

Ethical Journalism Network

Building Trust In Media at Election Time



Aidan White

aidanpatrickwhite@gmail.com



Who we are



A coalition of media professional groups from around the world committed to building trust in media and promoting principles of ethical journalism, good governance and self-regulation in the digital age

www.ethicaljournalismnetwork.org

Five Principles for Election Coverage



1. Build Public Trust

- Publish Ground Rules and develop a Media Election Code
- Publicise Rules of the Elections
- Highlight Watchdog Function of Media
- Work in Partnership with Audience and Social Media
- Understand Differences: Journalism and Free Expression

2. Practice Your Principles

- **Establish Internal Guidelines to strengthen Ethical Base:**
Accuracy, Impartiality, Humanity, Independence, Responsibility
- **Avoid Conflicts of Interest**
- **Show Zero Tolerance of Hate and Incitement in political speech**

3. Quality Journalism

- Provide staff training, election law, good practice for political reporting
- Insist on Good governance from top to bottom of Media pyramid
- Focus on Safety of all staff
- Separate Comment, News and Advertising

4. Audience Partnership

- Establish citizens' groups to test opinion
- Use in-depth interviews with a mix of voters (not just vox-pop)
- Highlight the experiences and aspirations of ordinary people
- Use Crowd-sourcing, Social Media but Moderate all User Content
- Don't put Clicks before Quality

5. Newsroom Leadership

- **Set Targets and Benchmarks:**
Establish a newsroom task force
- **Review your performance and use all platforms of journalism**
- **Take account of audience feedback and be different – don't follow the pack, follow the money**
- **Work with other media to respond to external threats**

Ten Reporting Tips

- Report events as they happen.
- Be impartial in every way:
Give equal prominence to major candidates.
- Be inclusive and respect diversity
- Avoid sensationalism. Because someone says something outrageous doesn't make it news.

...and more

- **Never accept any inducement – cash or otherwise – from a candidate or a political party.**
- **Do not makes promises to politicians about your story.**
- **Exercise fair play. If a person is unfairly attacked, give them a chance to reply.**

...and more.

- **Avoid inflammatory language. If someone is abusively insulting, say so. Do we need to repeat the offence?**
- **Report what candidates say -- not what their supporters say candidates said.**
- **Do not take sides in political arguments.**



**Build
Trust**

