



**ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾՍՆԵՐԻ լրատվության միջոցների էթիկայի
ԳԻՏՈՐԳ ՄԱՐՄԻՆ**

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Point 3.5 of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists adopted at the May 16, 2015 general meeting of the representatives of media and journalistic associations that joined the self-regulation initiative states: “Set rules of conduct in social networks for the editorial staff and follow the compliance with thereof.”

There was a proposal at the meeting that Media Ethics Observatory develops a guidance document, based on which each media will elaborate rules of conduct on social networks for its editorial staff.

The Guidelines are provided below.

This is a purely consultative document. The media are free to develop their own rules based on the provisions of the Guidelines by using these principles fully or only one or some of them.

MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY GUIDELINES

on the Rules of Conduct of Editorial Staff on Social Networks

When using social networks for disseminating information or for personal purposes you should always remember that you are, anyway, a representative of a certain media, hence your conduct can affect the reputation of the media. Therefore, it is necessary to be guided by certain principles.

1. Reliability

In case of a more direct and intimate communication with the audience on social networks one should not forget that he/she should maintain the reputation of the media. Every link shared on a social network or any comment written is public information regardless of what visibility restrictions have been set.

A media representative is not recommended to share a statement or write posts on social networks that may be considered as manifestations of discrimination on political, racial, sexual, religious and other grounds. This concerns also the photos and videos published.

If any post written on social networks can put into doubt one’s professional objectivity and honesty, then it is better to refrain from publishing it.

2. To Avoid Conflicts of Interests Also on Social Networks

Journalists and editors are not recommended to publish political or political party signs or stamps on their social network pages. They should follow that the texts by other individuals or organizations published on their page do not run contrary to these principles.

One should be particularly careful when joining a group or becoming someone's follower on a social network. If a journalist covers a certain field, it is not desirable that he/she becomes member of an initiative or a group, which promotes special interests in that field. The membership to such groups can only pursue an aim of being informed about the developments. One should always remember that taking part in social network campaigns can also trigger conflict of interests.

To avoid conflict of interests, it is recommended to refrain from expressing an opinion that runs contrary to the editorial policy of the media on social networks, if such policy is stated in any document signed by that employee.

It is also unacceptable that an editorial staff member expresses an opinion on social network that contradicts his/her standpoints stated in the media.

3. Internal Issues

To avoid discussing on social networks such internal issues as the principles of finding and preparing pieces, the ins and outs of the decisions to publish or not to publish the piece. This concerns also the information on business activities of the media and internal opinions about it.

4. Transparency

Regardless of whether social networks serve to publishing something or personal purposes:

- Use full name and position on social networks;
- Make reference to the primary sources of the pieces attaching hyperlinks;
- Clearly distinguish news and information from opinion in a re-shared text.

5. To Check the Information of Social Networks Before Disseminating It

- Check the facts. The information that appears on social networks needs to be checked as it is commonly accepted in journalism.
- Prior to re-sharing the facts and citations, try to check the authenticity of persons and organizations.
- Correct the errors. If you have mistakenly re-shared incorrect information, in the very following post the error should be corrected, and if possible, a correct link should be attached.

Adopted at the July 23, 2015 Media Ethics Observatory session