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**Media ethics in professional journalism:**

Ethics & Successful marketing

**Ethical marketing** refers to the application of marketing ethics into the marketing process and marketing ethics has the potential to benefit society, both in the short- and long-term.

Study of Ethical marketing should be included in applied ethics and involves examination of whether or not an honest and factual representation while Marketing ethics has influenced companies and their response is to market their products in a more socially responsible way. **Marketing ethics** is the area of applied ethics which deals with the moral principles behind the operation and regulation of marketing. Some areas of marketing ethics overlap with media ethics.

*The book industry and the ethical traps within the production of books*

For a simple product consisting of ink on paper, books have played a critical role in enabling the world to advance from the dark ages to the hyper-connected telecommunication world as we know it today. There is not a single book industry. There are many subsectors within the book industry; the major categories include: Trade books, educational books, scientifi c/professional books, children’s books, art/coffee table books and religious books. The majority of the output is black text, with limited four-color usage in educational books. Both trade books and educational book industries are undergoing tremendous changes. Like many industries undergoing change, the changes tend to be driven by new technologies enabling a shift in who controls the value of that industry. The Internet laid the tracks from which new technologies could be deployed, enabling shifts in control over sales/distribution, publishing and where content could be displayed. Combined, these new technologies caused a decline in printed book purchases that since the 2008/2009 recession has run between 4 to 5 percent annually.

But there is a silver lining, a lining that is benefiting the digital production printing industry. With orders for books becoming ever smaller and more frequent, and with more titles being introduced annually than ever before (due to self-publishing and backorder list titles), production inkjet printing technology is solving problems faced by book manufacturers related to the compression of order size, handling increases in order frequency and reducing manual labor through automation.

While printed books are irreversibly on a path of decline, it remains an extremely large market for print. Business model changes have shifted control over the value chain to authors and retailers, making demand unpredictable. Digital production inkjet print technology opens the window for book manufacturers to respond to compressed patterns of demand through labor and inventory cost savings. Offset and digital production printing will coexist for the foreseeable future, but few book manufacturers will be able to justify reinvestment in offset printing technology; most will not have a choice but to invest in digital production printing systems if they are to survive and grow share. A changing retail distribution landscape will further force adoption of more automated and flexible book printing/manufacturing. The risk of sitting still and maintaining the status quo for offset book manufacturers is greater than adopting a production inkjet strategy.

In the same time the procedure of finding authors and development of ideas for books is full with ethical traps for authors, agents and publishers. One of the biggest issue if the stealing if ideas. The publishing industry has a clear problem of welcoming back known liars, cheats and plagiarists. To be clear, these aren’t just any ethical violations, but ethical violations against the publishing industry itself.

Authors who commit these crimes not only harm themselves and their works, but the book publishing industry at large. After all, book publishing, like any art, is a field built on trust. The audience, authors, editors and publishers all have to be able to trust one another for the system to work, once that system breaks down, it has to either change or wilt away.

If book publishers want to hang onto their roles in society, much like newspapers and other bastions of “mainstream” journalism, it’s going to require that your brand and reputation be second to none. Giving lucrative publishing contracts to known liars and plagiarists because they can sell books doesn’t improve that relationship or that trust.

It may work and it may be successful, but it trades short term profits for a long-term erosion of trust and the ongoing problem of more people trying to cheat the system.

In the end though, the responsibility also must fall on consumers.

*The newspaper industry*

The impact of the Internet on the newspaper industry has been starkly highlighted by a graph released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics on June 6th, 2016a and its is an excellent example for the whole world.

It shows how employment in that industry in the US has declined by 60% over the past 25 years, from 458,000 in 1990 to 183,000 back in March 2016. [Today is even higher, where US newsroom unemployment had dropped by a quarter since 2008, with greatest decline at newspapers.](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/07/09/u-s-newsroom-employment-has-dropped-by-a-quarter-since-2008/)

This statistic reflects the decline both in the number of newspapers and the shift to reducing the number of journalists and other staff required to produce increasingly digital output from a newsroom. From 1990 to 2014, nearly 300 newspapers closed in the US.What the data also shows is that at least part of the job decline in the newspaper industry has been taken up by the rapid growth in Internet publishing and broadcasting. Also, news jobs fell 25 % from 2008 to 2018...mainly in newspapers.

The disruption of the paper-based media industries by the Internet hasn't just been a question of doing the same thing with fewer people on a different medium. What has also changed is society's need and desire for this specific type of content. The disruption of these industries isn't a question of simply not moving quickly enough to adapt to a new presentation format, it is that the content produced has far less appeal to the current audience who are increasingly spending less time on news sites and more time accessing content through social media and in particular, as video.

The disruption of the news industry has been not so much like the shift from typewriters to computers but more like disappearance of the whaling industry as the products of that industry were no longer of importance to society and alternatives were found.

To that extent, all discussions of paywalls and the desperate but illusive search for alternative business models for news organizations are in the end going to prove redundant. It is hard to convince people to pay for something that they have simply decided they don't want to buy. It is not that the public won't pay for content on the Internet. They are only too happy to pay for video content through services like Netflix and other video streaming sites and for the equivalent services that stream music. News and opinion, on the other hand is something that increasingly is valued only when it is free.

The Newspaper Publishing industry is a segment within the Media industry and is made up of companies whose primary scope is to produce and print newspapers. The industry has experienced declines in both advertising revenues and readership since 2007. This decline has forced many in the industry to re-evaluate their strategy going forward. New strategies include the incorporation of online and social media as well as mobile ready electronic editions to reach new subscribers as well as to keep current ones. Recent surveys show that this new strategy may be working as circulation revenues appear to be on the rise. This rise in circulation may be a sign that good things are yet to come for the industry and revitalization may be on the horizon.

In recent years, the industry has experienced declines in its primary revenue sources of print subscriptions and print advertising. This decline has forced many companies to review its focus and to follow its subscribers to the digital and social media platforms.

The last ten years have proven to be tough times for the Newspaper industry as it has experienced declines in both the advertising and circulation revenues. Because of these declines many newspapers in the industry have revisited their strategy in attempt to increase such revenues. These strategic changes began with the creation of websites and mobile editions to make breaking news announcements. As their readership evolved technologically so did the industry. Because more readers are turning to social media to find out what is going so the industry decided to do likewise.

Many newspapers now have Facebook pages and Twitter feeds which they use to post stories and, in some cases, get feedback or information for other stories from subscribers. Three years ago, in response to a decline in revenues brought on by readers opting toward viewing stories for free online in order to avoid paying for print subscriptions, the industry has made a move towards charging readers to access their websites. The most recent change was made about two years ago when, in response to more and more subscribers turning to their mobile devices for news, many newspapers launched mobile friendly electronic editions featuring electronic copies of their print product.

The Newspaper Publishing industry is a segment within the media industry and is comprised of companies whose primary revenues are derived from the publication and printing of newspapers. Once a thriving industry it is now declining. Whereas, many companies have reduced staff, cut back on office space, or even shut down entirely. Others have sold entire business units within the company or shut down costly presses and opted to sub-contract printing to counter-act heavy losses. In his March 2005 opinion column [ABC reporter Michael Malone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_S._Malone) wrote; “Newspapers are dead. They will never come back. By the end of this decade, the newspaper industry will suffer the same death rate — 90-plus percent — that every other industry experiences when run over by a technology revolution.”(Malone wrote that in 2009).

Malone’s prediction has not entirely became a truth, however, as although its revenues are still declining many publishers and some investors are trying to breathe new life into the industry. With declining subscription rates and high operating costs overall as compared to the sector the industry would not appear to be very attractive to potential shareholders. A high barrier to entry also reduces attractiveness to potential investors wishing to enter the market. Competitive strengths.

Newspapers are in direct competition with other media outlets such as television news broadcasts and the internet. Although there is some internal competition, newspapers have a competitive advantage over other outlets. One such advantage is that community newspapers are generally delivered in a small circulation area. Thus, they can offer advertisers a specific market in which to advertise whereas television broadcast areas are generally much broader areas. Because of the ability to reach a specific audience newspaper can generally charge more for its advertising space. Newspapers also offer inserts such as sales circulars and coupons which give readers the ability to review options for saving money at their convenience.

This ability generally adds revenue on both the advertising and circulation ends without dramatically increasing costs to the newspaper company. The key driving forces in the industry are barriers to entry, changes in circulation demographics, changes in technology, and costs. High entry costs tend to reduce the likely hood of competition from new entrants to the market. Existing companies benefit from the ability to attract subscribers and advertisers based on name recognition. Some companies have entered into joint ventures to reduce costs to the individual papers and increase “barriers to entry.” Currently, only approximately 25% of readers are between the ages of 18 and 34 years old. This number is down from a rate of 30.7% as little as five years ago which shows that the upcoming generations are less likely to read the newspaper than before.

By keeping up with changes in technology the industry can find ways to appeal to the younger generations and therefore increase readership. Finally, costs can be a driving force to the success of the industry. Through the development of consortiums some members of the industry have been able to harness their purchasing power and reduce some costs. However, the cost of paper, wood pulp, and ink are the most volatile. Although the industry has made several key strategic changes over the last five years the industry still appears to be in an overall declining state.

As this may be an indication of what is yet to come over the next five years; opinion exists that as advertisers begin to see a return in subscribers they will be more willing to spend their advertising dollars in the industry and revitalization will occur. However, to keep this upward trend the industry must continue to evaluate their strategy and incorporate new technologies as they come and keep their products in the hands of the younger generation.

In conclusion; due to high costs, advances in technology, and an aging readership market, the last 5 years have proven to be very strenuous years financially for the Newspaper Production industry. Recent changes in strategy have enabled the industry to recover a small portion of lost circulation revenues but advertising revenues still lag. Continued strategic evaluation and changes may prove to be beneficial to the industry and a potential revitalization may be on the horizon.

*Professional journalist’s ethics vs. Newspaper industry*

Parallel, with a change connected [with the issues of new media](https://www.amazon.com/dictatorship-democracy-democratic-new-media/dp/3659537071/ref%3Dsr_1_1?keywords=9783659537073&qid=1563972489&s=gateway&sr=8-1) within newspaper industry professional journalists are faced with several ethical questions.

The world wide web also means increasing competition for newspapers. Not just from TV and radio companies that have moved into producing news in the written word format - the [BBC News website](https://www.bbc.com/news)is essentially a newspaper that doesn't happen to have a printed edition - but from newer companies and services like MSN and Yahoo! (sic!), and from a multitude of independent voices. The emergence of [Social media](https://www.morebooks.de/store/gb/book/the-dictatorship-of-democracy-or-democratic-dictatorship-in-the-new-media/isbn/978-3-659-53707-3) has reduced the barrier and cost of publishing to virtually nothing.

***New digital ethics***

The growth of easy digital publishing technology brings with it new ethical dilemmas for journalists. Even as the press write scare stories that Facebook can give you cancer, sex diseases and is a danger to your children, newspapers use it as a valuable research tool.

Whenever a young person is in the news, Facebook or other similar social networks are usually a ready source of images. No longer does the news desk have to wait for a family to choose a cherished photo to hand over. A journalist can now lift photographs straight from social networking sites, and often, in the most tragic cases, newspapers republish tributes to lost friends that have been posted online.

This leads to a new potential for ethical problems. The Scottish Sunday Express, for example, splashed with a story that survivors of the 1996 Dunblane massacre had been 'shaming' the memory of their fallen classmates on Facebook. To most people it just seemed that they were acting like ordinary teenagers on social network sites, and that the 'outrage' was entirely manufactured by the paper. The Express was ultimately forced into an apology for the article, and in part this was because of an online petition of over 11,000 people protesting about the article.

There is still an inequality in publishing - albeit one that I think sometimes journalists don't appreciate. Journalists still have exclusive access to newspaper audiences, and the technology developed by the news industry. But they also have access to all of the other freely available tools as well. When I look at a publishing platform like Tumblr, it sometimes seems like the only way you can’t publish to the Internet is by folding up a message into a bottle and throwing it into the sea. Everything else - email, voice phone call, desktop app, iPhone app - is catered for.

The amount of equipment needed to cover events has also drastically decreased. A single decent smartphone can replace the separate camera, sound recording equipment and laptop needed to report from events even just a couple of years ago.

One crucial thing to remember is that the concept of 'journalism' is a separate thing from the concept of running a newspaper. Whilst the recession and structural changes in the industry have put the business model of making and selling newspapers under severe strain, journalism in a digital age will undoubtedly continue. We'll no doubt see a change in the mix of whether news is produced by the professional, or the random passer-by who happens to be at the right place at the right time once with a camera phone. From chronicle to broadside, from broadsheet to iPhone app, the format and delivery of news has always changed as a result of technological change and innovation, but the basic human behavior of wanting to uncover, tell, and share stories of common interest always remains.

Ethically, of course.

*The magazine industry*

The threat of the internet has forced magazines to get smarter.“PRINT is dead” was a common refrain a couple of years ago. The costly print advertisements that kept magazines and newspapers alive were migrating to the web, where they earned only pennies on the dollar. To publishers, it felt as if a hurricane was flattening their business.

But as the storm has cleared, a new publishing landscape has emerged. What was once a fairly uniform business—identify a group of people united by some shared identity or passion, write stories for them to read and sell advertising next to the stories—has split into several different kinds.

Hard news is perhaps the hardest to make profitable. It is increasingly instant, constant and commoditized (as with oil or rice, consumers do not care where it came from). With rare exceptions, making money in news means publishing either the cheap kind that attracts a very large audience, and making money from ads, or the expensive kind that is critical to a small audience, and making money from subscriptions. Both are cut-throat businesses; in rich countries, many papers are closing.

But among magazines there is a new sense of optimism. In North America, where the recession was deepest, more new magazines were launched than closed in 2011 for the second year in a row. The Association of Magazine Media (MPA) reports that magazine audiences are growing faster than those for TV or newspapers, especially among the young.

Unlike newspapers, most magazines didn't have large classified-ad sections to lose to the internet, and their material has a longer shelf-life. Publishers are still experimenting with formats: some are little different from their print versions, while others are more interactive, perhaps too much so. Hearst's Cosmopolitan launched the digital-only [Cosmo for Guys](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/content/cosmo-for-guys/), which purports to shed light on feminine psychology for baffled males; an early issue included 3-D models of sexual positions that you could rotate to view from every possible angle. Who says glossy mags aren't educational?

The ability of magazines to inspire fierce loyalty among readers means there are also lots of small-time, quirky successes. XXI, a French quarterly of long-form reportage, is profitable despite carrying no ads, not putting its text online and being sold only in bookshops; it seems to capitalize on French intellectual traditions and the concentration in Paris of voracious readers. Germany's [Landlus](https://www.landlust.de/)t, which extols the virtues of living at a relaxed pace and in close contact with nature, is another print-only (is it today, in 2019?) holdout, with a circulation of 1m after seven years. If there are coffee tables, people will want things to put on them.

The goals of the magazines are:

* To attract attractive auditorium
* To attract auditorium who will be faithful to the content and profile of the magazine – its trademark
* To ensure environment that will precipitate selling of the advertisers products
* To ensure auditorium and that environment on the basis of acceptable price
* To ensure identification of advertisers with trademark of the magazine and readers also outside of its pages

 You want people to trust that the information in your magazine is reliable and objective. You don't want them to think that advertisers are influencing the editorial content of your publication. To avoid the perception among the reading public that advertising dollars/euros are determining the stories you do and don't print, you need to follow a strict set of ethical advertising policies.

Your magazine needs a policy that forbids what is known as pay for play. Under a pay-for-play arrangement, editors run profiles of companies or include quotes from them in feature stories if these companies agree to pay for print ads. Not only does this lessen the quality of your magazine's editorial copy -- there's no guarantee that a paying advertiser is the best source for a story or column -- it also creates doubt in the minds of readers that the magazine is unbiased. Readers will suspect something is wrong if they read a quote from a hotel chain executive in a Page 5 story and then stumble across a full-page ad from that same company one page later.

Sometimes magazines can be perfectly ethical and still raise doubts in readers' minds about the veracity of their published content. For example, readers may look negatively at a full-page ad for a car manufacturer next to a feature story highlighting the hot new cars of the coming year. That advertiser may not have received mention in the story as a reward for placing an ad, but readers might think that it did. This can provide serious damage to your magazine's credibility.

Sometimes you may have to lose a valuable advertiser to maintain your magazine's editorial credibility. A staff writer may have written an investigative piece on a local business's illegal accounting practices. This company may threaten to remove its advertising from your magazine if you run the story. You then have to make a decision: What is more valuable, the lost advertising dollars or your magazine's reputation among your readers?

You do not have to accept every ad proposed for your magazine. You might refuse ads that are offensive to your readers, misleading or overtly sexual. It's important to have advertising standards in place that you can cite when your sales force brings potentially offensive ads to your desk. Again, you'll have to weigh whether the ad dollars/euros or your readers' sensibilities are more important.

*Division within responsibilities*

Professional journalist, have personal responsibility:

* Towards his/her public to who is concretely proselytize and to the whole public, in general
* Towards his/her sources of information and towards persons about his/her story is
* Towards professional rules and towards organization who takes care about respecting of it
* Towards his personal assuredness that derive from his/her conscience
* Towards the employer which, though, is responsible for the work of every journalist in front of the publisher or in front of the owner of the media and advertisers whose ads are published

From other side, professional journalist takes over responsibilities that are carried by his media:

* Towards public and public opinion
* Towards sources of information and towards persons that are the subject of information
* Towards different lobbies, who are more or less powerful, and which creates economic and social environment of the media
* Towards state and its agencies which defines general mission of the media and, with the help of certain number of laws, determine frames of their activities.

Mentioned responsibilities are mentioned in ethical codes, but very often are not collected in one place. Within some analyses that are resides on descriptive ethics (implicit studying and description of the people’s morality, culture and society and ensures foundation material for the normative ethics) is considered that the respect of professional norms does not represent something that have strong determination mean for the journalistic practices. It is dominant to take caer about those responsibilities which journalist take over towards his public, towards employer and towards his media as well.

*Contradictions within the theory of social responsibility – ethical issues*

Ethical and socially responsible conduct is treated with increasing importance and prominence by the corporate world, governments, the public, and other stakeholders globally. The reputation and success of organizations (and individuals associated with them) are increasingly and intricately linked with the level of ethical conduct, social responsibility and accountability to a varied range of stakeholders. Society and governments also expect the business world and non-profit organizations to behave ethically and be socially responsible.

Issues of ethics and social responsibility arise in professional journalism, bit in all professions as well, in government, and in the context of personal decision-making. The failure to recognize and deal effectively with these issues can have, and all too frequently has had, serious implications for individuals, companies, governments, stakeholders, and society. One major challenge is recognizing ethical issues when they arise. Another is recognizing why they arise. A third challenge is figuring out how to deal with them. A fourth challenge is to establish systems and processes that can help to prevent and discourage unethical behavior, as we have spoken within all lessons of this module.

I hope that those reflections of mine, since beginning of 2018 and until October 2019 in Eurasia Review were of help as starting point for determination of real issues of Media literacy and Media Ethics in professional journalism. More at the just published book “Media literacy and Media Ethics, the only way out.”

Also, that cannot be enough if we are not ready to become ethical within its core. If we do not do that, we will just be another grain of sand instead the sea of change. For the benefit of the society in large. And our own, of course.

Question to think about: Is the principle of ethics have been sacrificed within the function of success in political marketing?

Next: Media ethics in professional journalism: Economic interest vs. moral obligations