

Paradoxical: Ethical Journalism



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Is ethical journalism dying? The answer may not surprise you, but the reason might.

Journalism is considered to be the first draft of history, marking down events that take place and recording them in archives. Because of journalism, we know what's happening in Syria during the Civil War, what happens within the White House with President Donald J. Trump, the sex scandal with Anthony Weiner, and more. Journalism is the tool that allowed these things to become known. That and social media, of course.

What makes journalism ethical and why has it been put into extraordinary questioning in recent times?

Not any one single media company must follow these guidelines, but there are a set of ethical guidelines one must follow within the Society of Professional Journalists. It, in itself, is lengthy but comprehensible.

The job of a journalist should be a simple one: tell the facts as they are. Opinions, one's own voice or biases should never be involved. That's why opinions and columns, such as this one, exist. They exist so that journalists can

have an outlet for their own opinions.

Not to intentionally throw the metaphorical punch at an organization, but the Willamette Week (WW) is a prime, local example of unethical journalism. While admittedly having researched and released some great stories, they do not hold a candle to the ethics of what makes journalism, journalism.

One example is the public endorsement of a political candidate, Hillary Clinton, during the 2016 presidential election.

While I do not care if Aaron Mesh, (news editor for the WW,) was to endorse her, an entire organization showing a clear stance and bias, makes them untrustworthy. Can you truly trust them to report facts that shame Clinton and praise Trump? The answer is a solid "no."

Another issue they pose is, after Richard Spencer was socked in the face by a cowardly Anti-fascist (Antifa) member, Willamette Week seemed to believe it was completely acceptable to physically assault someone on the basis that they might cause harm.

The Willamette Week? They put on their Twitter name "Willamette Week" with a fist and a frog, representing neo-Nazis and the alt-right. This was an open endorsement of physical violence against people like Spencer, who, at the

time, was simply giving an interview.

Finally, to showcase their inability to post quality news, afterward James Damore was to speak at Portland State University, hosted by the Freethinkers of PSU, they misrepresented Damore, the man fired from Google after publishing a seemingly extremely controversial memo.

The WW recently published an article charging Damore with a very factually incorrect headline and sub-headline; "Tech Bro Fired from Google for Saying Women Are Biologically Unfit to Be Engineers Will Speak at PSU: Next Month James Damore will answer questions about his opinions on diversity and, presumably, why he thinks women can't do math."

I've read the memo, multiple times. It's not long at all. At most, I recall it being eight pages. While there are things people may disagree with or even not like, his memo didn't say women are unable to do math or biologically unfit to be engineers, but what he did argue was that there are some biological differences, such as women on average looking for more work-life balance than men.

This fallacious headline writing and unneeded charging is partly why people fail to believe journalists. Such tactics are simply examples of yellow journalism,

which have required little to no research and are filled with sensationalism.

This type of journalism is seen even in the New York Times, Huffington Post, Breitbart or the Root. These outlets don't represent true journalism. This type of journalism, yellow journalism, is prominent and has poisoned the well that is honest, ethical and truthful journalism.

Is it any wonder that journalism is dying as a field? From the Internet arguably being the last stake to the heart, in terms of monetary income, honest to goodness journalism from the likes of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein during the Watergate scandal, or what we see in movies such as The Post or Searchlight have become more scarce.

Journalism is dying, and it's dying by suicide from pseudoistic journalists who mask themselves as reporters and tell biases, preventing a field of fact-tellers from being a reliable source for information.

We must stick to outlets such as the Associated Press, Reuters and those few others who still hold journalistic integrity high. Subscribe to journalists who do the work. Follow them on Twitter or Facebook. We should demand better than to take our news from the likes of Willamette Week or BuzzFeed.

screencapture by the Willamette Week

graphic by William Farris

Tech Bro Fired from Google for Saying Women Are Biologically Unfit to Be Engineers Will Speak at PSU Next Month

James Damore will answer questions about his opinions on diversity and, presumably, why he thinks women can't do math.



Story headline and photo from Willamette Week Clackamas Print

YELLOW JOURNALISM

A SENSATIONAL STYLE OF REPORTING THAT WAS USED MOSTLY IN THE 1800 THAT:

EXAGGERATED STORIES AND LANGUAGE

MADE THINGS UP (LIED) AND MINIPULATED FACTS