

Photo Manipulation Policies

Below are 38 photo manipulation policies from an assortment of organizations, including professional associations, daily newspapers, news sites and online communities. The majority of these policies were collected from two sources, Poynter Online and the American Society of Newspaper Editors, as noted below. The remaining policies were gathered from the Web sites of the respective organizations.

They are:

1. National Press Photographers Association
2. The Society for News Design
3. Associated Press
4. Atlanta Journal-Constitution
5. Austin American-Statesman
6. Charlotte Observer
7. Journal News (NY)
8. Kansas City Star
9. New York Times
10. Newsday (NY)
11. Sarasota Herald-Tribune
12. Spokesman-Review (WA)
13. St. Petersburg Times
14. Tampa Tribune
15. Washington Post
16. Society of Professional Journalists
17. Hearst Newspapers
18. The Arizona Republic
19. Los Angeles Times
20. San Francisco Chronicle
21. San Jose Mercury News
22. Danbury News-Times
23. Orlando Sentinel
24. Champaign (IL) News-Gazette
25. Fort Wayne (IN) Journal-Gazette
26. Lincoln (NE) Journal Star
27. York (PA) Daily Record
28. Dallas Morning News
29. San Antonio Express-News
30. Newport News (VA) Daily Press
31. Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
32. Richmond Times-Dispatch
33. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
34. Wisconsin State Journal
35. BBC
36. iReport.com
37. Flickr
38. Yahoo!

1. National Press Photographers Association

Code of Ethics: http://www.nppa.org/professional_development/business_practices/ethics.html
July 10, 2004

Photojournalists and those who manage visual news productions are accountable for upholding the following standards in their daily work:

1. Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
2. Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
3. Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work.
4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.
5. While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.
6. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
7. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.
8. Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
9. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.

Ideally, photojournalists should:

1. Strive to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public. Defend the rights of access for all journalists.
2. Think proactively, as a student of psychology, sociology, politics and art to develop a unique vision and presentation. Work with a voracious appetite for current events and contemporary visual media.
3. Strive for total and unrestricted access to subjects, recommend alternatives to shallow or rushed opportunities, seek a diversity of viewpoints, and work to show unpopular or unnoticed points of view.
4. Avoid political, civic and business involvements or other employment that compromise or give the appearance of compromising one's own journalistic independence.
5. Strive to be unobtrusive and humble in dealing with subjects.
6. Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.
7. Strive by example and influence to maintain the spirit and high standards expressed in this code. When confronted with situations in which the proper action is not clear, seek the counsel of those who exhibit the highest standards of the profession. Photojournalists should continuously study their craft and the ethics that guide it.

2. The Society for News Design

Code of Ethics: http://www.snd.org/about/organization_ethics.html
Aug. 30, 2006

Accuracy

Accuracy is the indispensable value in journalism and must not be compromised. We must deliver error-free content, across all our media platforms. We must ensure that our content is a verifiable representation of the news and of our subjects. We promise never intentionally to mislead those who depend upon us for public service. We will correct errors promptly and prominently. We must be as accurate with our colleagues as we are with our audiences.

Honesty

We value original thought and expression. Our work will be free from fraud and deception -- that includes plagiarism and fabrication. We will attribute content and honor copyrights. We will strive to keep news content free of special interests, inside or outside the news organization. We embrace the value of transparency, disclosing the thinking behind key decisions -- from a credit line up to an editor's note on the front page.

Fairness

We must be scrupulously fair. We recognize that our work can have great impact on the subjects we cover and therefore we must respectfully balance that against the public's need to know. Even when it is impossible to avoid harm in the pursuit of truth telling, we will work hard to minimize that harm. We will listen to our critics. Our judgment in these matters must be based on our sense of right and wrong in a manner consistent with our professional values.

Inclusiveness

We will remain vigilant in our quest to combat prejudice and lead needed reforms. We will avoid stereotypes in reporting, editing, presentation, and hiring. Diversity, broadly defined, will be a hallmark of our work.

We accept the responsibility to understand our communities and to overcome bias with coverage that is representative of the constituent groups in the community. Over time, many groups, lifestyles, and backgrounds should see themselves and their values represented in the news.

Courage

Journalists need moral and, at times, physical courage to fulfill their responsibility to serve the public. It takes courage to stand behind values such as accuracy, honesty, fairness and inclusiveness. Such courage is necessary to achieve personal integrity and build credibility. This includes the courage to step beyond rigid boundaries. We must test conventional thinking explore innovative story-telling to help changing audiences understand an increasingly complex world.

Logic and literalness, objectivity and traditional thinking have their important place, but so must imagination and intuition, responsible creativity and empathy.

Photo Manipulation Policies Published on Poynter Online

Below are the unabridged, unedited photo manipulation policies available on Poynter Online, the Web site of the Poynter Institute. The policies were submitted by news organizations in response to an open invitation by Kenny Irby, Poynter's Visual Journalism Group Leader and Director of Diversity. The names of the policies were provided the news organizations. Dates indicate when they were posted on the Poynter site—and may not necessarily reflect the most current policy. They are available at: http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=46964

3. Associated Press

Code of Ethics

9/25/03

The following statement of our policy on electronic handling of photos was issued in 1990, the infancy of high speed photo transmission and digital picture handling. It is as valid today as it was then.

Electronic imaging raised new questions about what is ethical in the process of editing photographs. The question may have been new, but the answers all come from old values.

Simply put, the Associated Press does not alter photographs. Our pictures must always tell the truth.

The computer has become a highly sophisticated photo editing tool. It has taken us out of a chemical darkroom where subtle printing techniques, such as burning and dodging, have long been accepted as journalistically sound. Today these terms are replaced by "image manipulation" and "enhancement." In a time when such broad terms could be misconstrued, we need to set limits and restate some basic tenets.

The content of a photograph will NEVER be changed or manipulated in any way.

Only the established norms of standard photo printing methods such as burning, dodging, toning and cropping are acceptable. Retouching is limited to removal of normal scratches and dust spots.

Serious consideration must always be given in correcting color to ensure honest reproduction of the original. Cases of abnormal color or tonality will be clearly stated in the caption. Color adjustment should always be minimal.

In any instance where a question arises about such issues, consult a senior editor immediately.

The integrity of the AP's photo report is our highest priority. Nothing takes precedence over its credibility.

4. Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photo Manipulation Policy 9/25/03

Our policy is short and to the point.

In order to maintain our journalistic integrity, and so that we do not misrepresent information or mislead our readership, we will not manipulate any photographs, for any reason.

We will use darkroom techniques for reproduction purposes and we will produce dropouts and illustrations that involve photographs under the following conditions:

- An image that is dropped out will be used as is. No cloning or rubber stamping parts to change its shape or character.

Illustrations

- If there is more than one person or image involved in the dropout (from different photos), we will make sure one image is more prominent than the other, to emphasize that the resulting photo package is not real or a face off. We will then make sure the caption information states that the images are taken from separate photos.
- We do not try to fool the reader.
- We label the image as an illustration.

Additionally, all illustrations involving photographs will require the approval of John Glenn.

**5. Austin American-Statesman
Photo manipulation policy
5/11/04**

Photo manipulation assumes two forms.

1. Electronic manipulation of an image.

NEWS IMAGES:

Credibility is our most valuable asset. Maintaining that credibility is the purpose of drafting and enforcing these guidelines. Photographers report the news visually with the same goals as reporters and editors—with authenticity and accuracy.

The film or digital image captured by the camera can be computer-enhanced only for the purpose of producing the closest possible likeness of what the photographer actually saw. Beyond this, the images are technically manipulated to ensure faithful reproduction on newsprint.

We do not digitally alter photographs by adding or removing content. Traditional darkroom techniques such as lightening or darkening parts of photos for legibility or emphasis are allowed within limits and approved by a photo editor. Exaggerated use of dodging, burning, and sharpening for effect is not permitted.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Photo illustrations, fashion, food and other controlled studio work have guidelines different from news photography. They are labeled as such or are such obvious departures from reality that any reader would know it.

All staff photographers must adhere to these policies. These guidelines also apply to free-lance photographers, images provided by outside sources, and any image purchased.

2. Manipulation of subjects we photograph.

Photographers do not create situations or otherwise manipulate subjects of news stories and portray them as "found" moments. Portraits are an exception.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Statesman staff or those representing the newspaper should not mislead subjects of their photos in order to obtain permission to photograph them. They should not break the law to obtain photos or promise subjects access to their photographs without prior permission or agreement with supervisors.

Unpublished photos are not revealed or shared with outside sources or other publications without a photo editor's approval.

**6. Charlotte Observer
Photo Correction/Editing Guidelines
9/25/03**

Digital photography raises the need to clarify ethical issues regarding the correction and editing of photographs for publication in the Observer. The same principles that have guided us in traditional photojournalism should be the principles that guide us today.

Photo guideline policy

1. Adjustments to any image will be limited to standard industry "dodging and burning" practices to accurately reflect the scene which was photographed.
2. No colors will be altered from the original scene photographed. This includes excessive changes in density and saturation levels.
3. Backgrounds cannot be eliminated ("burned down") or aggressively toned under any circumstance.
4. All original digital images must be downloaded into Pix Box for editing or review if necessary. When transmitting on location, original files will be downloaded upon return. All printouts for editing will be from original digital camera files.
5. Cloning (rubber stamp tool in Photoshop) can only be used as a touch up tool for excessive dust or other imperfections.
6. All photos prepared for contests will follow the Observer's photo correction guidelines and should be toned as originally corrected by the photographer.
7. Photo illustrations are the only format where our correction guidelines do not need to be followed. The image must clearly be an illustration (not confused with a documentary image) and labeled photo illustration.
8. Backgrounds of an image will not be dropped out or cloned without the specific approval of a photo editor during the page design process. These images should be bylined as photo illustrations.

7. Journal News (NY) Policy on Electronic Imaging 9/25/03

Electronic imaging raises questions about what is ethical in the process of editing photographs. The questions may be new, but the answers all come from old values.

Simply put, the Journal News does not alter photographs. Our pictures must always tell the truth. When we fool readers, we undermine our credibility.

The content of a photograph will NOT be changed or manipulated in any way. Only the established norms of standard photo printing methods such as burning, dodging, toning and cropping are acceptable. Retouching is limited to removal of normal scratches and dust spots.

Serious consideration must always be given in correcting color to ensure honest reproduction of the original. Cases of abnormal color or tonality will be clearly stated in the caption. Color adjustment should always be minimal.

In any instance where a question arises about such issues, consult the editor, managing editor, or the DME/Presentation. ANY exceptions, including photo illustrations, must be approved by one of these editors.

The integrity of our photo report is our highest priority. Nothing takes precedence over its credibility.

8. Kansas City Star Photo Guidelines 9/25/03

These guidelines are intended to help preserve our credibility. In an era when technological developments allow photos to be manipulated in ways that can mislead or deceive viewers, we must be especially careful and deliberate in how we use photographs.

It's the Star's policy that any content alteration of news photographs is unacceptable. We do not concoct news photographs and try to pass them off as reality.

It is acceptable to dodge and/or burn areas and to correct technical defects in a photo (such as dust spots, transmission line hits, or color shifts) as long as the photograph's content is not changed. Removing digital stamping or printing from a negative or print also is acceptable as long as content is not altered.

Photojournalists should not set-up, re-create, direct, or otherwise intrude on the reality of an event. Direction is allowed for situations such as portraits, fashion, studio work, and photo illustration and should be obvious to the viewer.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS

These are photographs staged or produced, otherwise "'not real' situations" which are documented through the lens of a camera. This excludes environmental portraits shot on location. It should always be clear to a reader that the image is of a staged situation, not a real, "live" event.

These are images manipulated in PhotoShop or by other tools. Digitally-altered photos must not be made to look like a real photo or situation. The viewer must not be fooled.

When feasible, include in the cutline an explanation of any special effects used in creating the photo illustration, especially if it aids the viewer's understanding of the photo. All photo illustrations should be labeled as such.

HERE ARE GUIDELINES TO ADDRESS A WIDE RANGE OF SITUATIONS

Discussion with a photo editor is required before:

- Altering or manipulating a photo for a photo illustration.
- Such manipulation must be obvious to the viewer and the photo illustration must be labeled.
- Placing type or another image on a photo. We should not place type on news photos.
- Using historical photos, photos from The Star's archives (Merlin) or Star Library photos.
- Producing a COB (cut-out-background) from a photo.

With rare exceptions, no news/feature/sports photo from a "live news event" — shot that day — should be considered for a COB. The exception is for use in the Powerbar at the top of the page. In that case, the COB should lead the reader to the full-frame photo inside the section, or to another full-frame photo from the same event. The Assistant Managing Editor of Photography must approve any other exceptions.

The powerbar photo should not be the only photographic representation from a live news event.

Discussion with the AME/Photo and a managing editor or the editor is required before:

Publishing a photo of a sensitive nature, especially one that may offend community standards because of graphic subject matter, nudity, obscenity or other sensitive subjects. The discussion group should be expanded to include gender and/or cultural diversity if it doesn't exist within this group of editors.

**9. New York Times
Guidelines on Our Integrity
9/25/03**

Reporters, editors, photographers and all members of the news staff of the New York Times share a common and essential interest in protecting the integrity of the newspaper. As the news, editorial, and business leadership of the newspaper declared jointly in 1998: "Our greatest strength is the authority and reputation of the Times. We must do nothing that would undermine or dilute it and everything possible to enhance it."

At a time of growing and even justified public suspicion about the impartiality, accuracy and integrity of some journalists and some journalism, it is imperative that the Times and its staff maintain the highest possible standards to insure that we do nothing that might erode readers' faith and confidence in our news columns. This means that staff members should be vigilant in avoiding any activity that might pose an actual or apparent conflict of interest and thus threaten the newspaper's ethical standing. And it also means that the journalism we practice daily must be beyond reproach.

No one needs to be reminded that falsifying any part of a news report cannot be tolerated and will result automatically in disciplinary action up to and including termination. But in a climate of increased scrutiny throughout the news business, these further guidelines are offered, to resolve questions that sometimes arise about specific practices:

Photography and Images. Images in our pages that purport to depict reality must be genuine in every way. No people or objects may be added, rearranged, reversed, distorted or removed from a scene (except for the recognized practice of cropping to omit extraneous outer portions).

Adjustments of color or gray scale should be limited to those minimally necessary for clear and accurate reproduction, analogous to the "burning" and "dodging" that formerly took place in darkroom processing of images.

Pictures of news situations must not be posed. In the cases of collages, montages, portraits, fashion or home design illustrations, fanciful contrived situations and demonstrations of how a device is used, our intervention should be unmistakable to the reader, and unmistakably free of intent to deceive.

Captions and credits should further acknowledge our intervention if the slightest doubt is possible. The design director, a masthead editor or the news desk should be consulted on doubtful cases or proposals for exceptions.

**10. Newsday (NY)
Photo Manipulation Policy
9/25/03**

Newsday will not alter the content of a photo in a way that would mislead readers by misrepresenting the pictured event.

Our goal is to reflect reality as faithfully as possible.

In certain limited and appropriate cases, photos can be altered and used in illustrations creatively to make a graphic point. But any photo illustration that distorts reality must be done in a way that is so obvious or so exaggerated that no reasonable reader will be deceived, and it must be clearly labeled.

We may make changes in tonal values for reproduction purposes.

We will not crop or silhouette images in a way that would mislead readers.

We do not flop photos.

11. Sarasota Herald-Tribune Photo Manipulation Policy 9/25/03

The power of documentary photography is based on the fact that real moments are captured as they happen. Anything done to alter the process, before or after the image is recorded, diminishes that power and turns it into a lie.

It has always been the policy of the Herald-Tribune that content alteration of documentary news photographs is unacceptable. We strive for fair and accurate visual reporting. While no protocol can anticipate every situation, common sense and good judgment will be our guiding principles. It should be noted that there is a clear difference between such documentary news photos and feature portraits and illustrations that are posed or created for a particular story. It is imperative that we keep one thing in mind — the credibility and integrity of the Herald-Tribune is at stake.

Manipulation of the subject

The same ethical standards that apply to written stories apply to documentary news photos, including spot and general news photos, sports photos, and enterprise feature photos. Herald-Tribune photographers will not create scenes or direct events with the purpose of making them appear as if they were "found" moments. If a photojournalist is unable to record a natural moment as it occurs, it should not be recreated.

Portraits

Portraits shot by staff photographers must not mislead readers to believe the moment was captured spontaneously. Captions must also be written in a way that does not mislead. For example, we should not say Joe Smith works in his workshop when he is actually there for the purpose of being photographed.

Illustrations

When photo illustrations are used, they must clearly be fictional. All photo illustrations should be labeled as such.

Digital Manipulation

Manipulation of images electronically for the purpose of better reproduction is permitted. Any such alteration will only include techniques that have been traditionally accepted in chemical darkrooms. This includes dodging and burning in selected areas within a photograph so long as it does not change the content of the image. This may also include the correction of technical defects in a photograph such as dust spots or color shifts caused by mixed lighting. Objects

within a photo may not be moved, added, deleted, combined, or altered. No photographer, artist, designer, or image technician may change the actual color content of any documentary news photograph. Photographs may not be flipped, stretched or shrunk to fit a layout. Cutouts, mortises, color screens or colorizations, and type within images should be used sparingly. Any such use should be discussed with the photographer and photo editor.

**12. Spokesman-Review (WA)
Code of Ethics (Photographers)
9/25/03**

Photographers should not alter a scene when shooting a news photograph. Digital manipulation that changes the content of an image is not allowed unless it involves a graphic device or photo illustration approved by the photo editor and clearly labeled as such. Publication of controversial pictures, such as those depicting grief or tragedy, should be considered with the feelings of the community and the photo subjects in mind. The decision to publish must weigh community sensibilities and taste against the news value of the event.

**13. St. Petersburg Times
Guidelines to Publishing Photographs
9/25/03**

It is the policy of this newspaper that photographs should be truthful.

- Our business is to publish "documentary" photographs, which includes news, sports, features and picture stories. We do not stage or re-enact events. When we photograph subjects in a studio (food illustrations, for instance) or shoot portraits, the photographs must not mislead readers to believe that the moment was spontaneously captured.
- The integrity of the documentary photograph lies within its border. Therefore, we do not alter backgrounds, add color, create photo montage, flop, or mortise them.
- Altering the content of documentary photographs through technology is prohibited. This policy does not apply to improving the technical quality of an image through burning and dodging, tone and color balancing, electronic sharpening, spotting to eliminate dust, or correcting other technical flaws. These methods must be done carefully to ensure faithful reproduction.
- Images we receive from our readers for weddings, obits and otherwise must not be altered. We put just as much importance on "handout" pictures as we do on those that are staff-shot. For example, an obit picture is likely the last image published of an individual. Content and reproduction quality is critical.
- Photo illustrations are rarely preferable to documentary photographs. They should be developed with the input of photographers, photo and word editors and designers, with great care to ensure that they do not mislead readers and that they meet high standards of journalistic representation. We should always identify illustrations as just that.
- Photographers and designers should always consult with senior editors whenever questions about photo manipulation arise.

Above all, photography must be truthful. Readers should never be confused or misled as to the content of what they are seeing. Cutlines and photo credits, while important, cannot be a crutch to correct misimpressions left by a photograph or an illustration.

**14. Tampa Tribune
Newsroom Ethics Policy (Photography)
9/25/03**

Photographs should remain truthful in spirit, manipulated only through quality enhancements such as burning, dodging, contrast control, color balancing, spotting and cropping.

We don't stage, re-enact or recreate news events for photos. Personality portraits and studio illustrations shouldn't create an artificial sense of spontaneity. Photo illustrations, computer enhancements, colored and composite photographs should be labeled as such, out of regard for the public's trust.

Removing or adding an object in an editorial photograph is not permitted.

Nor is flopping a photograph.

Readers deserve accuracy and honesty, whether viewing an image or reading words. Their eyes may deceive them, but the newspaper should not.

**15. Washington Post
Policy on Manipulation of Photographic Images
9/25/03**

Photographs are trusted by our readers to be an accurate recording of an event. Alteration of photographs in any way so as to mislead, confuse or otherwise misrepresent the accuracy of those events is strictly prohibited. Traditional darkroom techniques such as adjustment of contrast and gray scale are permitted.

New technologies that enable the manipulation of photographic images have blurred the line between fact and fiction. It is the Post's policy to allow the use of these technologies only in a way that clearly makes their use evident and in no way misrepresents real events or implies that photographic collage or illustration depict real events.

1. Photography has come to be trusted as a virtual record of an event. We must never betray that trust.

It is our policy never to alter the content of news photographs. This means that nothing is added or subtracted from the image such as a hand or tree limb in an inopportune position. Normal adjustment to contrast and gray scale for better reproduction is permitted.

2. Photographic silhouettes, mortises, angled images, type surprinted on photographs.

Silhouettes should be used sparingly — generally reserved for feature material. Mortises and photographs tipped at an angle should be avoided at all cost. In rare instances headlines and captions may be set into photographs. When in doubt about use, consult the AMEs for Photo or News Art or their assistant editors. If further discussion is needed, the executive editor and the managing editor can be involved.

3. The use of photographs in whole or in part to achieve satire, humor or visual pun and the use of photographic collage is acceptable with reservations.

The use of photos in collage artwork is permitted for illustrative purposes only. This must be limited to stories where the art can be impressionistic or interpretive. This does not include news stories and such use must be approved in advance by the AMEs for Photo or News Art or their assistant editors. Again, the executive editor and the managing editor may need to be involved.

4. Digital photographic alteration.

The use of technology to create new kinds of imagery is acceptable only where such use is clearly a work of fictional imagery. If a caption is necessary to explain that the content is not real, then we should not use the image.

5. The decision to alter.

When the idea to alter a photo arises, take a reality check. Is this really a good idea? Will readers be confused? Do others get the point of this irony or visual pun? A rule of thumb ought to be: kick the idea up to the next editing level.

Photo Manipulation Policies Published by The American Society of Newspaper Editors

Below are photo manipulation policies of news organizations, associations and regional newspapers available on the Web site of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. (ASNE). Because most of these policies form part of far lengthier codes of ethics, we've edited them to exclude information unrelated to photo manipulation. The names of the policies were provided by the news organizations. The dates indicate when they were last updated on the ASNE site—and may not necessarily reflect the most current policy. You can read the policies in full here: <http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?id=387>

16. Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics 1996

- Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.
- Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.
- Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.

17. Hearst Newspapers Statement of Professional Principles 5/20/02

“...photographs shall not be materially altered unless clearly labeled as such.”

18. The Arizona Republic Ethics Code 2/17/99

PHOTOGRAPHY

News photographs must not be altered. Photographs that electronically obscure the face of a victim or undercover police officer are exceptions, but the alteration should be clearly explained in the caption.

Photo illustrations should be labeled as such.

**19. Los Angeles Times
Ethics Guidelines
10/17/05**

PHOTOS and GRAPHICS

Photographs and graphics must inform, not mislead. Any attempt to confuse readers or misrepresent visual information is prohibited.

In photographing news, we do not stage or reenact events. Photographers may direct subjects of portraits, fashion shoots or studio work. In presenting such images, we must avoid creating the impression that they were captured spontaneously.

We do not add color, create photomontages, remove objects or flop images. We do not digitally alter images beyond making minor adjustments for color correction, exposure correction and removal of dust spots or scratches required to ensure faithful reproduction of the original image. Exaggerated use of burning, dodging or color saturation is not permitted.

On occasion, we publish artistic or graphic renderings that include altered photographs. Such renderings should be clearly labeled "photo illustration." Before creating a photo illustration, photographers, photo editors and designers must obtain approval from a Senior Editor for photography.

Complex graphic illustrations should be similarly labeled. Photo editors must verify the authenticity of handout photos. Except in rare instances, credit lines must identify the source of such photographs.

**20. San Francisco Chronicle
Ethical News Gathering
2/17/99**

Photographs and graphics. Both photos and graphics should represent reality as precisely and accurately as reasonably possible. Standards of honesty, accuracy and fairness apply to news photographs and graphics just as they do to news articles.

a) Historical photos. Historical and file photographs must be labeled as such so that they do not mislead readers. Before a file photograph is used, we must be certain that we have the right to do so without agreement of the original photographer or owner of the copyright.

b) Enhancements. Pre-press enhancement should be confined to changes that make news photographs more faithful to the reality of the scene or situation depicted. Changes should not be made to alter reality.

c) Manipulation. When a photograph is altered or manipulated for illustrative purposes, the resulting image must be clearly labeled to indicate that it has been altered and is not a documentary news photograph.

d) Posed pictures. Photographers may pose a subject for a portrait or for a photo illustration. Photo illustrations should be labeled as such. If there is any concern that a posed portrait is misleading, the photo caption should make clear that the subject in the photo was posed for the photograph.

e) Photographer's news responsibilities. Photographers must not control or suggest activity to subjects in a news photograph. "Re-creating" news for photographs is not permissible. Photographers must be alert to -- and avoid -- situations in which straightforward photography may give readers a misleading impression.

Photographers should avoid shooting or cropping a photograph in a way that misrepresents.

**21. San Jose Mercury News
Ethics Policy
6/17/04**

In the interest of integrity and fairness, photographers and editors should exercise caution in the use of 'set-up' photographs. In the same way that reporters do not make up quotes, photographers do not reconstruct scenes or events with the purpose of making them appear as if they were 'found' moments.

However, photographers are often called upon to make environmental portraits or do illustrative photography. In no way should such photographs be approached or treated as anything but what they are. They are either portraits or are demonstrative of a situation. Both should be clearly labeled.

That means that care should be taken in writing captions so they do not suggest the picture is something it is not. For example, is Clark Kent working in his study or is he simply in his study (for purposes of a portrait)? Is Lois Lane actually practicing her technique of boomerang tossing or is she demonstrating her technique of boomerang tossing (for purposes of a photograph)? Such distinctions make a difference.

**22. Danbury News-Times
Ethics Code
02/17/99**

Photographers will not manipulate a scene to change its meaning. We will be careful about using photos in any other form than their original. On occasions when a manipulated photo may be acceptable (as an illustration, for instance), the photo shall be identified as such. The same requirements of care apply to the use of a photo as to the written word.

**23. Orlando Sentinel
Editorial Code of Ethics
8/30/06**

Posing and alteration of photographs. Photographers must not stage or direct the content of news photographs or alter the elements of a news scene. This does not preclude a reasonable degree of posing in non-news situations or the art direction of studio photographs. Once taken, a photo must not be altered in any way that turns it into something the photographer did not see in the viewfinder. Changes must be limited to standard quality adjustments applied by imaging technicians.

Photo illustrations. The combination of photography and illustration to create a "photo illustration" is acceptable in cases in which the subject matter is complex, abstract or difficult to convey through documentary photography. However, all photo illustrations must contain an element of the absurd so exaggerated that the image could not be confused with a documentary photo. These pieces must be labeled as photo illustrations, and their use must be approved by a supervising design or photo editor.

**24. Champaign (IL) News-Gazette
Guidelines for Professional Standards
02/17/99**

No staff member should alter photographs substantially for dramatic impact.

**25. Fort Wayne (IN) Journal-Gazette
Code of Ethics
02/17/99**

PHOTOGRAPHS: It has always been the policy of *The Journal Gazette* that content alteration of photographs is unacceptable using past or present technology. If significant reason exists to change this policy it will be addressed in the following manner:

NO DISCUSSION NEEDED:

(1) Minor dodging or burning or color correction of areas in the photograph that do not change the content; for instance, lightening or darkening areas to make them reproducible. Adding or removing elements that do not realistically represent what the camera captured is forbidden.

(2) Correction or removing of dirt or dust spots, or of technical defects in the photograph.

DISCUSSION REQUIRED:

(1) Photographs with the potential to breach community standards; for example, inclusion of genitals, obscene gestures, offensive cultural elements.

(2) Photographs that may offend community standards, including gruesome or emotionally distressing photographs.

(3) Discussion with graphics editor or chief photographer is required to manipulate photographs in the darkroom or electronically. If a photo is manipulated in any way it must be labeled as a photo illustration (meaning the photo was set up) or as an electronically manipulated photo (example: removing or creating elements in the illustration). Manipulated photos must be approved by the editor or managing editor. Extent of the alteration and/or the technique should be clearly explained to readers.

TRUTHFULNESS: All photographs used in *The Journal Gazette* should accurately represent the situations they portray. Photographers should never use "set-up" photographs or ask someone to reconstruct scenes. This does not apply to environmental portraits and illustrations.

PHOTO IN ADVERTISEMENTS: Photographs shall not be used in advertisements unless approved by the editor or managing editor.

26. Lincoln Journal Star (NE)
Ethics Code
12/13/00

Photography, new technology and alterations

In the same way that reporters do not make up quotes, photographers do not create scenes, reconstruct scenes or re-enact events with the purpose of making them appear as if they were “found” moments. Personality portraits and studio illustrations should not be staged in such a way that a typical reader could be confused or take it as a candid moment.

Posed photographs, photo illustrations, computer enhancements, colorized and composite photographs may be used with feature stories – but, if a reader could be confused by the image, it should be clearly labeled as such in the caption, out of regard for the public’s trust.

Removing or adding an object in an editorial photograph is not permitted. Nor is flopping a photograph to reverse the image.

27. York Daily Record (PA)
Guide to Your Workplace
02/17/99

Altering or faking photos

1. The content of a photograph may never be changed or manipulated in any way.
2. Only the established norms of standard photo printing methods, such as burning, dodging, black-and-white toning and cropping, are acceptable. Retouching is limited to removal of normal scratches and dust spots.
3. Color may be corrected only to ensure honest reproduction of the original. Color adjustments always should be minimal.
4. Any deceptive presentation of information in a news photograph (e.g., arranging debris at an accident scene) is prohibited.
5. Posed situations or the use of models for illustrative purposes should be specifically identified to the reader when there is the possibility that someone will believe the picture portrays a spontaneous event.”

28. Dallas Morning News
Ethics Code
02/17/99

Photographs, Graphics

Visuals have a tremendous impact on our readers. Follow good taste and good sense. As in many areas of taste, these should be discussed on their individual merits with appropriate Photo and News Art editors. Editorial photographs should never mislead the reader regarding their content, time or place of the information depicted. All environmental portraits or controlled situations should be executed in a manner that makes the context obvious to the reader. Photo illustrations can be misleading and should be used sparingly and only in consultation with the photo editors. They must be clearly labeled as photo illustrations. Photos are information and shouldn't be used as page decor, fillers or graphic devices. The DMN prohibits manipulation of

photo images. Enhancement for reproduction purposes, which includes burning, dodging and color correction, can be done only in the Photo department.

29. San Antonio Express-News

Ethics Code

11/03/05

Express-News employees should work in good faith with sources and readers to ensure the news is fair, accurate and free from bias. They should:

Not mislead the reader with staged news events or photos -- photo illustrations should be labeled as such. It should be clear when a photo is a portrait.

30. Newport News (VA) Daily Press

Ethics Code

05/15/02

MANIPULATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

The objective of photojournalists has always been to cover the news truthfully. That objective is the same as a reporter's. Only the tools are different. Just because technology has changed the photographer's tools doesn't mean it has changed our ethical standards as well.

Adobe PhotoShop and the Macintosh are not inherently evil devices. Computers don't lie, people do. If we didn't alter the content of news photos when we were slopping prints in chemicals (it WAS possible then, only much more difficult), we won't when we are using software to handle our images.

We have avoided hard-and-fast rules regarding this issue, because what is right or wrong in the manipulation of pictures requires the simple application of good judgment, intellectual honesty and common sense. It depends also on the context of each situation. What is acceptable on the cover of a youth-oriented weekend magazine may be unethical on the front page.

News photos: Every photo on a news page must be real. Don't alter content. Dodging, burning and cleaning off dust specks are exercises that require the same common sense we've used in the past.

There is one absolute: If the final product misleads the reader, it is wrong.

If what is recorded on film has a tendency to mislead -- even if it's clearly real -- explain in the caption. A couple of examples: a photo taken through a long lens that compresses distance, or one that makes a small item appear larger than life size. If a photo is set up, or the photo opportunity provided is somewhat misleading, help make things clear in the caption or don't use the photo.

Photo illustrations: If you have a reason to alter a photograph to make a valid point, that photo is no longer a news photo -- and no longer appropriate in a context where it will look like one. It is an illustration and should be clearly labeled as such.

Often, just the label "Illustration by .|.|" -- typically in small print -- is not enough. It is a good idea to discuss any photo-manipulation technique used in the illustration in the caption, just as you might tell the reader a long lens was used to compress the background in a straight news photo. But keep in mind: A photo can leave a misleading impression quickly and from a distance in a way that small type of any kind can't remedy properly.

Readers are used to looking at photos as a statement of fact. They understand that illustrations drawn by hand are not real. They have some trouble with the concept of photographic illustrations drawn by hand, mostly because they can be made to look very real.

For that reason, we should avoid photo illustrations whose effects are so subtle that they can't be quickly discerned. If you are manipulating a photo for effect on a feature page, make sure it crosses the border between illustration and reality clearly. For instance, if you are going to use a photo of a personality and want to stylize it, mangle it enough that no reader can interpret it as a straight photograph -- and make sure it looks as if it was done on purpose and is not just bad reproduction.

**31. Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
Code of Ethics and Professionalism
05/15/02**

VISUAL ACCURACY

Documentary photo

This is a candid or unposed photo that records news, features or sports. The spirit of the documentary photo is to be honest and above board with readers. Any appearance or suspicion of manipulation of documentary photos strikes against our core values. Submitted photos should meet these same standards.

For questions about photo authenticity, check with a photo editor.

Posing or re-enacting a documentary photograph is unacceptable. Altering a documentary photo is also unacceptable. This includes eliminating or adding material to the photo.

Examples:

- Do not ask someone to repeat an action for a documentary photo. The photographer would not ask a wife to again hug her husband at a ship homecoming because he missed it the first time.
- Do not cut out a "live" news photo. Cutouts can make a news photo look like a feature photo. Let the reader have full information.
- A photographer, photo editor or designer should not eliminate a telephone line from a photo to "clean up" the scene. Clouds, sky, grass or other elements should not be added to make room for type or make the photo fit a hole.

Adding type to a documentary photo is permissible under "Type in Photo" guidelines, which are part of the design styleguide. See the DME for presentation or News Editor.

Portrait photo

This photo is usually posed and it should be obvious to the reader if it is. A mug shot, a group photo or an environmental portrait with the subject looking at the camera are examples. With candid portraits follow the guidelines of documentary photos. Portrait photos shouldn't be altered.

Photoillustration

This type of photograph turns 180 degrees from documentary photojournalism and uses the medium as an artist uses colored chalk to illustrate a story. In a successful and ethical photoillustration, it is obvious to the reader that the photo is not a candid documentary photo. A photoillustration credit line should reinforce the fact that the photo is not a real situation.

Icon photos

This category is much like the photoillustration -- almost anything goes. It includes simple photos that illustrate or label stories. Examples include photos of planes, ships, money, hockey sticks, hands, buildings, etc. Cutout photos would be included in this. It is not necessary to credit these photos.

To use or not to use

When in doubt, use common sense. Know privacy rules and laws. Shooting the photo usually is not the problem. Publishing the photo may be. Using sound judgement, the photographer should almost always shoot the picture. The editing process will determine whether the photo will be used. The photo editor, page editor and news editor will also help determine publication. Some photos should be approved by a deputy managing editor, managing editor or the editor.

Some red flags:

- death
- nudity or sexual content
- exaggerated grief
- blood or other body fluids
- photo is too good to be true (it may be set up)
- vulgar words or gestures (these may be hidden in a photo)
- cheap shot (zipper open, food on the face)
- unflattering expression not related to the event or situation
- people performing dangerous acts
- violence
- racial stereotypes
- photos that may otherwise shock or appall readers

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is the photo appropriate to the story?
- Is the news value worth upsetting the reader?
- Is the photo from this community or from far away?
- What are the paper's general standards of taste?
- Do you need to pass the photo through the top editor?
- Does it pass the "breakfast table" test?"

32. Richmond Times-Dispatch Guidelines for Professional Conduct 02/17/99

News photographs should accurately represent the situations they portray. Nothing re-created, staged or posed should be represented as a spontaneous or candid situation.

Documentary photographs should not be manipulated, changed or altered to any degree, by any method or medium, including electronic manipulation. This excludes traditionally accepted cropping, dust and scratch cleanup, color balancing and contrast control.

However, photographers are often called upon to make environmental portraits or photographic illustrations. Both should be readily apparent to the reader as such and should be clearly labeled.

33. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Ethics Policy 02/12/04

Alteration of images. Photo illustrations must be clearly labeled as such. For all other photos, we may alter an image through physical or electronic means only to enhance the technical quality of the image for best reproduction. We do not insert or excise images to change the integrity of a photograph. Cropping and sizing to enhance clarity, impact or composition are encouraged.

**34. Wisconsin State Journal
Code of Ethics
02/17/99**

The State Journal's standards of decency and fair play apply not only to stories but also to page layout, headlines, photographs, captions, artwork and informational graphics. Retouching or electronic manipulation of photos to distort reality, unless labeled as illustration, is prohibited.

Photo Manipulation Policies by and for Online Communities

**35. BBC
Editorial Guidelines
Gathered: 1/15/2009**

What follows is an excerpt of these lengthy guidelines. You can read the complete guidelines here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/advice/videoaudioandstills/index.shtml>

Guidance

User Generated Content (Video, audio and stills contributions from members of the public in BBC News output)

Introduction

This guidance has been drawn up by BBC News, Nations & Regions, New Media and Editorial Policy, and is intended for newsgathering teams who receive or request photographs, video or audio from members of the public.

It is designed to be used in conjunction with our [external advice](#) for members of the public who wish to submit images and videos to the BBC.

The guidance applies to content supplied via mobile devices as well as content submitted online or through the post e.g. video cassettes.

Our audiences have provided invaluable material in the immediate aftermath of very important news events. The BBC wants to encourage this relationship with the audience and greatly values the role the general public can play in our coverage. This guidance should act as a checklist for staff to ensure that all third party contributions are subject to appropriate editorial scrutiny, that requests for contributions are made responsibly and that where relevant we have obtained appropriate consents.

Checking the facts

Material provided by eyewitnesses can strengthen our coverage greatly, provided we take sensible precautions.

Our starting point is that we should aim to apply the same approach to pictures, audio and video supplied by members of the public, as we do to any other material we handle as journalists.

We should not automatically assume that the material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification. As digital manipulation tools become more accessible, we also need to be on our guard against photo manipulation and hoaxing.

We aim to achieve accuracy by:

- the accurate gathering of material using first hand sources wherever possible
- checking and cross checking the facts
- validating the authenticity of documentary evidence and digital material
- corroborating claims and allegations made by contributors wherever possible
- In most cases, material will not be put directly on air or online.

We should ensure we have adequate resources to check material for accuracy, appropriate consents etc before it is broadcast or published. However in some cases of breaking news, there may be a very tight turnaround between receiving and viewing material and broadcasting it.

Special care must be taken if we suspect that material has been supplied by a member of a lobby group or organisation with a vested interest in the story, rather than a disinterested bystander.

**36. iReport.com (CNN)
Community Guidelines
Gathered: 1/15/2009**

<http://www.ireport.com/guidelines.jspa>

The views and content on this site are solely those of the iReport.com contributors. CNN makes no guarantees about the content or the coverage on iReport.com!

iReport.com is a place where the community decides what the news is. We encourage you to post whatever you think qualifies, whether that's video and photos of the events of your life, or your own take on what's making international headlines. Or, fingers crossed, some of each.

We hope you'll use iReport.com to post all kinds of news, the good and the bad, the personal and the global. Here are some basic ground rules to get us started:

Who's invited?

You must be at least 13 years old to participate.

What is "news"?

At its most basic, news is a report about a current event or a new development in an ongoing story, whatever or wherever that might be. There are a thousand definitions, none of them perfect. Let's make a new one together.

What kind of content is welcome here?

Whatever helps tell your story, whether that's video, still photos or text. Sometimes a story that has news value can be hard to stomach. If you're posting material you think may be difficult for sensitive audiences, mark the "discretion advised" checkbox and the iReport.com tools will add a warning to its page.

What isn't welcome?

- Pornography/sexually explicit content
- Obscene/lewd content
- Content that advocates violent behavior

- Content that contains violent images of killing or physical abuse that appear to have been captured solely, or principally, for exploitive, prurient or gratuitous purposes
- Content that advocates dangerous, illegal or predatory acts or poses a reasonable threat to personal or public safety
- Hate Speech/Racially or ethnically offensive content
- Content that infringes somebody's copyright
- Repeated uploads that flood the site with duplicate versions of the same or similar content

(Read more on this topic in the iReport.com [terms of service](#).)

What if you see something on the site that violates the Community Guidelines?

Click on the "report violation" link below the item.

What happens if you post something that violates the Community Guidelines?

Moderators will review it and take it down from the site. If you post more than three pieces of material that need to be removed from the site, your account will be disabled.

37. Flickr

Community Guidelines

Gathered: 1/15/2009

<http://www.flickr.com/guidelines.gne>

Flickr accounts are intended for personal use, for our members to share photos and video that they themselves have created.

The following Community Guidelines are here to help you understand what it means to be a member of Flickr. Don't forget that your use of Flickr is subject to these Guidelines and our [Terms of Use](#).

What to do

- **Do play nice.**
We're a community of many types of people, who all have the right to feel comfortable and who may not think what you think, believe what you believe or see what you see. So, be polite and respectful in your interactions with other members.
- **Do upload content that you have created.**
Respect the copyright of others. This means don't steal photos or videos that other people have shared and pass them off as your own. (That's what favorites are for.)
- **Do moderate your content.**
You need to take responsibility for ensuring that what you upload is appropriately flagged. If your judgment proves to be poor, we'll moderate your account to match appropriate ratings for safe search and/or content type and send you a warning.

Photo content must be flagged as "safe", "moderate" or "restricted." Video on Flickr may only include "safe" or "moderate" content -- "restricted" video content is not allowed on Flickr and will be removed.

Please note that although you may upload "safe", "moderate" or "restricted" content, some countries may only allow you to view "safe" or "safe" & "moderate" content. There's more about this in [our FAQs](#).

- **Do link back to Flickr when you post your Flickr content elsewhere.**
The Flickr service makes it possible to post content hosted on Flickr to outside web sites. However, pages on other web sites that display content hosted on flickr.com must provide a link from each photo or video back to its page on Flickr.
- **Do enjoy Flickr!**
See the world through others' eyes, participate, find your muse, and expand your horizons!

What *not* to do

Here's the deal: In most circumstances, we like to give second chances, so we'll send you a warning if you step across any of the lines listed below. Subsequent violations can result in account termination without warning.

- **Don't upload anything that isn't yours.**
This includes other people's photos, video and/or stuff you've collected from around the Internet. Accounts that consist primarily of such collections may be terminated at any time.
- **Don't forget the children.**
Take the opportunity to filter your content responsibly. If you would hesitate to show your photos or videos to a child, your mum, or Uncle Bob, that means it needs to be filtered. So, ask yourself that question as you upload your content and moderate accordingly. If you don't, it's likely that one of two things will happen. Your account will be reviewed then either moderated or terminated by Flickr staff.
- **Don't show nudity in your buddy icon.**
Only content considered "safe" is appropriate for your buddy icon. If we find that you've uploaded a buddy icon that contains "moderate" or "restricted" content, we'll remove the buddy icon, moderate your account as "restricted" and send you a warning. If we find you doing it again, we'll terminate your account.
- **Don't upload content that is illegal or prohibited.**
If we find you doing that, your account will be deleted and we'll take appropriate action, which may include reporting you to the authorities.
- **Don't vent your frustrations, rant, or bore the brains out of other members.**
Flickr is not a venue for you to harass, abuse, impersonate, or intimidate others. If we receive a valid complaint about your conduct, we'll send you a warning or terminate your account.
- **Don't be creepy.**
You know the guy. Don't be that guy.
- **Don't use your account to host web graphics like logos and banners.**
Your account will be terminated if we find you using it to host graphic elements of web page designs, icons, smilies, buddy icons, forum avatars, badges, and other non-photographic elements on external web sites.
- **Don't use Flickr for commercial purposes.**
Flickr is for personal use only. If we find you selling products, services, or yourself through your photostream, we will terminate your account. Any other commercial use of Flickr, Flickr technologies (including APIs, FlickrMail, etc), or Flickr accounts must be approved by Flickr. For more information on leveraging Flickr APIs, please see [our](#)

[Services page](#). If you have other open questions about commercial usage of Flickr, please feel free to [contact us](#).

Here are some other things to keep in mind:

Other People (their content, their behavior)

You will see all sorts of things on Flickr, some of which may offend you. If you are offended by a photo or video you can either click away or you can mark it as poorly moderated by clicking on the "Flag this photo" link on a photo page under "Additional Information". If you think there's immediate cause for concern, you can [report content and/or someone's behavior to Flickr staff](#) via the "Report Abuse" link that's available in the footer of every page.

Copyright Infringement

If you see photos or videos that you've created in another member's photostream, don't panic. This is probably just a misunderstanding and not malicious. A good first step is to contact them and politely ask them to remove it. If that doesn't work, please file a Notice of Infringement with the [Yahoo! Copyright Team](#) who will take it from there.

You may be tempted to post an entry on your photostream or in our public forum about what's happening, but that's not the best way to resolve a possible copyright problem. We don't encourage singling out individuals like this on Flickr.

In Conclusion

We've crafted these guidelines to ensure that everyone within the community has the experience they want. It's important that you understand the importance of moderating your content responsibly. If you don't feel that you can abide by our Community Guidelines as outlined above, maybe Flickr isn't for you.

38. Yahoo!

Terms of Service

Gathered: 1/16/2009

What follows is an excerpt of Yahoo's guidelines. You can read the complete guidelines here: <http://info.yahoo.com/legal/us/yahoo/utos/utos-173.html>

MEMBER CONDUCT

You understand that all information, data, text, software, music, sound, photographs, graphics, video, messages, tags, or other materials ("Content"), whether publicly posted or privately transmitted, are the sole responsibility of the person from whom such Content originated. This means that you, and not Yahoo!, are entirely responsible for all Content that you upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available via the Service. Yahoo! does not control the Content posted via the Service and, as such, does not guarantee the accuracy, integrity or quality of such Content. You understand that by using the Service, you may be exposed to Content that is offensive, indecent or objectionable. Under no circumstances will Yahoo! be liable in any way for any Content, including, but not limited to, any errors or omissions in any Content, or any loss or damage of any kind incurred as a result of the use of any Content posted, emailed, transmitted or otherwise made available via the Service.

You agree to not use the Service to:

- a. upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any Content that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, tortious, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, libelous, invasive of another's privacy, hateful, or racially, ethnically or otherwise objectionable;
- b. harm minors in any way;

- c. impersonate any person or entity, including, but not limited to, a Yahoo! official, forum leader, guide or host, or falsely state or otherwise misrepresent your affiliation with a person or entity;
- d. forge headers or otherwise manipulate identifiers in order to disguise the origin of any Content transmitted through the Yahoo! Service;
- e. upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any Content that you do not have a right to make available under any law or under contractual or fiduciary relationships (such as inside information, proprietary and confidential information learned or disclosed as part of employment relationships or under nondisclosure agreements);
- f. upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any Content that infringes any patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright or other proprietary rights ("Rights") of any party;