1. We discover a subject
2. We create a hypothesis to verify
3. We seek open source data to verify the hypothesis
4. We seek human sources
5. As we collect the data, we organize it so that it is easier to examine, compose into a story, and check
6. We put the data in a narrative order and compose the story
7. We do quality control to make sure the story is right
8. We publish the story, promote and defend it

What rights do journalists have?

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):
  1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
  2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

What laws in Myanmar will (1) encourage investigative journalism or (2) discourage investigative journalism?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENCOURAGE</th>
<th>DISCOURAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions found in the Constitution</td>
<td>Breach of privacy or data protection laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union security</td>
<td>Cybercrime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevalence of law and order</td>
<td>Covert recording</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community peace and tranquility</td>
<td>Contempt of court</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public order and morality</td>
<td>Copyright infringement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Censorship</td>
<td>Protection of confidentiality sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breach of confidentiality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Defamation</td>
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</table>
Action

WHAT IS BEING DONE? WHAT CAN BE DONE? WHAT MUST BE DONE?

• ???

ETHICAL ISSUES

Basic ethical principles in journalism

Seek truth and report it
Act independently
Minimize harm
Be accountable

Truthtelling vs Transparency

Make every effort to ensure the accuracy of information but...
- Do not break the law
- Avoid deceiving sources
- Use special methods only in certain conditions

Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

SEEK THE TRUTH AND REPORT IT
Special Investigative Methods
- Covert recording
- Undercover reporting
- False identities
- Stealing documents

When to use special methods
- No other way to get info
- Info of overriding public interest
- Benefits of making the information public outweigh harm to individuals/organizations
- Carefully planned investigation
- Disclosure of reason for special methods

The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public

ACT INDEPENDENTLY

A journalist’s motives come under fire when...
- He or she is perceived to be biased in favor of a source or sources
- A news outlet, its owners or editors/ producers are perceived to be friendly to a source or sources
- The story is written in such a way as to favor one side over another

Sources of Journalists’ conflict of interest/bias
- Involvement in particular activities
- Affiliation with groups or causes
- Acceptance of favors and money
- Financial investments
- Outside employment
- Friendships
What to do

- Include all sides affected in the story
- Respect the right of reply
- Avoid situations that may give rise to conflict of interest
- Disclose your affiliations or relationships with sources, if any
- Don’t allow vested interests to use you
- Don’t accept favors or money in exchange for a favorable news story

What if a source demands payment?

- Paying sources is a bad idea
- Source may lie and exaggerate to give you the answer he thinks you’re looking for
- Source can use payment to retract or discredit the evidence: “I only said it because they offered me money”

How about bribing the source?

- Bribing an official/civil servant to gain access is a big no-no
- A bribe is still a bribe

How about compensating the source?

- Compensate a source only in exceptional circumstances
- For working time lost giving an interview or for travel or other costs
- Pay a low, ‘normal’ rate for the expense in question

Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect

Minimize harm

Truthtelling vs Humaneness

- Portray subjects as human beings
- Keep sources confidential if they demand it
- Don’t endanger sources
- Respect privacy
Reporting causes harm when...
- It causes victims further harm
- It draws undue attention to innocent individuals
- Inaccuracies damage reputations

Anonymous sources (‘Deep Throat’)
- Is the request for anonymity justified?
- At the outset, explain that you may have to share their identity with some other people (your editor or media lawyer)
- Discuss how you will hide their identity
- Agree with them explicitly what will be in the story, when it will appear, what the deadline is for alterations to content, and whether the information will be embargoed

Anonymous sources (‘Deep Throat’)
- Make sure they understand the risks of contacting you, in person, over the phone or in e-mails
- Secure any notes or records relating to the source
- Honor your commitment to conceal someone’s identity, even at the risk of going to jail

Unesco resolution
- November 2013 statement: Information and Knowledge For All
- Endorsed the importance of investigative journalism
- “…privacy is essential to protect journalistic sources, which enable a society to benefit from investigative journalism, to strengthen good governance and the rule of law”

Credibility of sources is put in doubt when...
- We use confidential or anonymous sources
- When we fail to explain the need for the anonymity

Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one’s work and explaining one’s decisions to the public

Be accountable
Be Accountable

- Explain ethical choices and processes to audiences. Encourage a civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices, coverage and news content.
- Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness.
- Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently. Explain corrections and clarifications carefully and clearly.
- Expose unethical conduct in journalism, including within their organizations.
- Abide by the same high standards they expect of others.

Ethics for the New Investigative Newsroom (the NONPROFITS)

Major Issues

- Acceptable donors
- Transparency
- Editorial independence / misunderstanding with funders
- Appropriate ethics
- Advocacy vs objectivity

Acceptable Donors

- Who are acceptable? Who aren’t?
  - Criminals
  - Corporations
  - Government
  - Union
  - Foundations
- Vetting
- Diversity of funders

Transparency

- Full disclosure or “a great deal of openness”
- Anonymous donors

Editorial Independence

- Fund solicitation vs ad solicitation
- Who sets the agenda? Strings attached?
  - Clarifying your V-M-G
  - Learning to say “no”
- Conflict of interest: Stories affecting (positive and negative) interests of funders
- Shielding the newsroom from funders
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>✤ What issues can journalists take on?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Networking with other non-media NGOs? Joining consortia/coalitions?</td>
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YVONNE T. CHUA / University of the Philippines & VERA Files