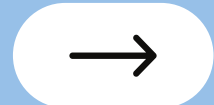


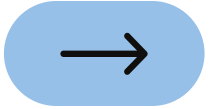
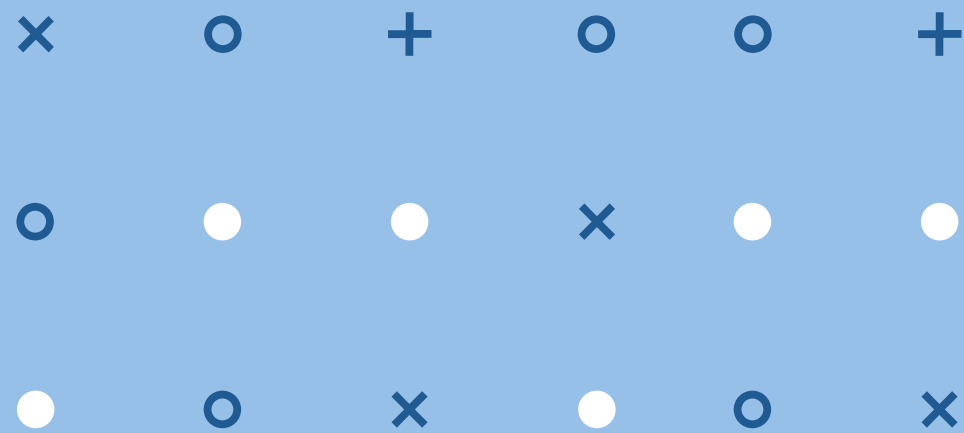


HANDBOOK

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August 23, 2020



OVERVIEW



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II Laws and Regulations

III Ethical Guidelines

IV Case Study

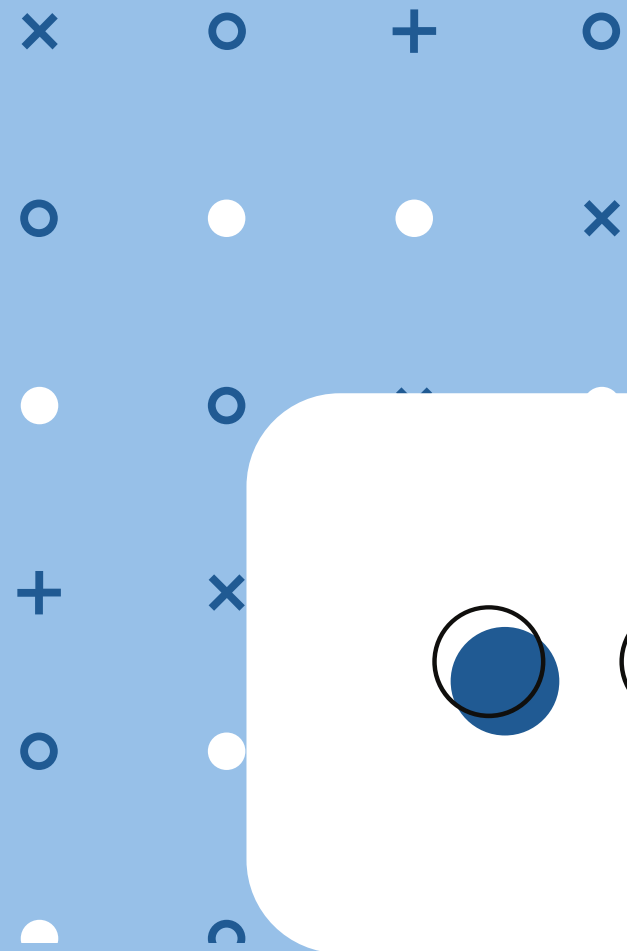
V Conclusion

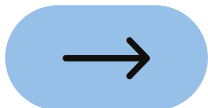
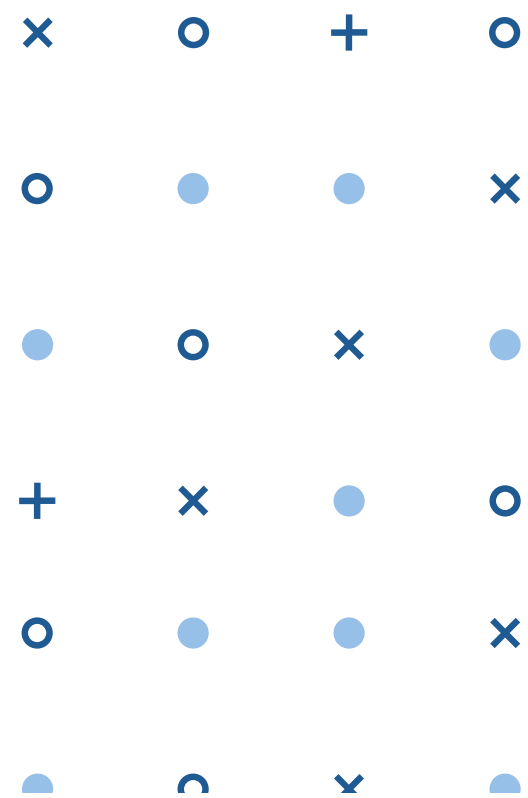
INTRODUCTION



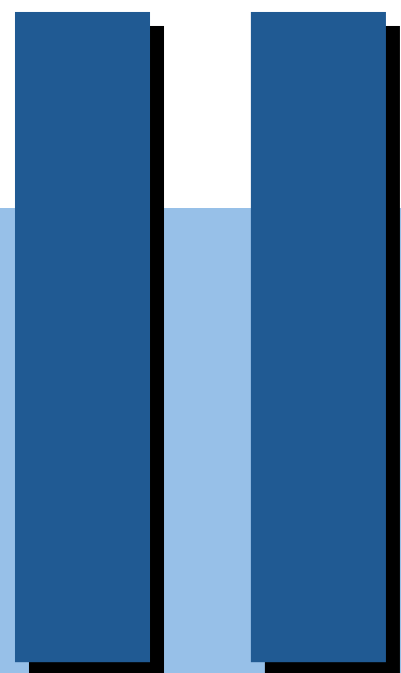
The truth. That is what journalists are seeking, that is the goal of news organizations and communications in the media: sharing the truth. The First Amendment protects the freedom of speech and of the press, so long that it is truth. The constitution does not protect false words that are made that harms others in contempt, known as libel or defamation. As watchdogs for the public, journalists have a duty to protect the citizens by giving them that glance behind closed doors, to keep them informed of what is happening the world. They are sharing the truth, balancing with a sense of beneficence.

In the world today, everything is fast-paced. With social media use increasing, everyday people are getting the opportunity to be individual journalists by sharing news on their phones in an instant. This does create a challenge in the communications and media industry today, through navigating those topics, deciding what is rumors and what is the truth. Journalists must take extra caution in the world of developing technology, to use these advances in a way to benefit their work and not to get caught in the spiral of rumors and “fake news.” Journalists face a challenge to ethically adhere to their obligation of withholding to the truth. This handbook is to serve as a guide to inform you on Laws and Regulations, Ethical Guidelines, and how these are confronted in the real-world environment.





Three milestone court cases further defined the rights and protections of journalists and later digital media communicators as technology evolved. These cases set the framework for how digital communicators send messages today. **Near v. Minnesota** establishes prior restraint in the publishing world. **Branzburg v. Hayes** defines a journalist as an “average citizen” and explains how they are protected in court under the First Amendment. **Chandler v. Florida** allows a new form of media into the courtroom, recordings, incorporating another level of truthfulness into the spectrum of journalism, and paving a way for digital media communication.



LAWS AND REGULATIONS

NEAR V. MINNESOTA

The Saturday Press was a newspaper in Minneapolis published by Jay Near and his co-publisher, Howard Guilford. Near and Guilford accused local officials of being gangsters, ignoring bootlegging and taking part in illegal gambling (Moore, 2018). After publishing about the implications of local officials in their newspaper, Minnesota officials served an injunction against **The Saturday Press** halting all publications on the grounds that the information published was malicious and defamatory, a violation of the Public Nuisance Law ("Near v. Minnesota"). The Public Nuisance Law prohibited regular publication in newspapers and periodicals that were considered "malicious, scandalous and defamatory," and publications that violated this law were found guilty of nuisance ("Near v. Minnesota").

The question permitted in this place is does this Minnesota "gag law," or prior restraint, violate the First Amendment protection of free speech and free press?

The court ruled that withstanding the injunction was unconstitutional. Under the First Amendment, the government cannot censor or prohibit a publication in advance ("Near v. Minnesota"). Even if the work could violate regulations after publication, prior restraint of prohibiting publication beforehand is unconstitutional and violates the freedom of press guaranteed in the First Amendment.

Near v. Minnesota is a landmark digital communication case, for it was the first prior restraint case decision of the U.S. Supreme Court and is still highly referenced to this day, despite the case occurring in 1931 (Moore, 2018). Near v. Minnesota laid the groundwork for the precedent of prior restraint. The government cannot censor a publication before it has been published, for that limits our freedom of speech and press guaranteed in our First Amendment Constitutional rights. Prior restraint has evolved as digital communication has evolved, however the principle still remains and our rights are still guaranteed.



BRANZBURG V. HAYES

Branzburg was a reporter at a local newspaper in Kentucky. Branzberg published an article observing the use of marijuana in Frankfort. He followed two men and wrote an eyewitness account from the manufacturing to distribution of the drug. Branzburg promise confidentially of the individuals and used the article to describe the drug scene in the state capital (Moore, 2018). Officials caught wind of this article, and subpoenaed Branzburg, hoping to get information on the identities of the individuals he shadowed in hopes to break up the drug trade in the area. Branzburg refused to reveal names, claiming a reporter's privilege statute, that his rights were protected under the First Amendment (Moore, 2018).

The question of this case is whether or not a reporter is protected under the First Amendment to appear in court and testify on confidential sources.

The court decided that no, there is no protection of reporters under the First Amendment to not disclose confidential information to the court. There is no violation of the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and press by requiring reports to testify in court on confidential information ("Branzburg v. Hayes"). Reporters receive information from sources in confidence, but that does not grant them the protection to withhold that information in a court during a government investigation. An "average citizen" is often forced to disclose information received in confidence when subpoenaed by the court, and a reporter does not have any special protection over an average citizen ("Branzburg v. Hayes").

This case was a landmark case in digital media communications because it defined reporters as average citizens, not granting them any special protections in regards to disclosing information under the First Amendment. In the digital communications world, this case created a standard for those gathering content and information, knowing that the information communication specialists gather, in confidence, is still held under the court. This changes the way journalists and broadcasters function. This case defines digital communication specialists under the definition of "average citizen," knowing that there are no special protections of the First Amendment regarding classified information in court.

CHANDLER V. FLORIDA

In the case of Chandler v. Florida (1981), two men were charged with conspiracy to commit burglary, grand larceny, and possession of burglary tools. They were convicted after breaking into a restaurant on Miami Beach in Florida, both men were police officers at that time ("Chandler v. Florida"). Being two police officers who committed the crime, this trial gained much media attention. A recent Florida Supreme Court decision allowed the use of electronic media to record judicial proceedings, with restrictions ("Chandler v. Florida"). Local television stations shared parts of the trial, including the testimony of the prosecution's chief witness and closing arguments (Moore, 2018). Altogether, less than three minutes of the entire trial was broadcasted (Moore, 2018).

The question of this case is does allowing media coverage, such as recordings and videos to be shared through radio, television and photographic broadcast coverage of a criminal trial violate the right to a fair trial protected by the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments?

The court found no evidence that there was any constitutional violation in this case with the use of broadcast media coverage. With technology evolving, the courtroom will allow the use as long as it does not "infringe on 'fundamental guarantees' of the accused" that are protected by their constitutional rights ("Chandler v. Florida"). The state of Florida took a step further and implemented a policy that gave more protection to the right of fair trial for the defendant by allowing them to share the argument on broadcast if they feel that electronic coverage might bias the jury ("Chandler v. Florida"). This was implanted to protect witnesses from the "glare of publicity" as well ("Chandler v. Florida").

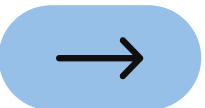
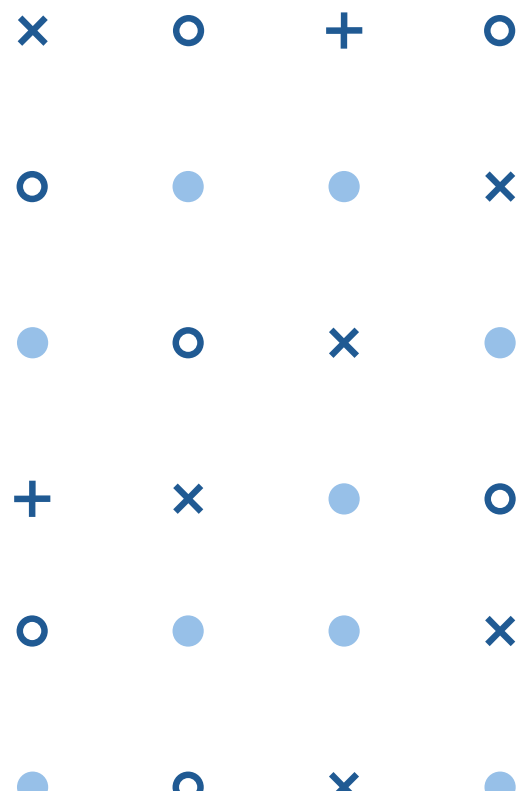
Chandler v. Florida is a landmark case for digital communication for allowing the use of recording and broadcasting criminal trials in the media. This case laid a foundation for camera coverage of court proceeding in all 50 states (Moore, 2018). While all have their own set of rules for coverages, this case was the beginning of the conversation of allowing evolving technologies into the courtroom.

Each of these cases impacted and paved the way for digital media communications. Content and messaging styles for digital communicators are best when honest, truthful, and straight to the point. This covers boundaries and protection from prior restraint, the First Amendment, and access to media coverage. Through keeping digital messaging and content truthful, sticking to the core of journalism, there will be no injunctions of prior restraint that violate their First Amendment rights. As defined as an "average citizen," a digital communications specialist is protected under the constitutional rights of the freedom of speech and press, but they are not protected under a court of law of withholding information. Media coverage, from video, voice recordings or photos, are allowed in court and paint a more realistic, truthful image of what occurs behind those closed doors.

The best legal practices for a communications professional is to have an emphasis on the **truth**. This includes **validating sources** and **staying honest in wording**. A majority of digital communication cases arise from not telling the truth. This can be seen in forms of defamation and libel that lead to prior restraint. In cases where the defendant does not share the entire truth, they keep information enclosed to themselves which leads to distrust and sometimes a subpoena, as seen in *Branzburg v. Hayes*. Be clear and transparent in communication and embrace evolving technology. Through recordings, whether it be voice, video or still photography, digital communicators can share a more complete picture of information, literally. *Chandler v. Florida* laid that foundation of evolving media in the courtroom and keeping to that transparency to the public.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS





A Code of Ethics is a guideline set by an organization for their subordinates to follow that governs professionals in conduct that supports the views of the organization. Different organizations emphasize specific views, however, some over-arching themes in codes of ethics for a media and communication organization are honor, integrity and truthfulness. These themes are seen in both of the Codes of Ethics from the Public Relations Society of America and The Walt Disney Company. The PRSA is a highly recognized and renown organization built on a code of ethics that transcends the industry. I was a member of the PRSSA during my undergraduate career, allowing me to be familiar with the organization and their values. The Walt Disney Company is the leading entertainment company in the world. But they are not just movies and theme parks, Disney is now the parent company to networks such as ABC, FOX, and ESPN. Disney has become a huge media communications conglomerate. I currently work for Disney, at the Walt Disney Resort in Orlando, Florida. I am familiar with company ethics and guidelines, as I have reviewed them before being employed.



ETHICAL GUIDLINES



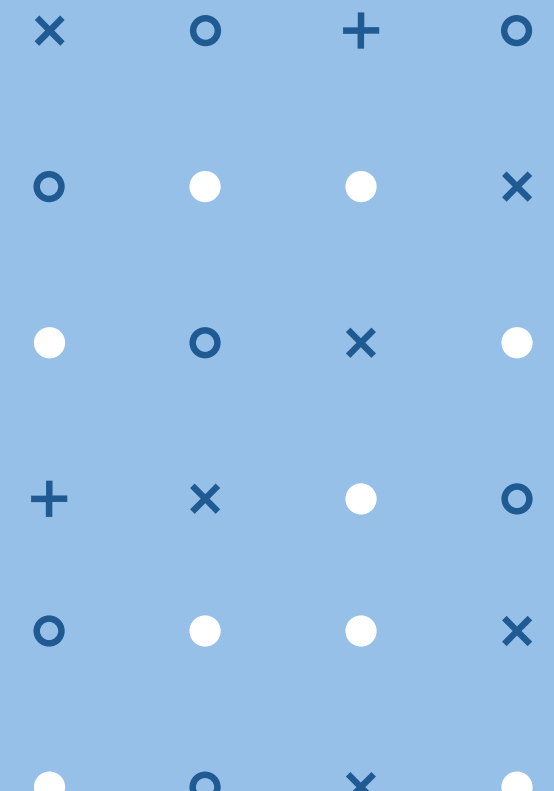
The Public Relations Society of America has a code of ethics for professionals to uphold in the public relations industry, including the core values of advocacy, honesty, loyalty, professional development and objectivity (The Public Relations Society of America). The PRSA has page on their site dedicated o ethics, filled with links and tools to help a young professional in the industry understand and develop those core values for themselves. The site includes a webinar, case studies for different issues such as professional conduct and digital issues, as well as a quiz to test one's knowledge. The PRSA is making ethics an open conversation for understanding in their organization.

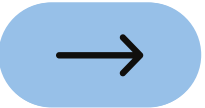
The Board of Ethics and Professional Standards, or BEPS, created a handbook located on the PRSA's site. In this handbook, the BEPS dives into the history of the PRSA and how ethics have come to play. Through context, one can further gain an understanding of why an organization upholds certain values. Part of the history that the BEPS handbook dives into is research efforts in the organization to determine whether or not there exists a need for an overarching code of ethics for the industry and a summary of their findings. The answer, yes. Having a power in place to determine the standards for professionals to uphold deemed important and necessary for the PRSA (The Public Relations Society of America). In 2000, a new code of ethics was created. As the profession evolves with time, standards must also evolve, making new amendments necessary as standards change. The amendments, Ethical Standard Advisories, are easily available to read in this document and on the PRSA's site.

The conclusion of the BEPS handbook includes a section built for understanding. There are a series of lists and questions for one to ask themselves before acting, whether the action is unethical or not. There are statements that are red flags to be on the lookout for, ethical quotes for inspiration, as well as professional and business development—indicators of whether or not a company has an ethical culture and recommendations for building employer branding. Not only is the BEPS handbook a helpful tool for understanding PRSA ethics, but it also is an application tool as well.

Listed in the PRSA Code of Ethics are terms of professional values and provisions of conduct. The Professional Values are core values for those in the communications and public relation industry to uphold, values such as advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness (The Public Relations Society of America). Journalism is the "watch dog" for the public, with their "first obligation is to the truth," the PRSA would uphold values of honesty, fairness and loyalty in their code of ethics (Kovach, 2020). Not only are there values to uphold, but ethical standards to follow in accordance to PRSA ethical guidelines. These provisions of conduct guide professionals in the industry in tough, morally challenging scenarios. From free flow of information, competition, and conflicts of interest (The Public Relations Society of America). The PRSA sets a standard and tips for professionals so they continue to work to gain the trust of the public and respect in their respective careers. The public relies on organizations they can trust for information, and through upholding the core values listed in the code of ethics, members of the PRSA can be sure they are platforms that people can trust.

PRSA





Disney has a set an ethical code and business conduct for their employees to follow. Last updated in 2017, the Standards of Business Conduct begins with a letter from CEO, Bob Iger. In this letter, Iger addresses six main ethical standards for The Walt Disney Company: Integrity, trust, teamwork, honesty, play by the rules, and respect (The Walt Disney Company, 2017).

The integrity key asks the employees to keep to a code of honesty on the job, and to comply with legal regulations. Stated in the Standards of Business Conduct, this guide is for employees to show “commitment and provide you with the information you need to do the right thing on the job and preserve the reputation we have earned as an ethical company” (The Walt Disney Company, 2017).

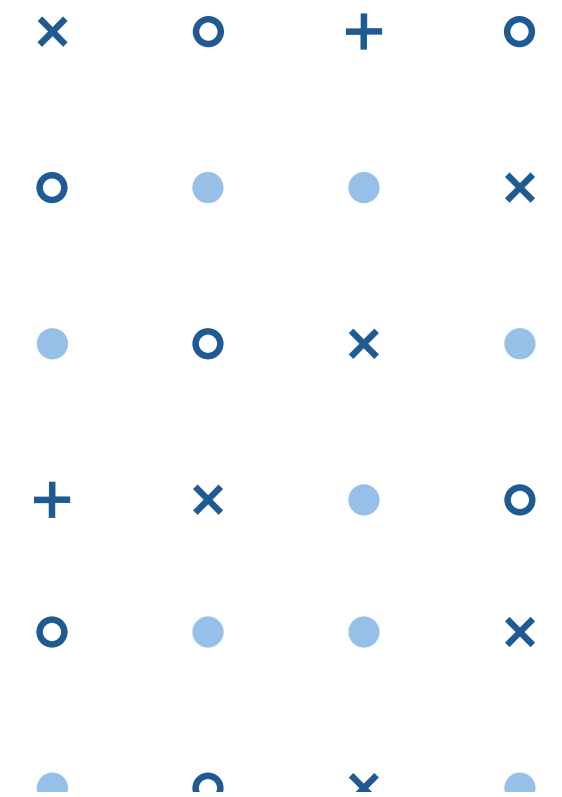
Disney highlights trust as another important core ethical value. In that trust, they focus on being a safe company that produces quality. Safety highlighted comes in many forms, from safety in the theme parks, with their cast, or in communications while protecting the privacy of others. Disney takes breaches of data seriously, and any exposing of someone's private information, such as names, addresses, phone numbers, can not only lead to a terminable offense, but would harm the reputation of the person responsible and the company (The Walt Disney Company). Disney is marketed as a safe, family-friendly company that produces quality entertainment. Any breach of someone's personal information would change that reputation.

Disney has another focus on teamwork. Through the value of teamwork, Disney values fairness, dignity, and respect of all their employees as well as guest and audience. They make an intense statement regarding harassment and discrimination, which creates an open environment for people of all ages, race, sex and color (The Walt Disney Company). Disney thrives in a diverse workforce and focuses on professional development of their cast members.

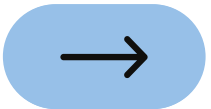
Similar to the value of truthfulness, Disney values honesty. Through the value of honesty, cast members are guided through situations of conflicts of interest. Again, Disney has a trust that has been built, and through confidence to make the ethical decisions, employees can avoid those situations where a conflict of interest could arise between the company's interest and their personal interest. The value of honesty also comes into play when employees are speaking on behalf of the company (The Walt Disney Company). Social media, for example, is a common place for employees to use their voice. Everything said or posted by a cast member is a reflection of the company, despite being on a personal account. Social media, and other personal media standards, are still upheld to the responsibilities of being professional, truthful and accurate. Through playing by the rules, Disney encourages their employees to take part in the competition of the industry. There are laws that limit competition, such as anti-trust, as well as anti-corruption and anti-bribery standards that Disney has set in place.

The final ethical code is respect. Disney is an international corporation with cast members around the globe, so Disney values being respectful of other countries and their cultures. Disney has many “going-green” initiatives that highlights their value of the environment, and they encourage their cast members to do their part in protecting our environment (The Walt Disney Company). Disney also upholds labor standards, ensuring that going to work, employees feel safe and valued. At the end of the guide lists glossary of terms used in the handbook, as well as a resources page to further one's understanding of the material and guidelines of ethical business behavior.

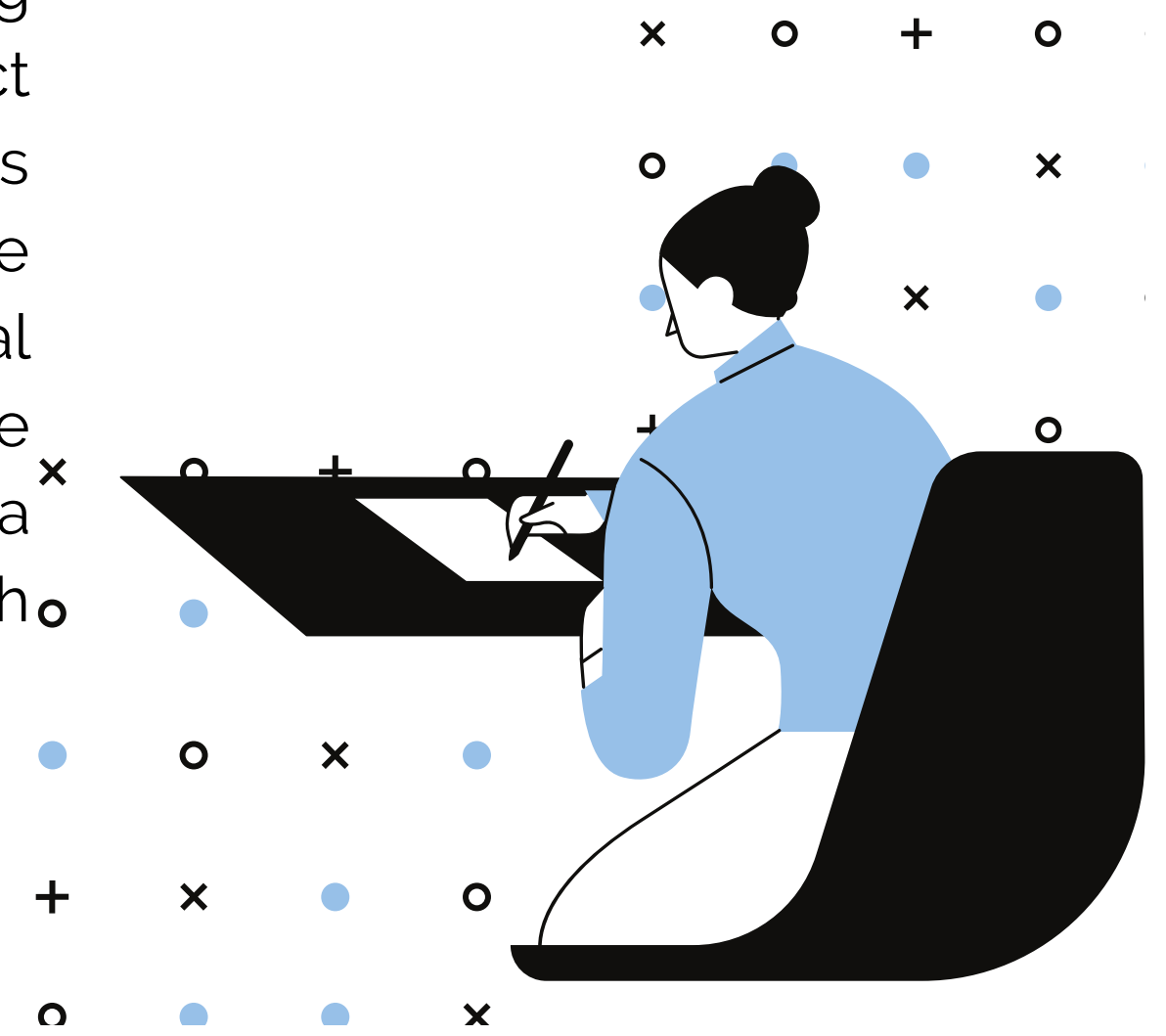
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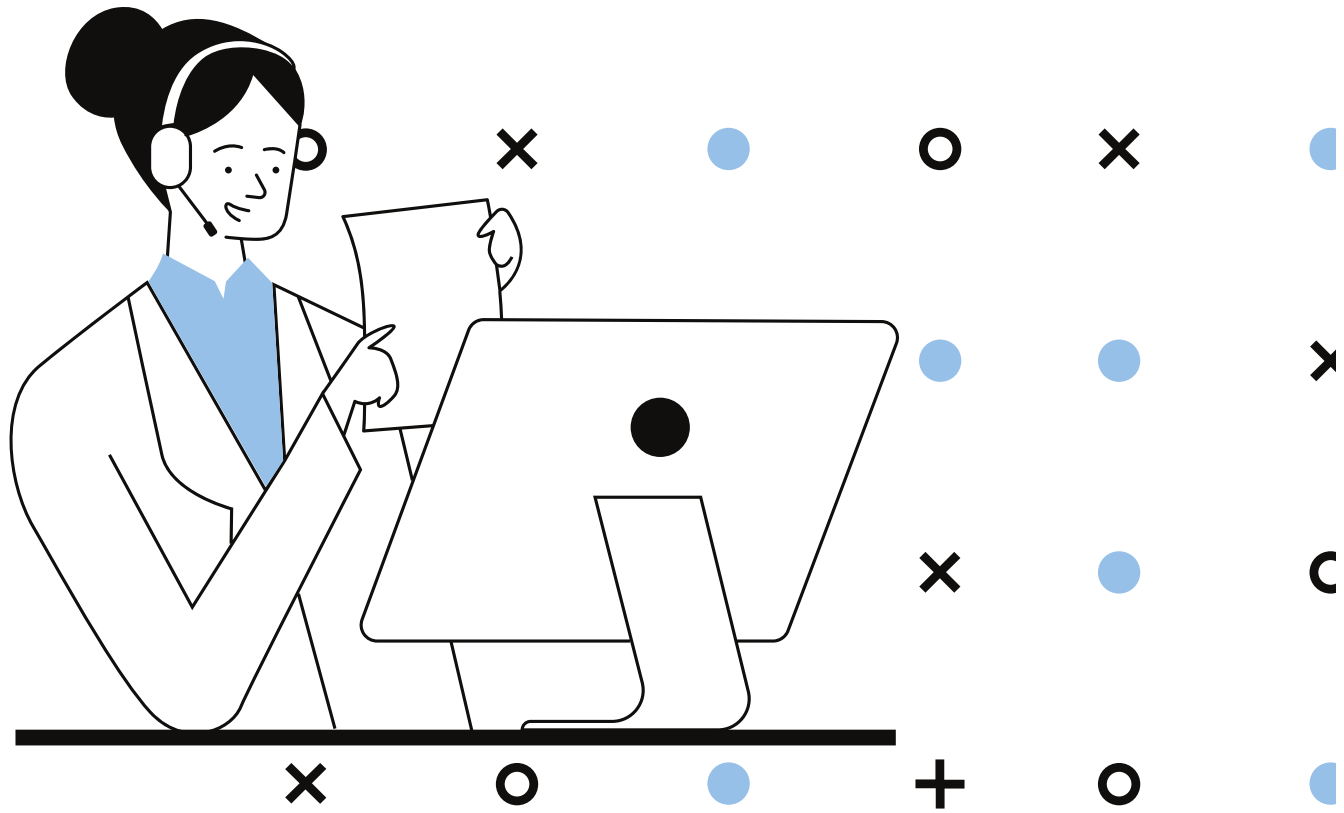


PRSA & DISNEY



There are an overwhelming number of common themes between the ethical codes and guidelines for the PRSA and Disney: professional values of **truthfulness, honesty** and **fairness**. Those themes go back to building trust in one's audience and creating credibility. As a public relations specialist in the field, it is their duty to the public to be open, fair and honest. Disney is a well-known and renowned company, who through years of building credibility, has gained the trust of the public. Similar provisions of conduct exist between the two organizations as well. Competition in both industries is encouraged, however with a level of respect and through being law-abiding professionals. Conflicts of interests are another area that both codes of conduct emphasize. Conflicts of interests quickly diminish trust, so by avoiding those situations one can continue to build the trust as a professional, or uphold the trust of the company. Both the PRSA and Disney encourage the advancement of professional development. They want to see professionals grow in the field and adapt to what the world throws at them. Through experience and following the guidelines set forward, a professional can grow with respect and credibility in their professional career and with their company.





Integrity, honesty and **fairness** are three common themes in ethical codes. These three core values are seen through the PRSA as well as in Disney, even Associate Press pushes the importance of honesty and truthfulness as a journalist (Kovach, 2020). Expanding from core values, some ethical guidelines and business conduct include **competition, privacy protection, and professional development.**

COMPETITION ●

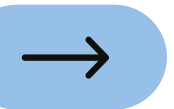
Competition is alive through the industry, and it is important to set some ethical guidelines to encourage competition but to also limit conflicts of interest that could be associated, as seen as practices by both the PRSA and Disney.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ●

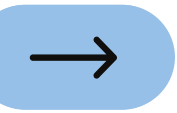
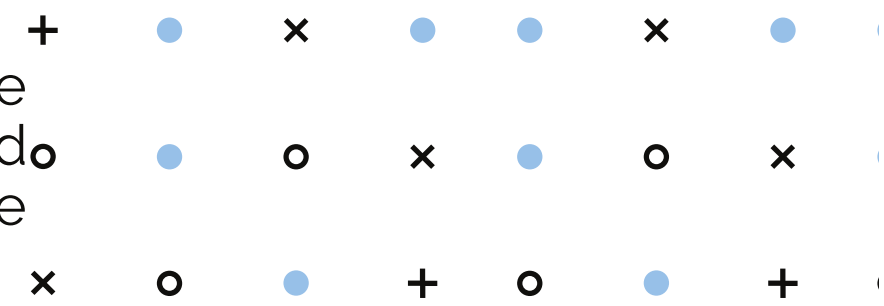
Through ensuring the protection of privacy, trust is granted. Whether it is disclosing private information to the public or sharing this information with another, both can break the trust and integrity of a professional and an organization.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ●

Professional development is another core business conduct value. It is important for an organization to give confidence, assurance, and the skills needed to grow and develop into a professional. .



Through setting these guidelines and giving resources to understand, one can enhance themselves in the media and communications field with their company, to continue to build that respect and credibility that only comes from upholding to a code of ethics. Some of the best practices for ethical communication in media today are:



BE HONEST AND TRUTHFUL

A journalist's first obligation is to the truth (Kovach, 2020). This is the number one duty of journalists as the watchdogs. Defenders for the public, through being honest and truthful gain the trust of the public and are ethically available to fulfill their duties.

CITE SOURCES

Cite, cite, cite! Any information or idea that contributes to your work, cite it. Effectively use the information to further expand on your point. Do not steal. Do not plagiarize and take some else's work as your own. Always give credit where credit is due.

VALIDATE SOURCES

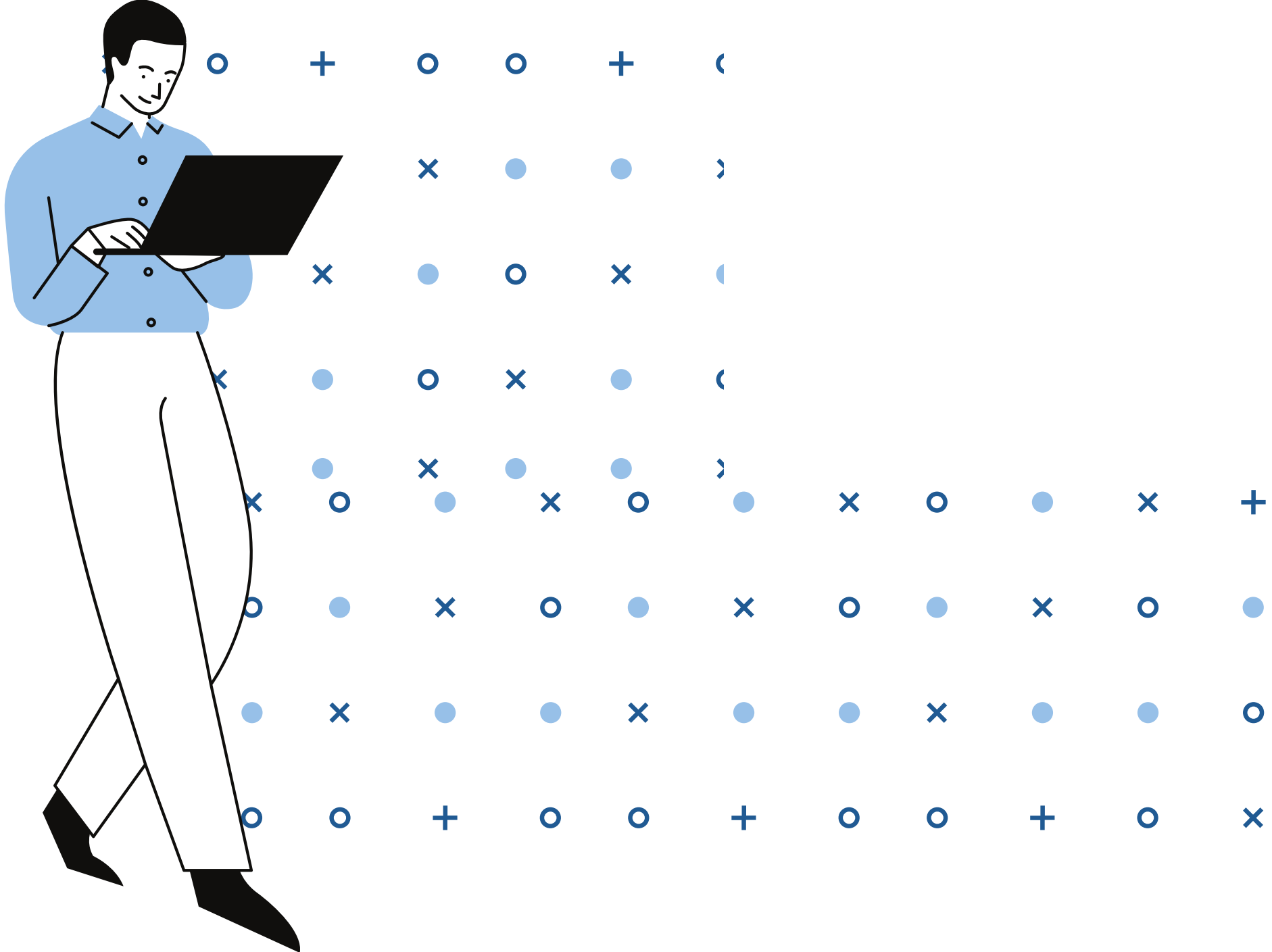
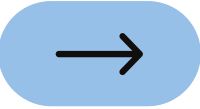
Double and triple check the information you receive is accurate. This emphasis ties back to the journalist's first obligation being the truth (Kovach, 2020). If wrong information is to be spread, then not only will there be a potential for libel, defamation, copyright infringement and other legal issues, but trust will be lost with the public.

THINK BEFORE YOU WRITE AND PUBLISH

Emotions get high. Words get miscommunicated and misconstrued. Understand the impact of the words you use and the power they have. Through understanding the laws that govern and protect the freedom of the press, to understanding the weight of our words and the messages they carry, a communications specialist can protect themselves and others in an ethical way.

APOLOGIZE FOR WRONGDOINGS

Nobody is perfect and everyone makes mistakes. This includes journalists and communication specialists in the media. Even after checking and validating sources, proof reading and citing, some incorrect information will be shared or another scenario that will damage the trust built and make one question the ethical scenario. In these cases, apologize. Take responsibility for the mistake, acknowledge where you went wrong and fix it. A simple apology and retraction statement will do wonders in establishing and building ethics and credibility.



N

CASE STUDY

After the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017, many news organizations took the tragedy to the headlines. Coverage from all over were careful with their words, utilizing similar messaging describing the events that took place, the identification of the shooters, and the lives impacted. The Onion, however, chose a different tactic.

The Onion has shared the same story on five separate occasions, only changing the date, location, and number of people killed (Patterson, 2019). The headline reads, "No Way to Prevent This,' Says Only National Where This Regularly Happens" (Patterson, 2019). Other mass shootings when The Onion shared the same headline include Umpqua Community College, Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a Christmas party for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, and Parkland High School (Patterson, 2019).

What is the effect of the resharing the content multiple times? The managing editor of The Onion claims that "by-re-running the same commentary, it strengthens the original commentary tenfold each time. In the wake of these terrible things, we have this comment that really holds up" (Patterson, 2019). By this stance, The Onion is taking their satire and humor and toning it into a political statement.

There are other ethical implications with The Onion as a source of news as well. A journalist's first obligation is to the truth (Kovach, 2020). The Onion, being a site of satire and fictional news, by definition is not sharing the truth. Does this violate the first ethical code of journalism?

Truth and beneficence are two balancing factors in journalism ethics (Aznar, 2020). Journalists not only must say honest and share the truth but be moral and kind to those they are writing about. Essentially, their goal is to cause the least amount of harm, while sharing the truth to the world. With The Onion, and in this particular case, the question of beneficence arises. Is humor an effective way to share that story, or did The Onion cross the line? Sharing the same story, although strengthens the commentary, can be seen as an insensitive reaction to the lives that were lost and impacted.

The Onion is a popular site for individuals and has present-day implications. With the spread of "fake news," it is important for a reader to understand the message being delivered from the source. In The Onion's case, the message is not straightforward. Some potential ethical problems with this strains from people not understanding the satire and taking The Onion's words for real. The relationship between satire and libel is a fine, blurred line.

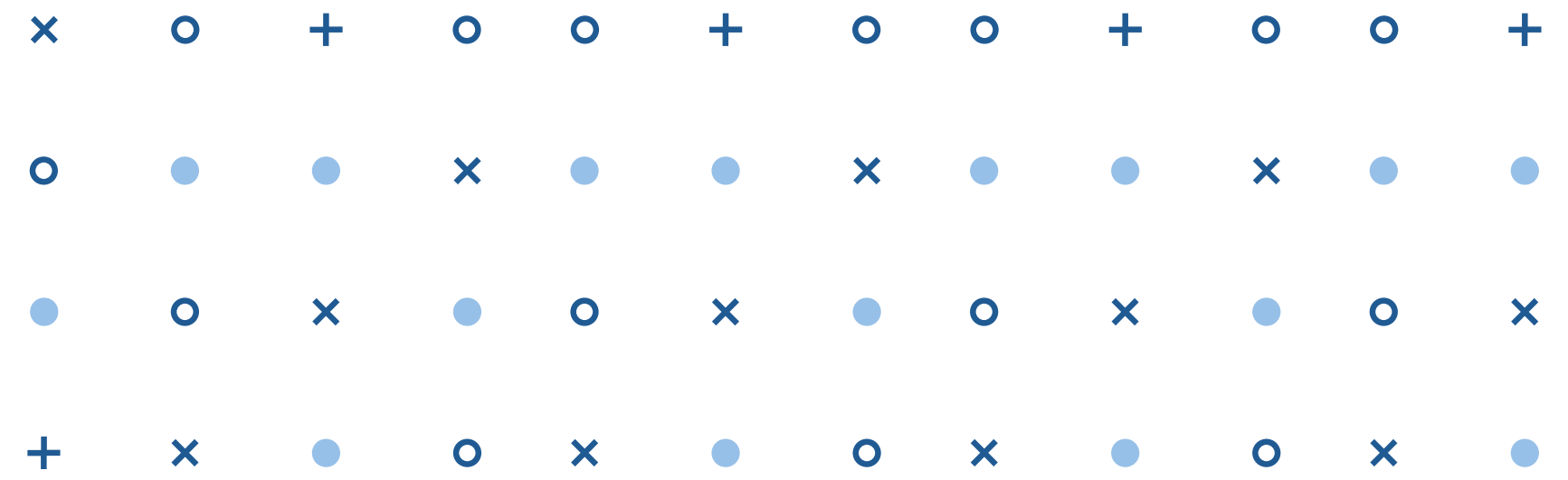
THE ONION



New Times Inc v Isaacks is a monumental case for defining satire versus libel in contemporary news media. A thirteen-year-old back in 1999 was instructed to write a scary story for a Halloween-themed assignment for school. The story they wrote ended up showcasing violence, specifically regarding the teacher shooting fellow classmates. The author of this short story was to receive detention and sought to be removed from school. This story later received national and international news attention, being widely-reported around the world ("New Nimes Inc v. Isaacks").

A reporter from the Dallas Observer took the Beamon incident, and published a satirical piece on the matter a few weeks later. "Stop the Madness" was the fictitious article that describe the semi-brutal arrest of a child after she wrote a book about "cannibalism, fanaticism, and disorderly conduct" ("New Times Inc v. Isaccks"). The article further describe how she was arrested during story time at her elementary school, taken in handcuffs and detained. False quotes from the governor and judges were included, such as this quote from the Ponder ISD Superintendent, Dr. Bruce Welch: "Frankly, these kids scare the crap out of me" ("New Times Inc v. Isaacks").

After the publication of the article, Isaacks and Whitten demanded an apology, a retraction of the article and even threatened to sue New Times. In the Observer's next edition, the Buzz column included a piece that explained how the "Stop the Madness" article was a piece of satire ("New Times Inc v. Isaacks"). In court, New Times moved for a summary judgment, stating that in a court of law one, "an average or reasonable reader would understand the article at issue as a satire or parody rather than actual statements of fact about the plaintiffs" and two, there was no actual malice ("New Times Inc v. Isaacks"). The summary judgment was denied.



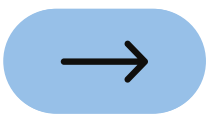
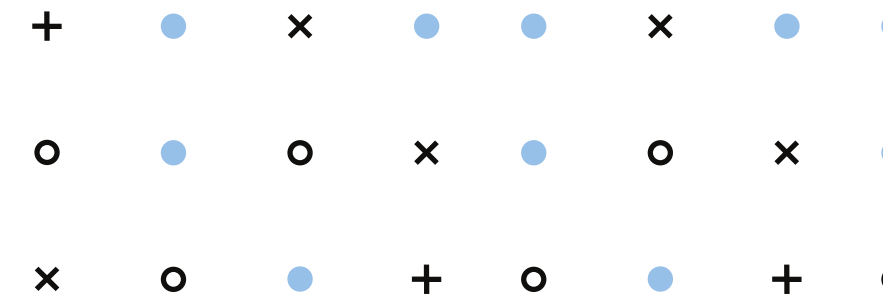
The court found that there was no evidence to prove that the article, "Stop the Madness" provided any indication to the reader that it was a work of satire. A reasonable person could conclude that those statements made were of fact. The court also concluded that there is evidence that the Dallas Observer knew, or at least suspected, that the article was false and defamatory, yet published the piece anyway ("New Times v. Issack").

New Times Inc v. Isaack is a landmark case for satire and libel in the news media for it help lay the foundation for where the line is drawn in the blur between satire and libel. This case further defined a reasonable person. Also, the article included false quotes from names of real people, which is further evidence of defamation rather than satire. Sure, the quotes were over-the-top and extreme (a trait of satire), however, a reasonable reader may not understand that its satire when it is being directly attributed to a person ("Avoiding Libel in Satire"). Especially if that person is an elected official, like the governor or a superintendent.

NEW TIMES INC V. ISAACKS



Satire is protected under the First Amendment Rights of Freedom of Speech and Press. To keep a distinction and to effectively use satire in communications without the threat of libel or defamation, there are some tips to follow:



USE A TONE THAT INDICATES A STORY IS NOT STRAIGHT NEWS

Use messages and language that are more extravagant and wild, without straining from the truth ("Avoiding Libel in Satire").

KNOW THE PUBLICATION, CONTEXT AND LOCATION WITHIN THE PUBLICATION THE STORY WILL BE SHARED.

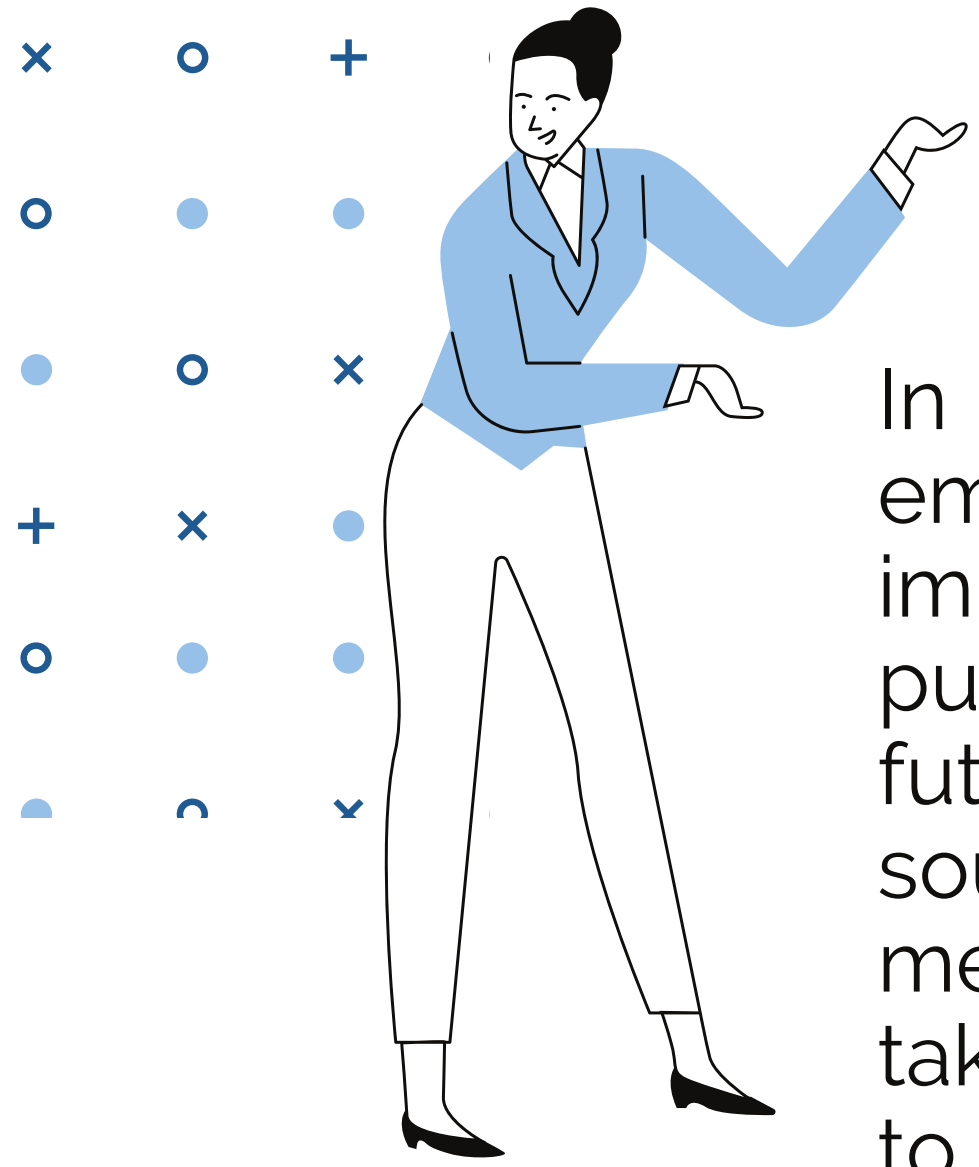
For example, a satire piece will not be front page of a serious news outlet, such as the New York Times, but it could go in the Opinions Page. ("Avoiding Libel in Satire").

DO NOT USE NAMES OF REAL PEOPLE, CREATE FAKE NAMES THAT ALLUDE TO A REAL PERSON

When attributing a made-up quote to a real person, that is an act of libel. Through using a fake name, the piece becomes protected and satirical. ("Avoiding Libel in Satire").

HAVE A DISCLAIMER

At the end of a piece, have a slight disclaimer that this work is a piece of fiction, a satire. Having the disclaimer will save a publication in court for a reasonable reader will see and acknowledge the disclaimer as such. ("Avoiding Libel in Satire").



In the communications and media world, there is a heightened emphasis on the truth. Honesty and integrity are two major ethical implications that journalists need to uphold as watchdogs for the public. As technology continues to develop and advance into the future, so must journalists. Extra care must be taken to validate sources and not succumb to the fast-paced, rumor-filled news media that some have found themselves trapped within. Through taking that extra effort to focus on the truth, the public will continue to build trust and form that relationship upheld through ethical and credible decisions.

V

CONCLUSION

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