

# Ethical Journalism as an Inspiration for Free Expression

Tom Law

Director of Communications and Campaigns tom.law@ethicaljournalismnetwork.org

### @EJNetwork

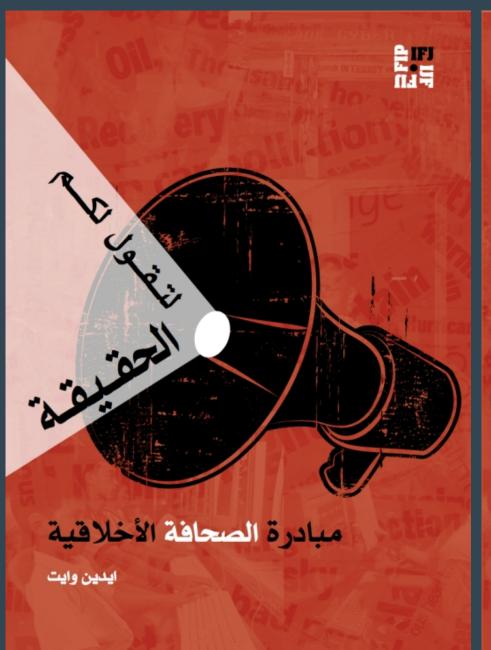
or

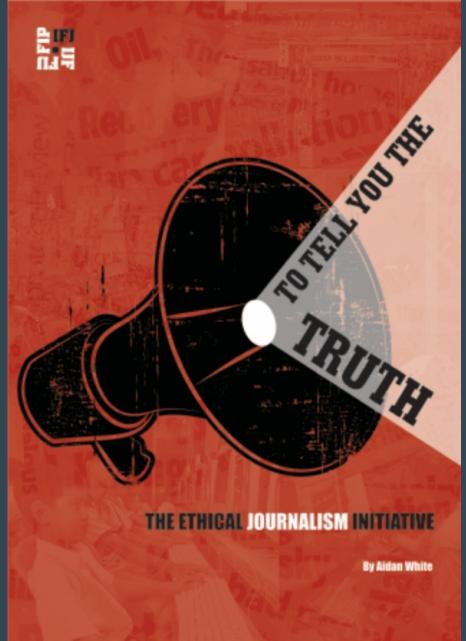
### @TomLawMedia

#### Who we are & what we do

The Ethical Journalism Network strengthens the craft of journalism and promotes higher ethical standards in media through education, training & publication of useful research.

www.ethicaljournalismnetwork.org







### Guide to Self Regulation for Egyptian Media

#### Censorship in the park

Turkish Media Trapped by Politics and Corruption

#### **Innocent Mistakes**

A controversial film finds journalism caught between image and reality



#### Journalism Ethics

An inspiration for free expression and media literacy



#### Ethical Choices when Journalists Go to War



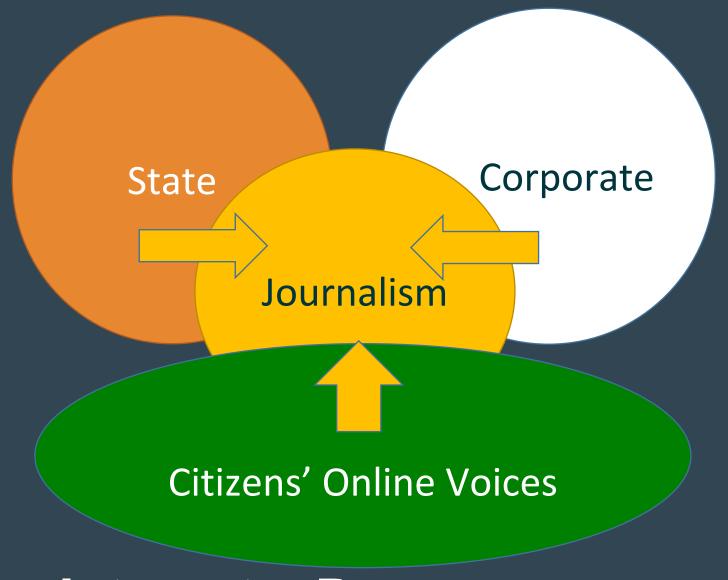
#### **Ethics in the News**

EJN Report on Challenges for Journalism in the Post-truth Era

### A World of Open Information

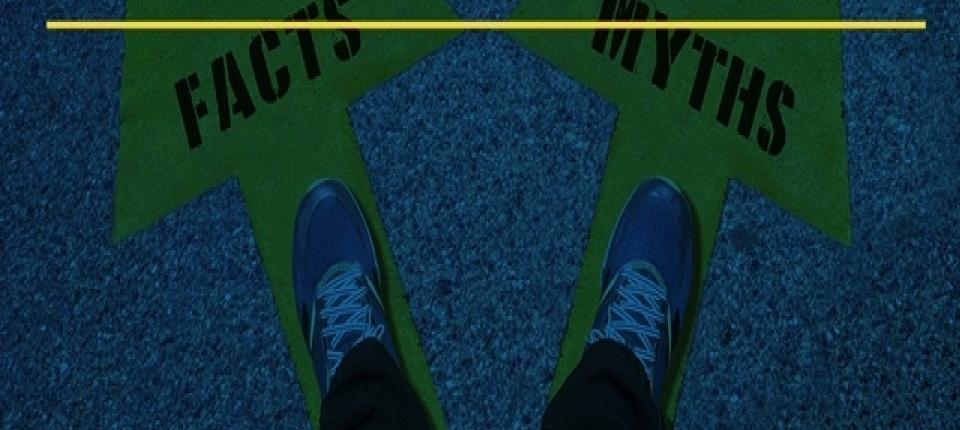
The Four Pillars of the Open Internet

- Corporate
- State/Government
- Journalism and Media
- Citizens' Voice



Internet = Pressures on journalism from all sides

The world's changing culture of communications, driven by the imperial power of internet companies and social networks, not only encourages users to create personal echo-chambers at the expense of information pluralism, it has also shredded the market models that used to nourish ethical journalism.



#### Media Under Pressure

- Market Turmoil: Media cuts newsroom capacity, Reducing editorial resources
- Populist Journalism: More stereotypes, sensationalism, lack of media diversity
- Undue <u>political pressure</u> with new ownership and business models
- Rush to publish



#### Trump Claims 'Millions' Voted Illegally, Citing No Evidence

- · The president-elect made the unsubstantiated claim during a series of Twitter posts in which he railed against a push for a recount in three states.
- · Mr. Trump, meanwhile, is trying to fill cabinet positions, including secretary of state.

11m ago

READ LATER | SHARE

#### Trump's Ties in Business Could Pose Conflict on Foreign Policy

In many of the president-elect's international development ventures, his business partners have close ties to foreign governments.

Nov 26

READ LATER | SHARE

### What happens when we rush to publish

- led by political narratives
- miss the bigger story
- mistakes are made

### The Open Information Crisis

- Governments and Corporations in Control
- Hitting the Limits of Free expression
- A Flawed Culture of Communications
- Mixing Personal and Public Expression
- Challenge of Extremism and Propaganda

### What Makes Journalism Different?

- Journalism is not free speech, it is constrained expression.
- It works in a framework of values and ethics.
- It has purpose.
- It is other regarding.

## The Core Values of Ethical Journalism

**ACCURACY** and fact-based communication

**INDEPENDENCE:** no propaganda

**IMPARTIALITY:** tell all sides of the story

**HUMANITY:** do no harm

**ACCOUNTABILITY** and transparency

### Ethical Challenges in the Age of Open Information

- The internet and its social networks are self-regarding, not other-regarding.
- Bias, prejudice and a lack of fairness are acceptable.
- Growth of political propaganda, corporate spin, public relations and extremist information strategies

### Fake News: Old Problem Given New Life in the Digital Age

#### The EJN Definition:

"Fake news is information deliberately fabricated and published with the intention to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting verifiable facts."

Deceptive, unverified, and error-filled reporting has always been with us, but the scourge has grown in the wake of technology that has helped shape a new world of clickbait, viral communications and confirmation bias.

### Tackling fake news







abcnews.com.co/donald-trump-p ...



Donald Trump Protester Speaks Out: "I Was Paid \$3,500 To ...

Fountain Hills, AZ - For weeks, rumors have circulated the web that individuals were being paid to protest at rallies held by Presidential hopeful, Donald Trump. Today a man from Trump's...

abcnews.com.co

RETWEETS

LIKES

153

168

















5:30 PM - 25 Mar 2016







000

### Tackling fake news

"I did not write to make Trump win. I just wanted to get viewers and make some money."

 NYT interview with False News "factory" worker

### Media's role in media literacy



### Propaganda or Free Speech

<u>Propaganda</u> feeds on ignorance and through misinformation reinforces stereotypes, bias and hatred of the other.

But people are **entitled to free speech**, even if they hold offensive, hurtful opinions.

So what are the limits? How do we draw red lines to define the limits of tolerance?



'Cries for help' / Facebook will let users livestream self-harm, documents show



Analysis / Has Facebook become a forum for misogyny and racism?

Ignore or delete / Could you be a Facebook moderator?

Leaked policies guiding moderators on what content to allow are likely to fuel debate about social media giant's ethics



Ignore or delete: could you be a Facebook moderator?

### **Challenging Hate Speech**

When it comes to hate speech against migrants and other groups, journalists and editors must pause and take the time to judge the **potential impact** of offensive, inflammatory content.

The following test, developed by the EJN and based on international standards, highlights questions in the **gathering**, **preparation** and **dissemination** of news and helps place what is said and who is saying it in an **ethical context**.

## STATUS OF THE SPEAKER

How might their **position** influence their **motives**?

Should they even be **listened to** or just **ignored**?





## 2 REACH OF THE SPEECH

**How far** is the speech traveling? Is there a **pattern** of behaviour?



## 3

### GOALS OF THE SPEECH

How does it benefit the speaker and their interests?

Is it deliberately intended to cause harm to others?





**ITSELF** 

Is the speech dangerous?

Could it incite violence towards others?

5

**SURROUNDING** 

### CLIMATE

SOCIAL / ECONOMIC / POLITICAL

Who might be negatively affected?

Is there a history of conflict or discrimination?

### Available in over a dozen languages



AMBILLAH SEBUAH WAKTU UNTUK MERENUNG

Réseau éthique en

PRENEZ UN MOMENT DE DÉEL EVIO

#### Self-regulation v Self-censorship

- We have to beware that our enthusiasm for restraint and good conduct doesn't have a chilling effect on free speech.
- We can't forget that people have the right to be biased, even offensive in their speech but journalism is different and we have to be aware of the distinction when developing public policy and developing media literacy activities.

### Seeking offence as tool of censorship

 The taking of offense and accusations of hate speech, fake news blasphemy, and political correctness are often being used by political, religious and other groups to put undue pressure on freedom of expression and journalism.

## Principles of Journalism for Critical Thinking in Society

Truth and accuracy: Fact-based communications

Humanity: Avoid malice and do no harm

**Accountability:** Transparency and self-correction

### Where do we go from here?

- We have to beware that our enthusiasm for restraint and good conduct doesn't open the door to chilling effects on free speech
- We can't forget that people have the right to be biased, even offensive in their speech but journalism is different and we have to be aware of the distinction when we are making codes that are working at two levels:
  - 1. for the public at large and
  - 2. for people like journalists who work in a framework of values and self-restraint



# Ethical Journalism as an Inspiration for Free Expression

Tom Law Director of Communications and Campaigns

tom.law@ethicaljournalismnetwork.org