

## Chapter 9 Media Ethics Notes

### Intro

- Original journalists in the US were citizens who stepped up as pamphleteers or publishers that had the desire to shape an emerging nation, ex: Ben Franklin & Thomas Paine
- Next century, journalism was born as a profession
- End of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalists no longer apply to the trained writer
- Anyone can be a journalist or blogger via social media (ex: 2011 Arab Spring)
- The Web is good for getting people together for a common goal

It helps separate people into groups

- The Web is not effective as an organization tool in activities (ex: politics, which requires face-to-face meetings)

The informer role: role of information provider and collector

Information Verification Role: makes the facts reliable

Values truth, context, and equality

### The Virtue of Originality

Digitization: enables media designers to confound the external referent as never before (ex: Audrey Hepburn Gap ad)

### Importance

- Cite source of information
- Journalists are required to note the originators of their facts
- Avoid exclusive Internet research (not always reliable)
- Demand confirmation of an independent source

Judeo-Christian tradition: avoid information theft

- Using your own stuff improves performance

Second maxim: info has the power to deceive the audience to its own origin

Is digital info intended to mislead?

### Mass Media as an Instrument of Fragmentation

- Nicholas Negroponte invented Daily Me, a computer that creates a news story

-This applies to the web now

Democracy demands 2 imperatives:

People must be exposed to materials that they have not chosen or agreed with

Citizens should have a range of common experiences

Absence of shared experiences will cause more social problems

Sources

-Granting anonymity requires a mutual agreement between reporter and source

-Sleeper Effect: audience disassociates the source from the message

Retain the fact what is said versus the context in which they hear (Nazi rallies)

Important Phrases

“Not for attribution:” journalists may quote what is said but agree to veil the source

“On background:” journalists consider the information given as an aid in placing facts in context

“Burn a source:” to reveal the identity of a source who has been allowed to remain hidden

Burning a source means terminating the relationship

Sources are only allowed to remain anonymous if they provide newsworthy information that would place their careers or lives in jeopardy

“Source verification:” learning who to trust and in what context so that the info can be verified & credible before being passed on

Online comments: considered inaccurate

The Role of Professionalism:

Rawl's Theory: allow the maximization of freedom while protecting weaker parties who might not have access to many of American society's advantages

How will journalism change?

From a profession of gathering facts to one that places those facts in a context, making them meaningful

The Meaning of Professionalism

-Citizen Journalism has been embraced by the traditional news media

-Stories and facts not otherwise gathered are revealed

-Citizen journalism = the fifth estate

What separates professionals from amateurs is the values & ability to think within a professional domain