerned with social justice for the powerful and the powerless alike.

Communication among the citizens serves an important political purpose – citizens to be informed and then to participate in politics. Freedom of speech – the rational being would be able to discern the truth, but the mass media provides citizens with what they need to know to get along in political society – the social responsibility theory of the press.

Representative democracy – elections of these, who have the good opinion of others. Therefore the mass media is the primary mode of political discourse: Media provides not only facts, but also framework to understand those facts.

Modern Mediated Problems

1. Getting elected: whether politicians should be “sold” like soap - factual accuracy must be the starting point for ethical political advertising.

Facts are linked with rationality – the use of emotional arguments is a “violation of democratic ethics”, but: our judgment of information is influenced by the emotional reactions we experience as we process it.

Encourage journalists to stop covering the “horse race” aspect of campaigns and focus on problem and policy solutions:
- hold candidates accountable for their ads
- allow attack ads only if they include the image of the candidate directing the attack,
- reject unfair or inaccurate ads created by political action committees,
- citizens need to demand that the candidates speak to each other about the issues.

2. Getting Connected with the Community: “public journalism” – to be less conflict driven and more responsive to reader interests in determining what is news – is using the power of the press to re-engage people in public life – people see themselves, their hopes and their values reflected in politics, and these are the four major community issues: education, crime, government gridlock and stress on the family. So political coverage should be about what’s important to citizens, not just what’s important to politicians or the press.

Because in pluralistic condition there is no longer detachment there must be found a way for the media to reclaim its role in preparing a citizenry to participate in a democracy.

3. Covering Political Character: Political character – an intersection of personality and public performance within a context. Character is dynamic: it represents a synergistic interaction of a person within an environment.

Journalists explore character that is invasion of privacy. Such invasion of privacy needs to meet some tests:
- The invasion must be placed in a larger context of facts and history. Since one of the definitions of invasion of privacy is the subject’s loss of control over the context of information, an effort to study character must include enough context to provide meaning.
- The revelation of private facts about political figures should meet the traditional tests of journalistic publicity and evidence. Further, these private facts need to be linked to public
- The invasion of privacy must further the larger political discourse. Investigation of the character of political figures must meet the most demanding ethical test: the need to know.

Publishing private information without discretion is “tabloid journalism” that casts doubt on journalistic motives and credibility. Therefore remember building blocks of character:
- The politician’s development of a sense of trust;
- A politician’s own sense of self-worth and self-esteem;
- The development of a politician’s relationship to power and authority;
- Early influences on adult policy outlook;
- How a politician establishes contact with people;
- The flexibility, adaptability, and purposefulness of mature adulthood;
• The historical moment.

Leaders are not saints: by emphasizing an almost inhuman standard of public behavior, the mass media may be setting a standard of public behavior that may be impossible to meet as well as politically inadvisable.

Journalist treat character as one political story among many to help think deeply about what we as a political system mean by and need from leadership.

4. Governing: one of the ironies of democratic politics is that, in order to accomplish something, you first have to get elected.

The mass media help to make policy, but: Who really holds the power in a particular situation?

Fundamental question for journalists – should they become consciously involved in the process of governing, and in what manner?

Willing involvement runs counter objectivity – journalists must decide if and how they are willing to use leaks and for what purposes.

5. Arrogance without Authority: the media’s primary function is to provide citizens with information that will allow them to make informed political chooses – the media is a "watchdog" on government – arises from skepticism of concentrated political power. But government must continue to function – the media have a “guide dog” function. When media emphasizes conflict and wrongdoing it degenerates political debate into a match between opposed factions that have no reason to compromise – learning to get along with one another is crucial in daily, political life.

There is no politics without government – media must provide meaning in the context of a democratic form of government and journalists cynical and conflict-laden view of politics is responsible for voter apathy.

Journalists should get themselves a new definition of news – instead of emphasizing events and conflict, news stories could equally revolve around issues and multiple policy perspectives.

Journalistic rights and responsibilities – the media are a powerful institution within the democratic system and hence partially responsible for its continued well-being.

Cynical journalists are a kind of "mad dog" – government can never act for the public good and journalists are outside the political system.

6. Social Justice

There is a power elite and who are excluded from political society

Minority groups seek access to the political process – they seek access to media – responsibility for the media: journalists need to become advocates for the politically homeless.

Socially responsible view of the media – journalists have a duty both to promote community and to promote the individuals within it. But: a socially responsible media smacks of a kind of benevolent paternalism that diminishes the moral worth of the individual citizen. Such a relationship does not promote political maturity.
CHAPTER VII: MEDIA ECONOMICS

Trying to satisfy competing publics – owners, advertisers and audience was creating with advertising in 1883 – a reader is a means to an end.

Three problems in shifting the profit center from consumers to advertisers:
1. in an attempt to attract the largest audience possible, media outlets “homogenized” their content – journalism takes no risks – events are more reported than processes;
2. more difficult for diverse voices to find a mainstream forum;
3. conflicts between the interests of powerful advertisers and the interests of the less powerful consumer over controversial content.

There are two theories about the role of the media - the Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories: an underlying assumption of theories is that any media system “takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates”.

The libertarian theory of the press: from Enlightenment assume that people are rational and truth is discoverable in a secular, empirical way – political authority rests with the individual (Milton’s concept of the “marketplace of ideas” – the rational citizen would select the truth from among versions available) and the press’s most antagonist would be government. Therefore the duty of the press is to support a well-informed individual in a quest for well-being and happiness.

Three intellectual changes in shift from this view of humanity and society:
1. Freud and modern psychology changed our view of rational humanity – people are often illogical, sometimes irrational, and motivated by a variety of needs, i.e. people are not uniform.
2. Knowledge, reality itself is transformed – what we think as a “fact” is subject both to perception and change, a philosophical view known as pragmatism, i.e. truth is ephemeral.
3. Society became cosmopolitan – people are different from one another in culture and language as they are alike in their quest for a better life.

Transforming the press of the 1800s into the mass media of the late 20th century means that the marketplace of ideas became a monopoly supermarket and media is an industry like other industries.

In the 1940s articulated the social responsibility theory of the press – the media have 5 functions in society:
1. To provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context that gives them meaning;
2. To serve as a forum for exchange of comment and criticism;
3. To provide a representative picture of constituent groups in society;
4. To present and clarify the goals and values of society;
5. To provide citizens with full access to the day’s intelligence.

But – the social responsibility theory, like libertarianism, does not deal with the realities of concentrated economic power.

Some of the most troubling problems in media ethics stem from journalism’s dual responsibilities to citizens and to stockholders.

Media Economics in the Modern Era

Information is in the hands of a very few corporations: ministry of information within a democracy - corporate ownership means a decline in the quality of journalism - power is found in information: media are economic and political power – how media itself can be checked, can the watchdog be trusted?

Government is probably the only institution capable of providing a counter to the massive economic power of the media – government functions as a regulator by legislating fair play in advertising.

News is a business, but journalism is something more.

In Doing Ethics in Journalism (1992) two of the “guiding principles” for the ethics of media economics:
(1) seek truth and report it as fully as possible; (2) act independently.

Treating the consumer as an end rather than a means is profitable: is audience- and community-oriented.

Conclusion

In the 1940s, the primary concerns was that people might not get the information they needed for citizenship, today the problem is of raw data – people might not filter out what they need through all the clutter. The power and role of “big media” emerges as the most important issue in media ethics. Adaptability is the key to survival - media conglomerates should adapt to serve the diverse communities.
CHAPTER VIII: THE ETHICS OF PHOTO AND VIDEO JOURNALISM

A number of ethical issues center on themes of fairness and accuracy. Minimum standard: No image used in the news is ethical unless it treats the subjects or topics fairly and attempts to present an accurate and unambiguous picture of reality.

**Problems:** Axiom “seeing is believing” – but: techniques influence perception and a picture is always an interpretation of reality, not reality itself.

Camera captures an isolated reality, a slice of life, free from context: camera does fix the appearance of event – possibility for manipulation and deception.

Whether to take the photo of a subject who is in no position to deny the photographer access to the photo – the right to a personal space free from the intrusion and the right to preserve one’s “information”.

**Checklist for photojournalist:**
1. Should this moment be made public?
2. Will being photographed send the subjects into further trauma?
3. Am I at the least obtrusive distance possible?
4. Am I acting with compassion and sensitivity?

A general rule for most photojournalists has been: "Shoot. You can always edit later.” But – sometimes it is the act of shooting the photograph that offends the subject. But: decisions cannot be made concerning photos that do not exist – the photographer who fails to capture some of the event, fails to capture some of the truth for the audience – these are powerful images of accident victims at the expense of an accident victim’s privacy.

**Set of questions to help the photographer to decide:**
1. Are the means truly morally evil or merely distasteful, unpopular, etc.?
2. Is the end a real good or something that merely appears to be good?
3. Is it probable that the means will achieve the end?
4. Is the same good possible using other means? Is the bad means being used as a shortcut to a good end when other methods would do?
5. Is the good end clearly greater than evil means used to attain it?
6. Will the means used to achieve the end withstand the test of publicity?

There are two opposite understandings of the purpose of news photography:
1. the “mirror” (attempts to recreate the world in whatever image suits the photographer, anything can be manipulated),
2. the “window” (be as objective a picture of reality, untouched by the bias of the lens) to arouse public opinion.

The problem comes in the substitution of one for the other – when the mirror is presented as window, then the viewer is deceived.

There is evident an epistemological shift away from photography as irrefutable evidence of a story to photography as changeable story illustration. Because: all editing is selective. The issue is who does the selecting.

Up today there is a dual standard between words and photos: the writer is allowed to reorder facts and rearrange details, but – should a photographer do the same, the result is called “staged” – we evaluate news photos according to print standards: linear and logical.

**Eyewash** – photo is used regardless of the context of the original photograph and sometimes without the consent of the subject.

**Conclusion**

Photojournalists should operate under Kant’s categorical imperative: Don’t deceive an audience that expects your pictures to be accurate representation of a particular quality of reality. The imperative allows exceptions, depending on audience expectations. But: While art may be manipulated, information may not

Permissible is an act when:
- the photographer’s intent is to merely make the photo more aesthetically pleasing and not to deceive; and
- the intended audience recognizes the difference; or
- the difference does not make audience members think or act in a manner in which they might not otherwise have thought or acted.
CHAPTER IX: ETHICS IN CYBERSPACE

Ownership on the Information Superhighway - today’s world revolves around the use and manipulation of information, but there is the absence of the minimal standards of the copyright law for the Internet.

Copyright Law has two concepts:
1. “you can’t copyright an idea”, i.e. copyrighted can be the particular execution of an idea;
2. the expression of an idea is novel and concrete enough to warrant protection, i.e. ideas are like private property and like private property are worthy of protection to enable the fundamental human right to liberty.

The essential feature of copyright law – “the right to determine what shall be done with an idea” to impede unjust enrichment. But: what and when may be copyrighted?

The philosophical questions are truth-telling and deception – how much digitization corresponds to reality or is it destruction of meaning.

The basic maxim: cite the source of your information to achieve 2 results: you have avoided theft, and you have fulfilled the duty of beneficence in sharing credit with the originator of your information.

The second maxim: information that has the capacity to deceive the rational audience must be regarded as suspect – the concept of deception: plagiarism and forgery are deceptive practices.

Sources – identification provides background to why a person or document is cited – granting anonymity is a mutual agreement between reporter and source. Audience tend to dissociate the source from the message, i.e. the fact from the context, but: readers and viewers are morally autonomous actors – they evaluate both content and a source’s motives.

There are three kinds of dealing with info:
1. “not for attribution” means journalists may quote what is said but agree to veil the source,
2. “on background” information given is an aid in placing facts in context,
3. “off-the-record” or “on deep background” – journalist do not reveal a source’s identity.

Reporters should identify themselves as reporters when they begin their Internet conversations - people need to know that they are dealing with a journalist working in a professional capacity when they respond to questions. But: the Internet makes it easier to learn what other news organizations are doing.

“Burn a source” is promise breaking.

Ethical justification for using anonymous sources:
- Preventing either physical or emotional harm to a source;
- Protecting the privacy of a source, particularly children and crime victims;
- Encouraging coverage of institutions, such as U.S. Supreme Court or the military, which might otherwise remain closed to journalistic and hence public scrutiny.

Who should Have Access to the Internet?

The contemporary conceptualization of the Internet – the government supports schools, hospitals and libraries to provide a better educated work force, and so government fulfills its constitutional responsibility to protect Americans from threats. This is founded in ethical theory of utilitarianism and has profoundly democratic implications; and follow also Rawls’s theory – allow the maximization of freedom while protecting weaker parties to better their individual and potentially collective lots in life. But: access to information does little good without making sense of it - journalism will change from gathering facts to a profession that places those facts within a context and makes them meaningful.

The Net makes journalists and government partners – a philosophic shift in the conceptualization of a “free” press demands that journalists have responsibility to political society, not only loyalty to media industries.

The Fragmentation of Political Culture

The reader may program own computer to develop a daily newspaper – the reader has more editorial control. But: The Internet, by putting responsibility on users, has potential to fragment culture deeply – citizens may lose the shared political vocabulary and experience that is the foundation for representative, democratic government. Journalists should develop a sense of how their work helps people make sense of their political, economic and social lives – journalists should connect themselves to readers and viewers or face the consequences of being considered irrelevant.
CHAPTER X: THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF ART AND ENTERTAINMENT

Plato did not like poets - platonic is to restrict the arts because of mistrust the power of the artist to link emotion and logic. Tolstoy say: “art communicates the feelings of the artist to the masses in the way in which the artist intended”, i.e. artistic social responsibility.

The moral impetus of art is putting us in touch. But: the dilemma is that great art is defined by how it is understood by an audience. Some scholars argue that the goal of popular art is to reinforce the status quo – it is “propaganda of assimilation” by story-telling. Especially the entertainment media gets its power by mores of the culture, i.e. is mass culture.

The media reinforce the status quo by presenting a distorted picture of reality – cultural stereotypes. But: some distortion is the outcome of compression – we hold to stereotypes by defining first and seeing second. Such a power of stereotypes is used in advertising.

When television is a “secret-revelation machine” then the result is a loss of faith in institutions with resulting loss of stability – in the Orwellian concept (1984) culture becomes a prison, in Huxlean concept (Brave New World) culture becomes a burlesque.

Every culture reveals itself through it underlying assumptions – the decisions it makes about what to value, how to solve problems, who is powerful, and what is taboo.

The unquestioning acceptance of reality is the antithesis of the idea of Tolstoy that art introduces the novel so that novel can become known and known become understood.

Truth in Art and Entertainment

Artists are not restricted to telling the literal truth – there is no truth requirement at all in art and therefore there is no place for censorship of art. But: These networks that opted for a policy of balance, believing that cooperation was superior to confrontation, pose as an outside group its will for the artist.

The struggle over censorship – by government supported programs should be accepted by all taxpayers.

Dilemma: political correctness and free speech – the debate over freedom and censorship.

Programs called “tabloid TV” or “infotainment” – the possibility of abuse of audience.

The mass-communication theory of uses and gratifications - audience will use the media to gratify certain wants and needs – people bring something to the message and what they bring affects what they take away.

The use of media – getting information necessary for citizenship and entertainment for gratification – entertainment may have the unintended “use” of informing.

This confounding of expected and unintended uses and gratifications is important - gratifying the human need to know, but bypass accuracy, fairness, balance, and other standards associated with news – then is gratified not the need to know, but the want to know in a way that some viewers might not recognize it.

Artists see the world differently – most people perceive only what is needful for a particular purpose, but an aesthetic attitude summons both emotion and logic to a particular end – harmony of form and function.

Qualities of excellence:

- An appreciation of the function realized in the product;
- An appreciation of the resulting quality or form;
- An appreciation of the technique or skill in the performance.

The Pro-social Effects of Media Entertainment

To get involved in the political process - television is the major “continuing education” available to many adults to help them learn to cope with contemporary crises.

Psychological healing powers of the media – entertainment can pull people away from the routine of everyday life. Are the media a force for dignifying humanity or debasing? It is in the hands of its owners and workers.
CHAPTER XI: BECOMING A MORAL ADULT

The choices you make are a reflection of the person you are at this moment. Journalists are concerned with concepts of free speech, the professional duty to tell the truth, and their obligations to the public and the public trust.

By the end of the chapter you should:
- Know the stages of moral development as described by Piaget and Kohlberg.
- Understand the ethics of care.
- Understand the stages of adult moral development.

Basic Assumptions about Moral Development – The Rights-based Tradition:
People can learn to develop morality just as they can learn to think critically – this assertion has the following premises:

Moral development occurs within the individual, cannot be produced by outside factors, not merely by engaging in moral acts: people develop morally when they are aware of their reasons for acting a certain way.

Moral development parallels intellectual development - there can be little moral development until a person has attained a certain intellectual capacity: one can be intelligent without being moral, the converse is not as likely.

Moral development occurs in a series of universal, unvarying and hierarchical stages – each level builds on the lower levels.

Moral development comes through conflict - Kohlberg: an individual moves from one stage to the next because the latter stages solve problems and inconsistencies unsolvable at the present developmental stage.

Piaget’s Stages of Moral Development
EARLY DEVELOPMENT (before age 2)
FIRST STAGE – egocentrism (years 3-7)
SECOND STAGE – heteronomy (years 7-8)
THIRD STAGE – autonomy (being about age 11)

The Six Moral Stages of Kohlberg
LEVEL 1: Pre-conventional
Stage 1: Heteronomous morality.
Stage 2: Individualism.
LEVEL II: Conventional
Stage 3: Interpersonal conformity.
Stage 4: Social systems.
LEVEL III: Post-conventional
Stage 5: Social contract and individual rights.
Stage 6: Universal ethical principles.

Critics of Kohlberg:
1. Any generalized theory of moral development should allow people who are not saints to attain the highest stages of moral development.
2. Men consistently scored higher than women on stages of moral development – is gender bias

Parallel Assumptions about Moral Development – The Ethics of Care: is founded on notions of community rather than in the rights-based tradition.
The ethics of care disagree with two of the fundamental assumptions underlying Piaget and Kohlberg:
1. Moral development occurs within the individual and parallels intellectual development, but does not always occur in a series of universal and hierarchical stages.
2. Moral growth emerges through understanding the concept of community, not merely through conflict.
The rights-based scholars believe that moral development emerges from a proper understanding of the concept “I”, proponents of the ethics of care say that moral development arises from understanding the concept “we”.
Carol Gilligan (1982) argue that women base their ethical choices on relationships, the first thing these women considered was how to maintain a connection; the moral adult is the person who sees a connection, and is willing to maintain the connection between the “I” and the “other” – the women spoke in a “different voice” about their ethical
decision making. Gilligan’s closest counterpart is Communitarianism with its emphasis on connection to community and its mandate for social justice. The language of rights protects separations and the language of responsibilities sustains connection.

Stages from Gilligan’s work would resemble:

**First** – an ethic of care where the moral responsibility is for care of others before self;

**Second** – an acknowledgment of the ethic of rights, including the rights of self to be considered in ethical decision making.

**Third** – a movement from concerns about goodness (women are taught to believe that care for others is “good” while men are taught that “taking care of oneself” is good) to concerns about truth. It is at this stage of moral development where commitment to a universal ethical principle begins, with truth at the core of that universal principle.

Ethical reasoning for journalists almost always assumes a rights-based approach – leads into errors in decisions about privacy, attitudes of arrogance toward sources and readers, and an unwillingness to be accountable to anyone. But: news organizations can work to sustain community – invite citizens to participate in the democratic process.

Journalism as a profession must see itself as the vehicle to help people become the citizens they can be and to help reconnect and sustain communities that have become fragmented, often by the very media that should have brought us together.

“Civic journalism” have a goal to bring people back together and foster a sense of community using the media as a primary tool in the process.

**Where Do You Go from Here?**

College students progress from a simple, dualistic (right vs. wrong) view of life to a more complex, mature and relativistic view – diversity and uncertainty exist in a world of relativism and make commitment to own choice out of multiplicity of choices available. Few individuals reach their full potential, although they are free for that.

An important part of moral development is the recognition that motive, not consequence, is the critical factor in deciding whether an act is ethical.

There are different reasons for actions – and it is in those differences that true moral development lies.
The concept of circles of intimacy

PUBLIC

YOU AND CASUAL ACQUAINTANCES

YOU AND CLOSE FRIENDS

YOU AND ONE OTHER

YOU

(Spouse, roommate, etc.)

(Family, friends, confidants)

(Co-workers, acquaintances, etc.)

PUBLIC