

A CHECKLIST FOR RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM

“Poor quality” is an easy (though invalid) argument for censoring your publication. Use this checklist to make sure you are following best practices in journalism, and help make censorship a thing of the past.

From: “Media Ethics: Issues and Cases” by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins

- ACCURACY** – Are the facts correct? Has the reporter used the right words? What are some examples of right and wrong words? Is information in the proper context? What biases could the reporter have brought to the story?
- CONFIRMATION** – Does the story hold up inside and outside the newsroom? Are there holes?
- TENACITY** – Has the reporter gone to extra effort on the story, or merely followed the pack? Is there depth to the story? If so, what are some examples from the story that point to depth?
- DIGNITY** – Has the reporter treated the subject of the story with respect? Have the others involved with publication of the story – photographers, editors, videographers, designers, ad sales representatives – done so?
- RECIPROCITY** – Do you think the reporter has taken a “do unto others” approach with respect to the subject of the story? Does the story pander to the lowest common denominator? What is important in this story from the audience’s perspective? Has the reporter addressed that?
- SUFFICIENCY** – Has the reporter had adequate resources to cover this story? Why or why not?
Equity – Have all sources and subjects been treated in the same manner? Have all sides of the story been told? What are they?
- COMMUNITY** – How does the community benefit from this story? How does the media outlet benefit?
- DIVERSITY** – Are all parts of the audience represented in this story? If not, who is missing?



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