Ethical Storytelling

How ethical guidelines across Canada are responding to (or failing to respond to) advancements in multimedia tools

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the intersection of advancements in multimedia technology and the role of ethics guidelines in Canadian journalism. This thesis uses a quantitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews to build on how virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism interact with the codes of conduct of a sample of Canadian media outlets. This thesis concludes that there are some ethical issues that are arising from new technologies that some journalists identified as outside of the conventional boundaries of ethics guidelines. It identifies that through the multiple ethical systems working in a coordination with one another, organizations can provide their journalists with resources to address the changing technological landscape. This thesis also identifies that a considered reliance on virtue-based ethics will work to future-proof journalism against possible ethical issues related to advancements in multimedia technology.
Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The reluctant to change nature of journalism's ethical codes is summarized by the Canadian Association of Journalists' guidelines. "Ethical practice does not change with the medium. We are bound by the above principles no matter where our stories are published or broadcast" (CAJ, 2011, p.4). While a firm, principled grounding in ethical tradition has anchored the profession through turbulent spells of change, the relationship between new technology and its relationship to ethical practice is worth considering and re-evaluating. Suppose a journalist can more safely cover a conflict using a drone to capture visuals. Is sending them into a potentially harmful situation more ethical to maintain the industry standard of bearing witness? What concerns should we have if this technology became an industry standard? The commonly cited virtue of independence is often interpreted to mean that journalists do not share unpublished digital files (CAJ, 2011, p.4). How does that apply to a data journalist sharing their dataset along with a visualization to build trust with their audience? Stephen J.A. Ward writes that he disagrees with the commonly held belief that the conventional principles of journalism are enough to answer the ethical dilemmas of our time (Ward, 2019, p.9). He succinctly illustrates their conservative approach to ethics as needing to pour "new wine into old bottles," with new wine being new forms of journalism and old bottles being the conventional principles of journalism (Ward, 2019, p.10). He writes that the industry needs new bottles for these new issues. (Ward, 2019, p.10). I emphatically agree.

Technological shifts in journalism have driven change, disruption and adaptation to the industry. From the printing press to social media, journalists have benefited from technology changes that fundamentally change how information is gathered and disseminated (Kovarick, 2015). At the same time, many journalists have been subject to threats and abuse on these social
media platforms (Chen et al., 2020, p.1). Since the Internet was in its infancy, journalists hypothesized how it would change the industry as other technologies before had similarly been catalysts for change. “We face a journalism in which technology will change journalism, as it always has. Just as telephones gave reporters the ability to remain on the scene of a story longer or TV allowed us to tell news stories using moving pictures, these new media are already changing the way we do our jobs as journalists—whether we welcome those changes or not” (Regan, 2000, p.1).

Now, as technologies such as drone photography, data visualization, virtual reality, immersive reality, and digital photo/video editing and production tools have found applications in newsrooms, journalists must explore the ethical considerations of their tools. As cutting audio or over-zealously cropping an image were considered ethical violations in the past, where are the ethical lines for journalists that are flying drones or using photogrammetry to patch together images in a way that can be explored by a user on their phone (McGuire, 2007; Boonyapanachoti et al., 2020)? Photos taken on newer models of iPhones use artificial intelligence to enhance the image without having the user do anything but snap a frame (Chayka, 2022). Without codified ethical guidelines, journalists working with advanced technology will be left to blaze their own trail as to what they deem to be ethically permissible on a case-by-case basis. With the boundless potential of technology to provide journalists with more tools to tell stories and engage with their audience, how do the newsrooms regulate the use of new multimedia technology?

Media ethics serve as tools to help govern the industry and its practitioners: guides and codes of conduct replace a formal regulatory body that creates a practitioner's guide to advise the practice of ethical journalism. Kieran (1997) writes: "It is important to realize that the implicit contract between citizens and the news media, as watchdogs, entails a normative conception of
good journalism. We have a picture of what good journalism amounts to, on the basis of which we can evaluate and criticize news stories and journalistic practices" (p.26). Through ethics codes, journalists enter into an implicit contract with their audience that establishes and maintains trust in exchange for reporting that was conducted to a standard of good journalism (Kieran, 1997). But when advancements in technology change reporting practices, or open the doors to new ones, it follows that ethics codes would need to adapt. In recent years, technological advancement has provided many challenges to practitioners in the media and elsewhere, as noted by Shannon Vallor (2016): "emerging technologies like social networking software, social robotics, global surveillance networks, and biomedical human enhancements are not yet sufficiently developed to be assignable to specific practices with clear consequences for definite stakeholders" (p.28). Ethics guidelines are an essential tool to unite the members of an organization, or to a larger degree, a profession, under a common set of norms that serve as a standard directive for everyone to follow. This is valuable in the context of journalism as a discipline without a professional regulator because without similar, codified ethics guidelines, it would be even more difficult to identify when the output of a publication was journalistic or another form of media.

How newsrooms use ethical guidelines and other ethical decision-making frameworks to address new technology is an important part of charting a course through an increasingly digital industry. What tools are used to tell stories, how they are used, and what limitations should be set in place to regulate their use will be questions necessary to consider in developing practical normative conclusions for the industry.
Research Question

This thesis explores the convergence of technology, journalism, and ethics. The core of this research is the following question: How have media organizations' ethical guidelines adapted to the developing landscape of multimedia journalism, and the unique concerns these developments raise? By taking on a wide range of interview subjects from various news outlets in Canada, this thesis seeks to shed light on how a range of Canadian media outlets consider and communicate their ethics with their journalists and the public.

Subsidiary Questions

1. Has advancement in multimedia outpaced the ethical guidelines that govern their use?
2. What ethical problems or concerns remain unanswered by current media guidelines?
3. What are the core values underlying decisions about harnessing new and emerging technologies?
4. What, if any, differences emerge between different kinds of news organizations (broadcast, print, digital startup, etc.)?

Significance

How media ethics guidelines are adapting to new storytelling technology is important to the field of journalism in an academic capacity. As technology advances and media ethicists identify concerns about how multimedia is gathered and created, journalists must be made aware of the boundaries they must operate within.

This thesis will identify some of the new technologies used in the newsrooms and examine if and how they are referenced in ethics guidelines, explore how practitioners view multimedia journalism and what tools they commonly use and how. Furthermore, this thesis will build on the work of other studies to determine what the experience of multimedia journalists is
with new multimedia tools. (Bosley & Vallance Jones 2022; Min & Fink 2021). This research compares and contrasts the ethics guides of a sample of Canadian media outlets against the experiences of journalists and individuals responsible for acting ethically in the context of the profession.

This thesis aims to build on and synthesize existing research on what multimedia tools are being used by journalists in a Canadian context, what ethical theories inform ethics guidelines, and how journalists are responding to changes in their practices. The original contribution to journalism studies discourse this thesis offers is in using an original sample of interviews and ethics guideline analysis to identify how Vallor's (2016) technomoral virtue of justice and approach to virtue ethics can help future-proof the profession in a changing technological landscape.

Scope

This thesis will analyze the research question and subsidiary questions in a Canadian context and exclude international publications. This is in part for pragmatic reasons to ensure that this thesis does not become too broad in its focus to answer the research questions. Another limitation of this research will be that it will focus on Canadian media outlets that have ethics guidelines or codes of conduct posted on their website. This research also prioritizes media outlets that employ multimedia tools. For example, The Logic, a Toronto-based business and innovation publication, would be an interesting outlet to examine in this thesis as they exist in the digital media space. However, their content does not leverage any multimedia technologies in a comprehensive way (The Logic, 2023). Furthermore, the publication's code of ethics is not available on its website, leaving it outside of the scope of this thesis (Ibid.). Another limitation of this thesis is that it will only cover English-language publications. In part, this is to ensure the
quantitative analysis of the codes of ethics can be consistent and does not have issues related to translations. In a much larger part, this is because of the linguistic limitations of the researcher conducting this thesis.

Another limitation of this research is related to the timeline interviews were conducted (December 2022–April 2023). During this period, generative artificial intelligence through applications such as Chat GPT, DALL-E, Midjourney, and similar programs. In some way, a discussion of emerging technology will be naturally limited by how widespread the use of any given technology is. It is still early days for these recent developments.

**Research gaps**

In a 2015 study about how journalism ethics guides have adapted to the Internet and digital journalism, only nine of 99 codes of ethics analyzed mentioned the Internet or the Information and Communication Technologies (Díaz-Campo & Segado-Boj, 2015). Canada and the Netherlands were the two top countries in this study. Still, it is notable that most publications worldwide had not accounted for the emergence of the Internet in their ethics guides by 2015 (Díaz-Campo & Segado-Boj, 2015). Researchers write: “The codes of ethics analyzed reflect an attitude toward the Internet and digital journalism that may be characterized, in short, as a widespread lack of interest and a lack of consistency” (Díaz-Campo & Segado-Boj, 2015, p.741). While this study documented a lack of references to the Internet and ICTs, this research used only a quantitative lens to assess how the media ethics guidelines are adapting to technological changes. This is valuable information, but the current to provide a more fulsome analysis of how journalists interact with ethics guidelines and there should be a better-rounded discussion about how journalists are dealing with new ethical issues that are caused by technological advancements. It is imperative to discuss what other means are being used to
regulate journalism and determine how vital it is to codify the solutions that are being practically applied.

**Conclusion**

This thesis contains five chapters beyond this introduction: A literature review; methods and methodology; results; discussion; and conclusion.

In the literature review, the relevant articles respecting ethical principles, technological and ethical changes from a historical perspective, and possible distinctions between legacy and digital media outlets will be investigated.

In the methods and methodology chapter, the critical lens (constructive technology criticism) and the methodological approach (interpretive phenomenological analysis) will be laid out. Additionally, the research methods (semi-structured interviews and quantitative content analysis) will be identified and explained. This chapter will also identify on what basis participants were selected and what keywords were identified in the analysis of the codes of ethics. This chapter will explain how the critical lens was applied to the interview design.

In the results chapter, the tables and analysis of the quantitative content analysis will be presented. The results of the interview will be shared thematically and rely heavily on the quotations of participants. A preliminary analysis will accompany both parts.

The discussion chapter will synthesize the results of the interviews, content analysis, and literature review. It will explore that media ethics guidelines are shaped in part by virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and utilitarianism. It will continue to demonstrate how the ethical issues of participants are not addressed solely by one ethical framework, and it is in their synthesis that media ethics guidelines are able to provide guidance to challenging ethical dilemmas. It will then
outline how Shannon Vallor's (2016) virtue of justice and approach to virtue ethics generally could be useful in informing how media ethics codes are adapted in the future.

In the conclusion, the main research question and subsidiary will be revisited. It will outline what this thesis contributes to the collective knowledge of the discipline. It will then discuss what further research could be done to expand on this thesis and also discuss how this thesis could be used to inform journalists in a practical setting. This chapter will also identify any questions that remain unanswered or require more research to wholly answer.
Literature Review

Codes of conduct and ethical guidelines are derived from journalistic principles, which are products of ethical theory. The principles that are central to the ethics of journalism do not exist in a vacuum; they exist as a product of centuries of philosophical and political discourse that made way for an acceptable vessel of criticism within which journalists can operate. This literature review will outline the philosophical theories that form the foundation of media ethics, the trend toward professionalization under codified ethics, and the industries’ response to the introduction of new technologies in the past.

This literature review provides a very brief overview of the philosophical background that has given rise to modern journalist ethics. It then discusses how the ethics of journalism, while built on strong, philosophical foundations, can change, as they have in part with objectivity. This literature review then outlines a brief section on the regulatory, and specifically unregulated, history of journalism in North America. Finally, there is a brief outline of the reckonings that are occurring in journalism, more specifically the changes to technology and the role of digital and legacy media in the current Canadian media ecosystem.

Journalism ethics: Utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics

Journalism ethics is generally based on some combination of deontology, Utilitarianism, and virtue ethics (Foreman, 2016, ch. 6; Elliot and Ozar, 2010).

The deontological strain, which comes from the thinking of Immanuel Kant, is a rules-based system wherein actions are either inherently permissible, obligatory, or forbidden (Quinn, 2007). Whether or not an action is morally permissible is not premised on the action's outcome but rather on universal principles (Quinn, 2007, p.171).
By applying this formulation, Kant’s ethical system involves a rule-based approach rather than analyzing the merit of an action by its consequence or by focusing on the moral character of the actor. To this end, a deontologist would object to lying in any circumstance, even if it would produce a net good in the world. Kant’s ‘universal law’ formulation of the categorical imperative demands that it must be possible to make a universal law out of an action being contemplated. Since we cannot create a universal rule allowing everybody to lie without making the idea of lying contradictory, lying is never permitted. Kant's second formulation of his categorical imperative, usually referred to as the humanity formulation, demands that people always be treated as ends in themselves and never as means to an end (Quinn, 2007, p.171). This is fundamental in connecting transparency to media ethics, according to Plaisance (2007). Plaisance links transparency as a media ethic to "truthful forthrightness," which is the duty journalists have to not only not deceive their audience but be forthcoming about their work, regardless of the outcome of their actions (Ibid, p.204). Through this, journalists are to prioritize fulfilling their duty to their audience, to sources, etc., rather than weighing the consequences of publishing or not publishing a particular story.

The Utilitarian strain is generally credited to John Stuart Mill, a 19th-century thinker who wrote prolifically about liberty and, by extension, the freedom of expression. Mill’s thinking was heavily influenced by the work of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), who penned the first system of Utilitarian ethics under the central premise that humanity is governed by pleasure or pain, and that the central determinant of whether or not a course of action is ethical is whether it produces the most pleasure to the most people (Bentham, 2000, p.16). In On Liberty, the rights of the individual and neutrality are central to Mill’s writing (Christians, 2007). Specifically, he writes that an action is good if it is the choice that will generate the most aggregate good for all of the
people impacted by a particular action (Elliott, 2007, p.100). In addition, some have argued that for Mill, an institution’s conceptions of good should come from a place of neutrality (Christians, 2007, p. 117).

In his treatise *A System of Logic*, Mill bridged Francis Bacon’s scientific method into a philosophical line of inquiry to rationalize his political philosophy. Bacon’s scientific method, in turn, is a system to test hypotheses and would be used, in part, as a basis for journalistic objectivity (Christians, 2007, p119). In bridging Bacon’s scientific method into the political sphere, Mill created a foundation of systematically testing the reliability of statements, which ultimately would be adopted in part in the codes of ethics that came in the 1920s as journalists were galvanized by their shared virtues of accuracy and truth (Lippmann and Merz, 2013).

Mill also made significant contributions to modern journalistic principles by contributing his harm principle to the discourse of liberalism (Mill, 2001, p.13). Mill writes, “The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others” (Mill, 2001, p.13). Through this, journalism finds its foundation in adopting a consequentialist lens to ensure sources and audiences don’t experience undue harm as a product of their published works, for example (Foreman, 2016, p.223). By contrast, the deontological approach demands that an action by the practitioner adhere to their duty rather than the action’s consequences.

Virtue ethics provides an additional framework for journalists to operate within. They draw on the theories of Aristotle as he discusses how an ethical person is one who acts virtuously and with a principled character (Vallor, 2016, p.18). Vallor suggests that the original virtuous individual Aristotle had imagined was a person who’s actions are informed by virtues such as honesty, courage, moderation, and patience and only through working on developing these
principles within oneself could a person lead an ethical life (p.18). In journalism, there is
certainly carry-over from Aristotle’s virtues. When we consider what makes a good or ethical
journalist, honest, accurate, fair, and impartial are only a few virtues that come to mind in
describing what the ideal journalist would be.

The conflict between these two theories demonstrates the tension around some of
journalism’s ethical principles. No one school of thought provides a robust and complete
response to all of journalism’s dilemmas. The virtue ethics of Aristotle, Kant’s deontology and
categorical imperative, and Mill’s approach to the principle of harm and considerations of
consequentialism are, in their own ways, flawed. However, the strength of journalism’s ethics is
that these ethical frameworks do not operate against one another, but rather in conjunction with
each other. As will be discussed in Elliot and Ozar’s (2010) work, they are not necessarily
mutually exclusive and, in a patchwork, serve to fill each other’s gaps.

Objectivity: Reforming journalism

Objectivity is not a central ethic to this thesis; however, it is a good example of how a
once cherished, and arguably once valuable ethic of journalism, has fallen out of favour as social
conditions change. This is an example of how ethics need to evolve and change to remain
relevant as the profession progresses.

Objectivity as a journalism ethic is the subject of great confusion, according to Kovach
and Rosenstiel (2014). Objectivity, as proposed by Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz (2013) in
“A Test of the News,” indicated that the journalism being produced at the beginning of the 20th
century was inadequate. Thus, Lippmann proposes using objectivity as a tenet to guide the
process of journalism in an effort to stymie the bias-ridden journalism of his era with specific
reference to the reporting done by the New York Times in its coverage of the Russian
Revolution:

Primarily, we believe, that the professional standards of journalism are not high
enough, and the discipline by which standards are maintained not strong enough, to
carry the press triumphantly through a test so severe as that provided by the
Russian Revolution. (Lippmann and Merz, 2013, p.41)

At that time, introducing a system that involved verification and accuracy was sensible: it sought
to create a standard for journalism and have all practitioners conform in deciding what news is fit
to print.

Ward (2005) introduces objectivity through millennia of philosophical thought, moving
from the ancient Greek to medieval Christian thinkers, and then to the renaissance, Protestant
Reformation, the development of the printing press and through Enlightenment to our modern
day (p.37–86).

Negatively, objectivity gathered support because it was a response to a range of
worrisome developments. A strong dose of objectivity seemed an antidote to excessive
yellow journalism. Objective, professional journalism appeared the only viable option to
a corrupt, partisan press or to a sensational popular press. Only a stern objective press
could cure the disease (Ward, 2005, p.255).

While this thesis is not based on how objectivity interacts with technology, it is valuable to note
that objectivity has a strong basis in philosophy and is an evolving virtue that has been criticized
by academics as a problematic structure. Ward (2005) positions the necessity for objectivity in
the context of a journalistic reform and as a response to the concerns of many concerned
journalists from the 1920s to 1940s, however troublesome critics find the ethic (p.257).
In *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting*, Vipond details the infancy of broadcasting in Canada from 1922 – 1932 (Vipond, 1992, p.xiii). This fledgling mass communication was left in regulatory limbo until the 1929 Aird Commission and then ultimately the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (Vipond, 1929, p.xiii). This provides researchers an insight into how the eight media outlets with broadcast licenses self-regulated before the outset of more formal government regulations. In advance of the regulation brought by the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, there was an autonomy enjoyed by license holders similar to the current regulatory environment of the internet with respect to the lack of substantive regulation coming from governments in the West.

**Commission on Freedom of the Press and professionalization without regulation**

The Hutchins Commission provides a benchmark on the necessity to heighten the standards of journalism at an institutional level, as well as a general fear of the loss of autonomy the industry would have if it were subject to regulation. The commission devised the following principles to ensure the media industry maintained a mandate of social responsibility:

1. The press should offer a truthful, comprehensive account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning. Perspective is important, not only objectivity.
2. The press should serve as a forum for comment and criticism.
3. The press should offer a representative picture of constituent groups in society; that is, no stereotyping.
4. The press should transmit cultural heritage, present and clarify goals and values for society.
5. The press should offer full access to the day's intelligence, that is, to reflect the public's right to know. (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947 pp. 21-29).

The commission whole-heartedly recommended that in order to operate in the public service, journalism must be subject to self-regulation (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947 p.69). The Hutchins Commission drew criticism from members of the American Press and newspaper owners alike but succinctly presented the necessity of a regulatory function for a productive media and posited legitimate criticisms of the industry at that time (Pickard, 2010).

**Multimedia and its role in journalism**

Deuze (2003) defines multimedia in two ways: the first, as the presentation of a news story package on a website using two or more media formats, and secondly, as the integrated (although not necessarily simultaneous) presentation of a news story package through different media, such as (but not limited to) a website, a Usenet newsgroup, e-mail, SMS, MMS, radio, television, teletext, print newspapers and magazines. For the purposes of this study, I will examine multimedia through the former definition as the scope of this research is to examine multimedia tools, and not specifically platforms as a whole.

In examining multimedia, defining its value is important, but there must be an investigation as to why it is used and its intended role in this context. Do journalists use multimedia to be more accurate, more engaging, or more entertaining? Is it merely to make stories more visually appealing? The motivation for journalists to use multimedia is central to the permissibility of its application. Deuze (2003) places the rise of multimedia journalism and the expectation that journalists would work outside of their single conventional medium, in the mid-1990s, beyond the extent to which journalists from the mid-20th century would serve, occasionally, as their own photographers. Deuze suggests that the requirement for journalists to
be multiskilled and have the ability to output a news story using multimedia comes from a position of best serving an audience (p.146). Through this, we understand that the use of multimedia comes from a position of leveraging the technology to be better storytellers rather than using them as solely as ornaments to hang on a text-based article.

Deuze (2003) analyzed the impact of the digital transformation of media following the internet’s first decade of existence. In this work, Deuze highlights three characteristics shared by online journalism outlets: Hypertextuality, multimediality, and interactivity (pp. 211-216). Deuze (2003), even at the ends of Web 1.0 was succinct in defining how these new methods impacted the practice of journalism:

Such changes also have to do with editorial organization patterns, and challenges to established journalistic ways, norms and values of storytelling. Living up to the characteristics and potential added value of journalisms online particularly challenges perceptions of the roles and functions of journalism as a whole. (p. 216)

Deuze noted in this work that in as early as 2003, there were indicators that mainstream print publications that had transitioned to online platforms brought with them relics of print media, including their processes and newsroom culture (p.219). Digital-native outlets at that point had identifiable distinctions from their legacy media counterparts, specifically in the type of journalism they were engaging in, according to Deuze (p.219). The new outlets expanded, in some ways, the scope of work of digital journalists, including monitorial and dialogical journalism, which acknowledged that it, in spells, engages with its audience and is in fact a two-way communication system (p. 217).
Journalism and its essential, contemporary elements

Kovach and Rosenstiel identify the key tenets of journalism in their *Elements of Journalism*. Their book, first published in 2001 and now in its third edition, documents the core elements of journalism while also allowing space for the tectonic shifts that have come to the media industry as a product of technological change. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) outline 10 elements of journalism that emphasize virtues of truth, independence, accuracy, and duty to citizenry.

In their most recent edition, Kovach and Rosenstiel highlight that there is a distinctly different purpose than the first edition of their book. Their original intention was to centralize and articulate the common elements of the outlets that appropriately fell under the umbrella of journalism. Kovach and Rosenstiel write in the third edition that it is for anyone in the world who may be charged with creating responsible journalism (p. x). The broadening definition of journalism and who its membership is composed of raises ethical considerations, namely at what point must a person adhere to the ethical responsibilities of a journalist if their profession would conventionally be outside of the profession. Changes in technology and beyond have led to a necessary reconsideration of what it means to be a journalist.

Technomoral virtue ethics

In *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*, Vallor (2016) suggests that forthcoming scientific and technological developments will outpace mankind’s ability to adopt ethical frameworks that give guidance on the responsible and ethical use of these new technologies. Vallor offers an approach that is a “strategy” rather than a “solution” to these issues. Vallor highlights 12 virtues she deems most crucial to the flourishing of humanity: honesty, self-control, humility, justice, courage, empathy, care, civility, flexibility,
perspective, magnanimity, and wisdom (p. 120). Vallor qualifies this list by suggesting these
does not exist in media ethics guidelines\(^1\). Valor’s theories primarily draw upon
the philosophies of Aristotle, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

**Systematic Moral Analysis**

Elliot and Ozar (2010) provide one example of an ethical approach to journalism that
combines different theoretical approaches, specifically from the works of Aristotle, Kant and
Mill (p.19). They argue that these theories may be presented as mutually exclusive options (Ibid,
p.20). Instead, they use these philosophies in conjunction with one another in what they call
“mixed formalism” (Ibid., p.20). Their Systematic Moral Analysis is created to provide
journalists a tool to analyze the ethical considerations of a particular an issue. Their product is a
series of questions to determine if an action is ethically prohibited, ethically required, ethically
permitted, or ethically ideal (Elliot & Ozar, p.22). Their approach offers a breakdown that can be
applied on a case-by-case basis to help inform journalists of their ethical duties.

But emerging technologies can give rise to dilemmas that would not have been
anticipated. Aitamurto (2018) establishes the connection between new technology and the
associated breaches of conventional journalistic principles. Aitamurto analyzes two normative
paradoxes created by the use of 360-degree cameras in journalistic applications: i) while
seemingly more “accurate,” a viewer’s freedom to change the 360-degree camera’s perspective
can create a less accurate image than conventional photography; and ii) the pursuit of more

\(^1\) This is not to suggest that media ethics guidelines do not change, but rather that media outlets generally carry over
longstanding principles and do not publicly qualify their ethics guidelines as living documents that are subject to
change based on shifts in societal values.
accurate and objective multimedia has, in fact, compromised the accuracy and objectivity of the visual asset.

Aitamurto’s (2018) findings in this paper suggest that journalists who had experience using 360-degree video believed that by providing more information (360 video rather than traditional video), the underlying work was more accurate as the audience members were given more agency (p.9). Airamurto found that paradoxically, journalists had used “spatial audio, camera placement, scene composition, movement, and animations such as arrows,” as a means of drawing the viewers’ attention to specific parts of the 360-degree video. Airamurto also found that journalists identified they would stage scenes or manipulate the media in post-production to affect the viewer’s experience when using 360-degree video. This, in turn, violates many ethical principles of photojournalism (CP, 2021).

While journalists can offer viewers more autonomy and information through new technology, the curatorial role of the journalist can cross an ethical line as the concept of photo manipulation does not necessarily translate directly into including animation or other tools to influence how an audience interacts with a piece of media. Further to this, there may not necessarily be an ethical crisis caused by journalists using these tools.

In Reckoning, Callison and Young (2019) outline the numerous and compounding issues that are forcing the media industry to seek answers to existential questions. They provide, amid the economic crisis and technological shifts in journalism, a call to action to reshape the media landscape in a meaningful way. Reckoning positions the moment of journalism that this study is conducted as a liminal area in which compounding factors that have, in many ways, put the profession in crisis have also created a space for journalists and academics to re-evaluate values practitioners should uphold or modify. Callison and Young also examine the colonial origins of
North American journalism and centralize the experiences of indigenous journalists as a way to understand the issues and imbalances created by the profession as an institution. They include in their book some of the start-ups that are defying journalistic convention and reshaping journalism during this period of reckoning.

While there are ethical and financial reckonings that are reshaping journalism, it is essential to also analyze the technologies that are impacting how journalists share news and information with their audiences. Multimedia technology has been advancing at the same pace as technology has been in other industries and there is value in ensuring that these other changes are not overlooked as journalists respond to other rapid shifts.

**Advancements in multimedia tools**

In this study, I will use the research done by Bosley and Valence-Jones (2022) as well as Min and Fink (2021) to establish the parameters of what multimedia tools exist and how often they are used. Min and Fink’s (2021) study sought to understand the practitioners’ response to news outlets’ push for technological upskilling. Similarly, Bosley and Vallance-Jones (2022) surveyed recent graduates of two journalism schools on the perceived usefulness and prevalence of the use of these technologies, among other topics. By comparing these lists, this study will have a robust catalogue of what multimedia tools are being used by journalists.

A noteworthy distinction is that the list of technologies created by Min and Fink (2021) was focused on “shiny new technologies,” excluding the multimedia tools that are conventionally used in newsrooms, such as photography and simple videography. The extent to which these tools are considered *advanced* varies, but generally, they would only be used in a newsroom with considerable investment in digital technology (Min and Fink, 2021). To this end, it is especially useful in the context of this study to get a sense of what technologies may be on
the horizon and increase in prevalence in years to come. The technologies they identify are as follows (Min & Fink, 2021):

- Web designing & development (such as Content Management Systems, HTML/CSS, JavaScript)
- Video/audio editing and production tools (such as Premiere)
- Databases (such as SQL, Access, etc.)
- Data visualization tools (such as Tableau, Datawrapper, and Flourish)
- Programming tools (such as Python, R, C+, Java)
- Artificial intelligence tools (such as automated writing, chatbots, and machine learning)
- Virtual reality or augmented reality related tools

Similarly, Bosley and Vallance-Jones examined what is considered “useful technology” by surveying recent journalism school graduates who work in journalism and other industries. The technologies they identified were as follows (Bosley & Vallance-Jones, 2022):

- Photography
- Videography
- Data visualization
- Podcasting
- Interactive Maps
- Databases
- Coding
- Graphic Animation
- Online Audience Engagement
- Text on video
• Interface design
• Mobile apps
• Drones
• Virtual or Augmented Reality
• 360 photo and or video
• Voice activated Computing
• Personal Assistant systems

While separate in scope, both of these studies found that while many of the tools could be leveraged in a news context, according to their respective respondents, they often aren’t for a variety of reasons. The technological tools described by Bosley and Vallance-Jones (2022) step beyond multimedia and examine platform and tools related less to visual or auditory presentation of media and into technologies that are tools of dissemination. While this is certainly relevant to a broader discourse surrounding the general application of multimedia tools, technologies that exist, in essence, as their own platforms, are outside the scope of this research.

**Defining digital media start-ups and legacy media**

With the context of Callison and Young’s (2019) discussion of the major shifts in journalism, there a number of considerable changes that are happening simultaneously in journalist. Examining issues with an intersectional lens may be useful in determining how the financial and technological reckonings overlap and if there are distinctions between the ethical approaches of legacy media outlets and their digital media counterparts.

Bruno and Nielsen (2012) define digital media start-ups with three criteria: they are journalistic, in that they are focused on “news and current affairs”; they are online, as they exist primarily as an online entity, with the possibility of having a print-spinoff, though they were
created initially as a digital presence; and they are start-ups, meaning they are not a product or spin-off of a legacy media company (p.4).

According to Cockayne's (2019) investigation into the subject, the line between start-up and other types of businesses is often unclear (sec. 7). Cockayne (2019) suggests that a start-up is best defined by the context from which it emerges rather than an empirical economic figure or one trait (sec. 7). Legacy media is defined by Tworek and Buschow (2016) as established players in a specific media sphere (para. 2). By applying Cockayne's definition, once a company has grown to the point that it is a larger, more established player in its ecosystem, it loses its identity as a start-up. Start-ups are also defined as “new, active and independent” by Luuger and Koo (2005, p.17). This article reinforces that once a start-up becomes established in its space and is no longer new, it loses its start-up status. In some instances, the start-up distinction is central to the identity of a company. Since digital platforms have been standard practice in Canadian journalism for over two decades, the start-up distinction will not necessarily apply to all digital media outlets. Instead, legacy media will be juxtaposed with digital media broadly in this thesis.

Conclusion

There is extensive literature on the internet’s impact on journalism, the philosophical underpinnings of media ethics, the technology available to contemporary newsrooms, and the ethics surrounding technological use. There is, however, limited literature on how current journalistic principles are changing to adapt to new technology, or if they are being changed, or need to be changed at all. This literature review provides the broad contours of the historical and philosophical context. In examining the issues that technology may present, there is certain value in analyzing what principles must carry over to maintain the essence and function of journalism, while still providing space for the profession’s central ethics to grow and be reshaped by reality.
This research seeks to synthesize what issues are not answered in media ethics guides and explore how reporters and other stakeholders in the newsrooms are navigating the ethical dilemmas associated with multimedia technology. By linking these primary sources to these sources principled and informed findings can point to how journalism’s ethical quandaries can be handled in the face of changing technologies. In the discussion section, these ethical frameworks will be used to frame the codes of ethics that are used by media outlets in an effort to identify how they manifest in the ethical considerations of the profession.
Methods and Methodology

Introduction

This section will analyze the research question and research goals. It will continue to discuss the research methodology: interpretative phenomenological analysis and constructive technology criticism. Subsequently, it will discuss its research methods: interviews and quantitative content analysis. Finally, it will identify the considerations involved in participant groups and recruitment.

The key research question I seek to answer is as follows:

- How have media organizations’ ethical guidelines adapted to the developing landscape of multimedia journalism and the unique concerns these developments raise?

The following are subsidiary questions I seek to answer through this research:

- Has advancement in multimedia outpaced the ethical guidelines that govern their use?
- What ethical problems or concerns remain unanswered by current media guidelines?
- What are the core values underlying decisions about harnessing new and emerging technologies?
- What, if any, differences emerge between different kinds of news organizations (broadcast, print, digital startup, etc.)?

Research objectives

The research objectives of this thesis are as follows:

- Identify where participants believe there may be potential shortcomings in media ethics guidelines.
- Identify common themes and common gaps in media ethics guidelines.
- Identify interconnected issues that participants identified are critical to address.
• Analyze the issues and gaps and identify how advancements in multimedia technology can be addressed by using separate frameworks in conjunction with one another.

Methodology

The contents and ultimately the findings of this are informed by the phenomena identified by research participants, which are analysed alongside the sample of media ethics guidelines. This thesis uses interpretative phenomenological analysis and applies the lens of constructive technological criticism (2016) to create its findings.

The IPA approach is “phenomenological in its focus on lived experience, and through interpretative work, it attempts to explore and understand individuals’ personal experiences” (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, p.147). The sample size of this group is in keeping with the conventions of IPA in that it is relatively small, homogenous group of participants (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, p.150). This is to find a “purposive sample,” which is a closely defined group rather than a random collection of individuals (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, p.150). This is to determine trends in a small group that apply specifically, rather than assembling a group of random individuals to and apply those finding broadly to the world. IPA also relies primarily on semi-structured interviews because it allows for the researcher to explore the specific areas of expertise of the interview participant.

The critical lens that this research will adopt is constructive technology criticism, as outlined by Sara M. Watson (2016). Watson writes the following as the questions most central to the application of this element of a constructive technology criticism: “How can we read technologies as texts? All technologies are human constructions, so how can we evaluate their ethics and aesthetics as such? How do technologies extend and constrain human experience?” (p.74).
It also suggests that the criticisms against technology have a tendency to carry a negative connotation when compared to criticisms in other fields (p.15). In the section on interview design, this chapter explains how that was considered and used to mitigate this concern.

The findings of this research will help to identify what technologies are most currently central to the discussion of advancements in multimedia, as well as what is to come. The themes as brought up by interview subjects will be further examined by testing the experiences of participants against one another and analyzing the responses in their own right in the context of this lens.

**Research methods**

This research was conducted using two research methods: quantitative content analysis; and semi-structured interviews with two participant groups. Using mixed methods was a research design decision to mitigate the shortcomings of studies that are reliant exclusively on either quantitative or qualitative research methods. The use of qualitative interviews is to identify recurring phenomena as recognized by participants, whereas the quantitative content analysis’ function is to more closely examine the language that is included and absent in current media ethics guidelines that contribute to the issues and solutions identified in the interviews. By juxtaposing these methods, this study hopes to provide a more comprehensive analysis than either method as a standalone research tool.

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, interviews were the qualitative research method selected for the purpose of this research. This allowed participants to have increased autonomy in identifying the issues that they were concerned about, as well as allowed for follow-up questions to be asked to discuss more nuanced issues and for clarification. Another benefit to using interviews over surveys is that it frequently generates more unexpected responses from
participants when compared to surveys (Jain, 2021). These factors, along with the benefit of communicating with journalists using a research method that is professionally familiar to them, were the leading reasons for conducting interviews.

**Quantitative content analysis**

The media ethics guidelines analyzed come from a combination of legacy and digital media outlets. They were selected based on the organization’s audience side, online availability, and the outlet’s use of multimedia journalism. For example, *The Logic* was left outside of the scope of this study because it does not meaningfully incorporate multimedia resources in its journalism. Similarly, *The National Post* and Postmedia publications were outside of the scope of this thesis because their ethics guidelines are not available online. Postmedia publications also do not generally incorporate multimedia in their work in a meaningful way beyond news photography and occasionally videography. The ethics guidelines that were selected for analysis were from the following organizations:

- Globe and Mail
- Toronto Star
- CTV
- CBC (*Journalistic Standards and Practices*)
- Global News
- The Narwhal
- The Discourse
- The Tyee
- Canada’s National Observer
- IndigiNews
The guidelines were analyzed with NVivo, a leading quantitative content analysis tool. When available, the quantitative analysis will identify the publication date of media ethics guidelines to create a basis for how frequently they are publicly updated. A query was used to identify the frequency of the following words within media ethics guidelines:

- Multimedia
- Photo, photography and stem words
- Video, videography and stem words
- Graphics, graphic design, and stem words
- Drones and stem words
- Data Visualization, databases and Data
- Coding and code
- Illustration and photo illustration
- Artificial Intelligence or AI
- 360-degree video
- Virtual Reality and Immersive Reality
- Mapping and stem words
- Interactivity
- Animation

After a preliminary exploration of media ethics guidelines, the following virtues were identified and selected to examine through quantitative content analysis using Nvivo. This was to determine how commonly they appeared across the media ethics guidelines in this sample. Objectivity was selected not because it was observed in a media ethics guide, but rather to
illustrate its absence, which helps indicate that the profession has reconsider the place of
objectivity in its guidelines.

- Objectivity
- Accuracy
- Truth
- Honesty
- Transparency
- Justice
- Independence
- Fairness
- Accountability

Finally, a thematic analysis was conducted to identify the frequency of specific ethics, which
will serve to outline the principles most central to legacy and digital media outlets, respectively.
This research does not assume that the ethical practice of a news organization is reducible to the
contents of its codes or guidelines. Furthermore, the fact that a particular technology, such as
drones, for example, is not mentioned does not in and of itself indicate that the news organization
in question has not contemplated the ethical implications of that particular technology. However,
interviews help to paint a more robust picture of whether there are gaps between ethical practices
and recent advances in technology.

**Research method: Semi-structured interviews**

All interviews were conducted via video conference, and anonymity was not granted to
participants. Because the expertise of the participants is integral to the soundness of this study,
ensuring that the content of each interview could be verified against their role and attribution was
of paramount importance, Interviewees were given the option to withdraw their response, in part or in entirety, after the interview in place of anonymity. Interviewees were not given the opportunity to provide written responses so as to avoid a distinction between the interview transcripts and written responses. The volume of interviews was selected to gather the sentiment of journalists and editors from a variety of different outlets, mediums, and career lengths regarding how media ethics guidelines were used in practice, not to generate a statistically significant sample size. Due to the abundance of multimedia journalists and editors that work in Canada, the use of interviews as a research method is to supplement and offer a check and balance against the data analyzed by quantitative content and vice versa. Using interviews to collect a significantly significant sample size is a consideration for further research on this subject area.

**Interview design**

The interview design was informed by both the constructive technology criticism as well as the interpretive phenomenological analysis. Watson’s main thesis is that the criticism that embodies so much of the discourse around technology is negative, unlike the critiques of other fields, such as literature and cinema (Watson, 2016, p. 40). In this, the questions were written with this bias against technological advancement in mind and with an aim to initiating a productive discourse.

The semi-structured element of the interviews was an important part of applying the interpretive phenomenological analysis because it indicates the ability to break from the form and explore the areas about which the interview subject had expertise (Smith and Fieldsend, 2021, p. 151). In interviews, there were numerous occasions that the conversation diverged in order to follow these areas of expertise. The interview questions were reviewed by Dr. Brian
Gorman of MacEwan University and Professor Aneurin Bosley to ensure that the questions would lend themselves to eliciting answers that would address the research questions. The question list (Appendix B), along with the proposal of this research has been approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (Appendix C).

Initially, two participant groups were identified and invited to participate in interviews for this study: Ombuds and individuals occupying similar editorial roles and multimedia reporters.

**Participant group one: Ombuds**

The first participant group is composed of ombuds, public editors, or standards editors. These interviewees were selected because they serve as liaisons between the public and their journalists and are largely responsible for interpreting their newsroom’s ethics guides in a practical application. They are also uniquely qualified because their role, especially in the case of an ombud, is to act as a kind of watchdog on their own organizations. This uniquely qualifies them to be openly critical of any ethical lapses within their respective newsroom. However, there is a limited number of individuals that formally occupy these roles in contemporary newsrooms. The New York Times, arguably among the most digitally advanced English news organizations in the world, eliminated this position in 2017 (Victor, 2017).

Additionally, public editors, standards editors, and other positions in newsrooms chiefly concern themselves with upholding ethical standards, making them the enforcement vehicle of regulations.

**Participant group two: Multimedia journalists**

The second participant group is composed of journalists who use multimedia tools. They were identified by their bylines and other credit lines included in published works that
demonstrated the use of advanced multimedia tools. The aim of interviewing these participants was to understand the ethical concerns and interpretations of ethics guides that inform the use of multimedia tools. By situating this as a question of practice, this participant group was asked to identify what they do rather than what they ought to do. This group encapsulates a significantly larger number of journalists, so every effort was made to interview a cross-section of journalists that work in digital media with these multimedia tools. This study focuses on journalists that work at a national level or in a market that has invested itself in creating multimedia journalism. Many local legacy news outlets were excluded from this study, since they generally lacked any significant use of multimedia tools beyond news photography and occasionally videography.

**Changes to participant groups during participant recruitment**

Initially, interview participants would be included across Canada and the United States. The scope of this research was reduced for two main reasons: feasibility and categorical differences in the multimedia technology being used. A bi-national would be too large to have a cross-section that included the perspectives of all interviewees.

Another change to the research design was broadening the ombud category to include the perspectives of more editors, founders and other editorial positions in newsrooms that are charged with either creating or upholding ethics guidelines. This decision was made for two reasons: a lack of participation from ombuds, public editors, and standards editors; and to better include the perspectives of organizations that operate under different organizational structures than conventional legacy media outlets.
Participant selection

Participants were selected with respect to the outlets they work or worked for (legacy or digital), what their role is or was within their organization, what point of their career they are in, the multimedia tools they use in their career, or whether they are freelance journalists or employed full-time by a media outlet. An effort was made to select participants from a variety of backgrounds, whether that be the type of outlet they work for, the point in their career they have reached, their racial identity, or their gender identity, to avoid biasing the interviews to reflect any one intersectional identity. One caveat to the data collected is that it is a reflection of the journalism industry and its own lack of representation, specifically of racialized journalists.

One trend noted in the recruitment process was a disparity in participation levels of in-house photojournalists and multimedia journalists generally. Due to the professional risks related to participating in an interview in which the participant is identified by their name, position, and employer, there is a potential barrier in recruiting early career journalists that work as in-house multimedia journalists who may feel their participation would expose them to undo professional risk. Overall, and as expressed by some interview participants, photojournalism especially has been facing significant downsizing (Quart, 2008).

A complete list of participants, their positions, and the outlet they are engaged with are available in Appendix A.

Analysis method: In vivo coding

In vivo coding was used to analyze the interview data for two reasons: It is most similarly aligned with the verbatim practices of journalism; and it reaffirms the value of the participant’s voice in this study (Saldaña, 2016). The coding helped determine what themes were important to participants during their interviews and avoid. Based on the trends indicated from the common
codes that emerged, a selection of the most salient responses that address the research question is shared in the results section.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology (constructive technology criticism and interpretive phenomenological analysis) as well as the research methods (semi-structured interviews and quantitative content analysis). It also shared the underpinnings of the interview design and changes that occurred over the course of participant recruitment.

In the next chapter, the results of the quantitative content analysis and interviews will be introduced with a preliminary analysis to create a basis for the discussion, which will synthesize the results along with the literature from the literature review.
Results

This chapter presents the results of both the analysis of the selected ethical guidelines as well as the themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. First, the publication dates, and then a quantitative content analysis of select key terms with reference to either specific technologies or ethical principles.

Publication dates

The publication dates of the ethics guidelines range from 2002 to 2023. This data was collected from the webpage of the respective media outlet where available

Table 1

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Frequency of multimedia technology key terms

A quantitative content analysis was applied to the ethics guidelines to ascertain which key terms were included and absent from the text.

Table 2

*Frequency of Multimedia Technology References in Media Ethics Guidelines*

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**Frequency of ethical principle key terms**

A quantitative content analysis was conducted on the same ethical guidelines to determine the number of references to several key terms related to journalistic ethical principles.
Table 3

*Frequency of References to Ethical Principles in Media Ethics Guidelines*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Objectivity</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Truth</th>
<th>Honesty</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBC’s Journalist Standards and Practices</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Television Digital News Association Code of Ethics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Association of Broadcasters’ Code of Ethics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global News’ Journalistic Principles and Practices</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globe and Mail Editorial Code of Conduct</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torstar Journalistic Standards Guide</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Narwhal Code of Ethics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discourse Ethics Policy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tyee’s Principles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada’s National Observer Ethics and Policies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IndigiNews Story Telling Intentions</td>
<td>4²</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTV News Editorial Standards and Policies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² All of the mentions of objectivity were critical of its use.
### Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>independence</th>
<th>Fairness</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBC’s Journalist Standards and Practices</td>
<td>8(^3)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Television Digital News Association Code of Ethics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Association of Broadcasters’ Code of Ethics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global News’ Journalistic Principles and Practices</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globe and Mail Editorial Code of Conduct</td>
<td>1(^2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torstar Journalistic Standards Guide</td>
<td>2(^2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Narwhal Code of Ethics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discourse Ethics Policy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tyee’s Principles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada’s National Observer Ethics and Policies</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>IndigiNews Story Telling Intentions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTV New’s Editorial Standards and Policies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 outlines the date of publication, when available. The dates range from 2002 to 2023, which captures a wide breadth of time. From this, we are unable to devise exactly how well these publications’ ethics guides are able to address technologies that were introduced after its publication. It is possible that the publication dates of these codes of ethics is not related to how well it guides its adherents in issues related to technology, however it is reasonable to state that

\(^3\) All mentions of justice were with reference to the justice system rather than the virtue of justice.
the new technologies that may complicate ethics were not even in existence when the outlet created their ethics guidelines. This may indicate there could be issues that their ethics guidelines are too dated to have considered.

Table 2 and Table 3 follow the same premise of the research conducted by Díaz-Campo & Segado-Boj (2015). In their research, they use quantitative content analysis to determine the frequency of references to the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies in 99 international media ethics guidelines (Díaz-Campo & Segado-Boj, 2015). Their analysis criticizes the lack of inclusion of specific terms related to the internet and calls on organizations to reconsider this approach. For this analysis, the results of Table 2 only indicate whether or not a publication has created codified rules that they are sharing about specific technologies, and the results of Table 3 only indicate which values were included, if at all, in the codes of ethics of the publications within this sample.

Interviews

Thirteen participants were interviewed, and they presented a breadth of experience from a variety of journalistic backgrounds. In vivo coding was used to discern what commonalities were present in the responses of each participant and these responses have been grouped accordingly. The participants in this study were selected to reflect the diversity of the journalism industry and, more specifically, the variety of journalists, editors, and publishers who are invested in the ethical conduct of multimedia journalists. The interviews were not conducted to create a definitive or exhaustive list of issues facing the participant with respect to multimedia ethics but rather to determine what common experiences the participants share.

One theme that emerged was that the founders of digital media outlets were both concerned with financial transparency in the content of their ethics. For example, Douglas
Soltys, editor-in-chief and founder of BetaKit, referenced a general concern with financial transparency and a desire to make his business publication’s funding clear to readers. Similarly, Carol Linnit, cofounder of The Narwhal, shared that disclosing their funding to their readers is an important consideration for The Narwhal in tandem with their conflict-of-interest policy.

Reporters with a background in local media primarily highlighted many conventional multimedia challenges, such as ethical considerations with respect to cropping and photo manipulation as well as the concerns they have for the wellness of their sources after publication. Meral Jamal, Phillip McLachlan, Mackenzie Lad, Spencer Colby and Jesse Winter notably returned to concerns that they share in ensuring that the images they publish are suitable for their readers and their sources if they are members of vulnerable communities.

Kathy English, former public editor of the Toronto Star, and Jack Nagler, CBC’s ombudsman, shared similar sentiments regarding a steadfast belief in the adaptability of media ethics as they exist. English said that from her perspective, the reconsideration of media ethics in the context of the Toronto Star’s newsroom, which occurred during the digital transformation in the early 2000s, sufficiently prepared the publication for many of the challenges that the industry faces today. English outlined that the key change to media ethics guidelines at that point was with reference to the permanency of publication and impossibility of un-publication. When asked to remove an image from a digital edition, English likened it to cutting an image out from a microfiche, which her publication would not do before they had an online presence. The decision was made in 2007 not to unpublish images or other materials at the request of complainants, which English says she has since changed her mind on:

That was before everybody basically had a computer in their hand that they could search for something instantaneously. We were thinking like old-style newspaper people when
we weren't thinking of the realities of digital. That was when I really altered my thinking and saw that we had evolved a policy really largely out of newspapers.

English noted that during the formative years of the digital transformation of journalism, there was a re-evaluation of what rules must be applied from print and what would need to be adapted to be more suitable in an online context:

The challenge was always that you couldn't just be the person that said, ‘this is the way we do things because this is how they did it in newspapers for all of my career and for a hundred years before.

Nagler shared a similar perspective regarding the ethical considerations arising out of new technologies:

So, in most multimedia reporting, I don't think the ethical challenges are all that different than in other journalistic content. The standards are the same, the way that you gather the information—it has all of the same kind of principles involved.

But Nagler acknowledged that an evolution of media ethics is an essential element of an evolving industry:

The idea that journalistic standards evolve over time should not frighten anyone. In fact, it's a necessity. Certain principles such as accuracy are a constant, but it is okay to argue over what it means to reach the bar. And it's okay to argue over which journalistic values should have the highest priority. In this day and age, people are wondering if the principles need to evolve to deal better with some of the challenges that our society is facing. But whatever you think your most important journalistic principles are, you have to express them, regardless of whether you're doing it through a 3d hologram or whether you're doing it through a traditional print story.
Frequency of conversations between editors and multimedia journalists about ethics

Gabrielle Drolet, a journalist and cartoonist, noted that in one instance, the necessity to complete an assignment quickly didn’t allow for a conversation, though she acknowledges that a conversation isn’t necessarily warranted in every instance.

They emailed me, and they said ‘we have a piece coming out this afternoon, can you draw something?’ There wasn't like, you know, a lot of time to discuss the ethics.

Jesse Winter, freelance multimedia journalist, expressed that he has had a similar experience on several occasions:

The shortest version is that process [a discussion of ethics before a story] is that it doesn't happen at all. When I have an assignment, I get told to go where I go, and the assignment work, especially for folks like me [freelance visual journalists].

Meral Jamal acknowledged that the conversations between reporters and editors often do not happen:

Oftentimes, we don't have a conversation. I don't think some of the editors I’ve worked for have ever really established guidelines for how we edit photos. And so, you will find inconsistencies on our website and every reporter just kind of goes about their own process of like editing a photo. Of course, we know the essentials like don't add or remove anything in the photo, but for everything else, there are no guidelines. Whereas ethics around how you visualize data, or how do you make connections between data to present something—that's a conversation that hasn't happened.”

Mackenzie Lad, a weekend visuals editor at The Globe and Mail, described her conversations with freelance photographers positively, indicating that they were informed of The Globe and
Mail’s ethics policies immediately. Lad also said that in her experience, many of the ethical decisions were made by the photo editor:

Photojournalist freelancers will file a big batch of photos, and you take that in and, as the editor, you have an idea of what the story is what story you're trying to tell. So, it's both the choice of what photos are going to tell the story, but also what photos are left behind. Lad also spoke broadly about how collaboration is an important part of the ethical decision-making process:

I think collaboration needs to be a part of the framework: the guidelines, which is how we approach this work, and we have collaborations, we have conversation, and then that's another way to sort of push those conversations about ethics.

**Complaints from the public largely with respect to conventional photo and video**

Nagler highlighted that the majority of complaints that arise are more closely related to non-multimedia components of an article.

The things that generate the most complaints from people are headlines and tweets—things that get shared around on social media.

Graeme Roy, Canadian Press Visual Content Curator, noted that complaints that are related to multimedia are primarily associated with individuals wanting a conventional photo taken down:

Generally speaking, the pictures [CP receives complaints about] are fine in the legal sense, in terms of being shot for news gathering in a public place. But a lot of times, you'll just say, O.K., especially during the pandemic, you know, with photos of people lining up to get COVID tests, they got masks on, we've got hundreds of these pictures, it's, you know, it doesn't make any difference, and we can we withdraw the picture.
Neither Nagler nor Roy identified that advanced multimedia tools were causing the public to criticize the ethics of their respective publications.

**Ethical considerations of data visualization**

Patrick Cain, freelance journalist, reflected on a key moment where the use of multimedia gave rise to ethical concerns. In 2015 a large trove of data was leaked from dating site Ashley Madison, whose tagline was “Life is short. Have an affair” (Ashley Madison, 2023). The leak included the user data of individuals using the website to elicit interest from others seeking extramarital affairs, Cain explained.

We could absolutely have mapped the Ashley Madison data in public to the household level. That’s actually not technically challenging. And I think we actually did it, but not for publication, and wrote around it.

Cain went on to explain that the data that his team had from the Ashley Madison leak could have been used to plot users’ location data to a three-foot square on a map.

We could really easily publish a map that shows what room in their house someone was using Ashley Madison. It would have been terrible, and it probably would have got people killed.

In this instance, Cain and his colleagues determined that the deleterious impact of publishing this information in this form greatly outweighed the public good and decided to leave the information unpublished in a multimedia capacity.

Christopher Brackley, a freelance cartographer who often works with Canadian Geographic, discussed the nuances specific to map-making that many journalists who are not trained in this specific multimedia tool may miss. He also shared that as his role is highly
specialized, he is often without a code of conduct or guild that is specific to his particular practice of journalism:

Given the real scarcity of sort of cartographic journalists, I don't really have anybody else to talk to about their decision-making processes in this specific context, nor do I have any kind of guild or group to ask what is the best practice. It is absolutely on me to make those [ethical] decisions.

Brackley also noted that in using multimedia representations, it is easy for journalists who don’t understand the nuances of data collection to use a map to present two unalike data sets as if they are the same:

A very untrue storytelling is to use two different datasets for a spatial extent. Consider if I have data from Ontario and data from Quebec, but they were acquired in different ways. They have different assumptions, but if I put them together, because they both represent [the same subject matter] and they have a spatial extent. They're very different in the way that they were acquired, and they are different in their methodology. If you put those two things together and use the same number scale, you know they're not really comparable; it builds out the map, it makes it feel like it's complete, but it's not true. It's definitely apples and oranges.

Aside from the actual content of any map, how the cartographer decides to represent the data using colours presents what Brackley considers to be an ethical choice.

The insinuations of the graphic choices that I make are very real. Hot colours—those alarmist sorts of colours—are very real and they get people excited. I want to be sure that whatever I see graphically, whatever I choose to design—reflects the variety, the severity, and the intensity of the data as it is. Most of the people that I'm working with,
and certainly my own instinct, is to represent it in a way that, to my opinion, which is a
biased perspective, reflects something that's fairly defensible about the data and doesn't
exaggerate the data.

Beyond this, Brackley also raised issues that he has with crowdsourced data. While it presents
many possibilities, he said that he has concerns about its use:

Generally, crowd-sourced data raises an interesting audience engagement/participatory
angle and opens up a litany of new data sources, but ultimately there are concerns of the
accuracy and consistency of that data.

**Speed of filing for wire services**

Graeme Roy noted that at Canadian Press, content management technology has allowed
photojournalists to almost instantly send images and captions to their photo desk, which raised
considerations amongst his colleagues about how to ensure that the increase in speed does not
come at a sacrifice of accurately contextualizing an image in its caption. Spencer Colby, a
freelance journalist who has worked for Canadian Press, echoed Roy’s considerations about the
growing pressures related to the speed of filing as an early career journalist. Colby recalled that
as an early career photojournalist without the technology to file photos almost instantly, he had
the time to ensure his process is of the highest ethical standard. This is an important
consideration as an early career reporter, according to Colby.

Lad also said that from her perspective, speed and verification were often in competition
in this face-paced information landscape:

It's challenging, you know? You want to get information out there quickly, and you want
to match that speed. But you also need to do your due diligence with, you know, the
ethical imperatives of verification.
Labour concerns and precarity

Participants in reporter roles, especially those in freelance roles, reported a connection between their ethical concerns for the industry and the precarity caused by the imbalanced power dynamic between freelance journalists and their employers. Drolet, Winter, and McLachlan noted that outlets vary widely in their treatment of freelancers. Winter noted that the staffing cutbacks in newsrooms across the country have stifled the efforts of multimedia journalists.

Labour challenges influence these ethical concerns because the challenge that we are currently facing and have been for the last 10 or 15 years, is a complete hollowing out of robust professional newsroom photo departments.

Winter explained that when freelance journalists are kept at a contracts-length away from the organization that they work for, they are not given a role in decision making.

The majority of journalists, multimedia, visual journalists, photojournalists, videographers, etc. being pushed into precarious freelance work means that we are further from centres of power. It's harder for us to advocate for ourselves.

On the subject of which outlets use more advanced multimedia tools and which do not, Lad said that from her perspective, the disparity came down to how well resourced the organizations are.

I guess one thing I noticed is the ways that organizations that have money, bigger organizations are able to finance the tools that actually really excite us and interest people in a multimedia space. Smaller organizations don't have those capabilities. I think there is this sort of imbalance of the types of media we get our news from local media, it's sort of fallen by the wayside in a lot of places. And you know, you can see that in in small newspapers being eaten by bigger corporations.
Consensus that artificial intelligence is a growing concern

A clear trend in the interviews was a general concern amongst journalists that the developments in generative artificial intelligence are a significant ethical consideration moving forward. The range of issues brought up was closely related to how it could be used to generate hyper-realistic images and the challenges that would present in the disinformation landscape. Jesse Winter said that while he is concerned about the labour implications that may stem from newsrooms adopting AI as a means of eliminating photographers, there is a possible upside.

I think there's a possibility that AI could essentially drive a renaissance in photojournalism and documentary if we can get people to trust us and trust that photojournalism and documentary work and fact-based photography is not AI. Similarly, Drolet said that she believes there are concerns about how quickly some newsrooms have adopted generative artificial intelligence to replace the work of illustrators:

I think the quickness with which this AI technology became so usable, and so part of the way we interact with the world, and what we see online, is really scary. And I also think that when it comes to using that for articles, or for any form of journalism, that's like a person you're not paying, right? That's someone who used to make a living wage, making her illustrations, who's now out of a job.

Kathy English also expressed a number of concerns about artificial intelligence.

How much do you tell readers this article was created through artificial intelligence? Newsrooms are going to have to create systems around how do you have human oversight of AI. I don't believe it can just be published as is. I just think we haven't even begun to figure out the issues. And, you know, for me, it's sort of like, it's like the early days of Wikipedia, you know, we had to have a way to, you know, put a newsroom
memo out to say Wikipedia is not a reliable source. So how do you do the same with AI, as it's being tested? My greater fear is that with the economic challenges facing the news industry, that this will be an easy way to create content.

**Common issues face legacy and digital-native media**

The issues that face journalists at legacy media outlets and digital media outlets are closely related. There is an important distinction to be made that national outlets with larger audiences have, in some instances, the budget to do more work in multimedia journalism than their smaller counterparts. The dialogue remains focused largely on conventional photography and occasionally videography and graphics teams, which is indicates that within the context of this sample, there was not a heavy emphasis on technology that exists on the cutting edge of multimedia technology Reporters at digital media outlets did share that there was more dialogue about advancing these tools and implementing drone photography, and developing more multimedia forward work, like photo essays and interactive maps.

In part, the Narwhal’s standards and principles are derived from the conventions set out by legacy media outlets as a way to ensure that they maintain a level of journalistic authority that is not shared with activist groups. According to Linnit:

You see a lot of environmental organizations using the tools of journalism, like investigations, filing freedom of information requests, and you see a little bit of those tools being pulled into campaign work. For us, we are very specific about ourselves as journalists, and we really adhere to journalistic standards and principles.

Nagler shared his perspectives about working for the national broadcaster and how that has informed his perspective on the adaptability of media outlets:
Broadcasters in general, but CBC in particular, who have so much experience in trying to integrate different platforms and different ways of delivering content, are probably better positioned than some other news organizations [to adapt ethical principles to new technologies]. The flip side to that is they're sometimes less nimble because of the sheer scale of an organization of that size.

Conclusion

The outlets included in the media ethics guideline analysis provide some indication about how journalists communicate to their staff and members of the public what standards and values they espouse. Different outlets take different approaches, but most put a strong focus on how the ethics apply to the written word. The language in the codes also tends to lack specificity. This translates to a common sentiment from participants surrounding a lack of specific guidelines on the ethical use of multimedia tools. There are also significantly different views as to whether this lack of explicit direction constitutes an issue or if it needs to be addressed at all. Some interview participants, including Nagler and English, said that they do not think that journalism needs new ethics to deal with new technological issues as the principles remain the same. This is in line with a virtue-based approach as it is premised in empowering journalists to make their decisions based on principles that can be applied to a variety of situations, they may find themselves in. Some interview participants, like Drolet and Jamal shared that they believe there are gaps in ethics guidelines that leave them without firm instruction as to what the most ethical way forward is. Drolet and Brackley also shared that there is limited mention of their particular multimedia technologies which leaves them fitting themselves into ethics guidelines that were not necessarily designed with their mediums in mind. These issues illustrate that there are lapses
in ethical guidelines that leave some practitioners, by their own assessment, without solid
direction that is applicable to our technological reality.
Discussion

In this chapter, the results will be broken down and discussed through an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology. This thesis will outline how the methodology impacts these findings and will then break down the ethical challenges of new technologies, the re-emergence of multimedia issues that existed in previous, more analog forms and the commonalities and differences that emerged in interviews. The strengths and shortcomings of the three ethical theories outlined in the literature review will then be discussed, and the primary and subsidiary research questions will be addressed. This thesis applies interpretative phenomenological analysis IPA as its methodology. In interpreting results, IPA outlines the following steps: Identifying themes through coding the first case, finding connections, and repeating the process individually across other transcripts and then connecting them broadly across the sample (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, pp. 151-152).

In the first step, themes are identified through free textual analysis to summarize and determine what overarching themes were present in the interviewee’s responses (Ibid.). From that point, the responses were coded using in-vivo coding, which focuses on the parts of a transcript that indicate action or emphasis to help informer the researcher about what is important to the participant (Saldaña, 2016, p.184). The tool that Saldaña uses to describe this is to code any sections that the researcher things would be emphasized in speech (Saldaña, 2016, p.184).

The second step was to examine the codes and identify themes that emerged within individual interviews (Smith & Fieldsend , 2021, pp. 151-152). Given the content of the interviews, the threads that naturally connected all interviews was ethics and technology. Within individual interviews, connected themes were closely related to the general sentiment each participant shared regarding their views of technology and their views of journalism as an
institution. For example, some freelancers who were technologically inclined and are in a position to embrace new tools, like Jesse Winter, Spencer Colby, Meral Jamal, Gabrielle Drolet, and Phillip McLachlan, shared a positive sentiment about the technology for the most part. Winter questioned how adaptive journalism’s ethics could be and thought that those most able to determine what rules should govern new multimedia tools are working as freelancers, since news organizations have greatly reduced the number of photographers and videographers on permanent staff. These themes helped tie in the constructive technology criticism and avoid the content of this research to be premised entirely in a distrust of technological advancement (Watson, 2016). In applying this criticism and using it to design the survey, this research is intended to examine the limits and possibilities of ethics codes and how they interact with technology.

The final analytical step in interpretative phenomenological analysis is repeating the first steps of coding the interview and analyzing themes and applying it to all of the interview transcripts. Using a smaller sample size allowed for more time to be spent on each individual transcript.

In conjunction with the literature review, a number of themes emerged, including critiques of individual technologies, the necessity of using a synthesis of ethical theories to inform ethics guidelines, the carryover of technological issues from technologies past, the ethical issues that arise from labour issues for multimedia reporters, and artificial intelligence challenges.

**Identifying consequentialist, deontological and virtue-based language in ethics guides**

Virtue-based ethics, as described by Vallor (2016) is any stable trait that allows its possessor to excel in fulfilling its distinctive function (pp. 17-18). In that, virtue-based language
manifest in ethics code through a specific mention of what traits an ethical journalist should embody. References towards specific virtues would likely be identified in Table 3.

Rule-based ethics manifest differently in ethics guides. Often, there are direct references to an ethical issue and a decisive, appropriate response associated with the rule. For example, in the Globe and Mail’s ethics guide, the organization has a rule-based approach to what they and their reporters should pay for and how they should handle items given to them:

Those who keep such items for personal enjoyment must make a similar-value charitable donation. Other free items of more than nominal value must be returned or given to charity…

Free admission to sports and entertainment events or access to professional services may be accepted for review purposes. Although it is seldom important who pays for lunch in business entertaining, The Globe and Mail pays whenever possible.

(Globe and Mail, 2022, p. 7)

These offer precise guidance using rules-oriented language (“must make,” “must be returned,” etc.). In the context of technology, this research assumes that to formulate a rule about how a specific technology should be used, the ethics guideline should name the technology. Through this, Table 2 identifies when a specific term related to a multimedia technology appears in a code of ethics, which may indicate that the code of ethics is creating a rule based on how it should be handled.

Finally, consequentialist language manifests itself less frequently in ethics guidelines. There are fewer quantifiable indicators to determine when an ethics guideline is using language that is based in consequentialist or Utilitarian ethics. Often, the mention of harm or the public good are often indicators that the ethics guide is applying a consequentialist lens. It is important
to consider that the mention of specific language is not a robust method to determine the ethical principles of an organization, but rather a criterion to assess generally what frameworks may be at play in a particular guideline.

New technologies, new issues

The introduction of new technologies introduces new issues for their users. For example, creating maps is neither new nor journalism specific. The maps Cain and Brackley can create have a capacity to communicate significant amounts of valuable information relevant to readers or viewers. As noted, using the Ashley Madison data, Cain was able to plot user locations to within about three square feet. The principle of accuracy might ordinarily demand that a map contain as much information as possible, though given the sensitive nature of the Ashley Madison data, such a map would raise significant privacy concerns. At the same time, a map can’t really be created without the location data. Cain ultimately decided not to publish a map, since this would come at too high a cost to the safety and privacy of the individuals in the data. In this, there exists new tensions between ethical principles that require some consideration and communication to practitioners and the public about how outlets believe these issues should be addressed. In part, Cain appears to be operating using a consequentialist framework, as he is considering whether the action is ethically permissible based on the consequences of his actions (i.e. ‘If I post this map, someone may be killed. Therefore, it would be unethical to post the map’). In part, there is also a consideration of what harm he would create if the map were to be released to the public. Cain shared that his thinking was in considering what harm his actions could cause, which is aligned with Elliot and Ozar’s (2010) Systematic Moral Analysis and the principles mentioned in that framework.
Re-emergence of non-digital issues

There also are ethical considerations to be raised with respect to technological shifts that impact conventional photography and videography. As per Roy, Colby, and Winter’s comments, the content management technology that has enabled live filing is able to deliver photos to an editor’s desk, with captions, almost immediately. This does not necessarily create a privacy concern, nor is the manner of capture changed from essentially the technology used in film cameras. But there is now less time for the reporter who took the photos or the editor to make editorial decisions as post-production begins as quickly as the file can be transferred. In contrast, McLachlan reports that much of his time between capturing an image and filing a story was spent considering the possible ethical implications of his work as he does not work on the to-the-minute deadlines of wire services. This slower pace, in his words, provides an opportunity to discuss relevant details with sources and weigh the ethical considerations of his decisions.

To summarize, there are technologies that are leaving reporters with less time to think about the ethical impact of their work and there are also new technologies raising new ethical issues that guidelines may not have addressed. Drone photography is similar in some respects to ‘conventional’ photography, but drones can also be flown near to peoples’ bedrooms or back yards, raising additional privacy concerns beyond just having a powerful zoom lens. Drones also allow journalists to capture images and video while being physically separated from a given event. Winter observed that a multimedia journalist could technically cover a protest from a near enough building and never set foot at the scene of the actual protest. To some extent, a journalist could do the same with a camera and a long enough lens or a remote trigger in a more analog time. But drones can give the impression of walking through a crowd in a way that is distinct
from other forms of photography or videography. Many newer technologies may have ‘legacy’
or analog equivalents, but they can also have an amplification effect.

**Legacy and digital media**

A key distinction between the guidelines of legacy media outlets and digital media outlets
covered in this study is that the former offers much longer and more detailed guidelines to its
journalists. Most of the media ethics guidelines of these start-ups were relatively brief, often
written in plainer language than legacy media outlets, and did not present significantly different
use more virtue-oriented language to communicate their ethics in their respective guidelines. For
example, the following excerpts of Canada’s National Observer rely heavily on virtue-based
language:

1. We report the news responsibly with fairness and accuracy.

6. We strive to be sensitive and respectful when dealing with sources. (Canada’s National
Observer, n.d.)

In this example, there is an idea presented that journalists should be fair, accurate,
sensitive, and respectful, which is aligned with how virtue ethics manifest in media ethics
guidelines (Canada’s National Observer, n.d.).

Digital news start-up guidelines are relatively brief, leaving audiences with less
information to create expectations of what sort of behaviour to anticipate from the reporters. This
is not to suggest that length is a measure of the quality of an ethical guideline, but in function,
media ethics guidelines provide publications an opportunity to share how their processes work
with their audience with their audience. McGraw (2004) argues that codes of ethics in a
professional context can be examined as though they are a social contract both between
organizations, their membership (in this context, journalists) and the public. In this, when ethics
guidelines are brief, they may communicate less to the audience and miss an opportunity to
explain how journalists operate and what their ethical beliefs are. More detailed codes can help
laypeople understand what kind of conversations are happening in newsrooms and help give the
public confidence that an organization is firmly grounded by ethical principles. Organizations
may also need to update their codes regularly to keep pace with technological change. For
example, an ethical code that was last updated in 2015 may have a more robust framework to
consider social media platforms that one written in 1999. Additionally, a code of ethics last
updated in 2015 will not likely have considered the challenges of managing Chat GPT or AI-
generated images.

**Multimedia and ethics of labour**

Some editors and multimedia journalists suggested that technological shifts have placed
additional burdens on photographers, videographers, cartographers, illustrators, and other
multimedia journalists, who have been left to navigate the issues with little to no direction
coming from an institutional level. Winter discussed a connection between what he described as
unfair and can be exploitative treatment of multimedia journalists and the need for an evaluation
of equitable treatment of multimedia journalists. While discussing how ethics should apply to
and be communicated between media organizations, writers, and the audience, Winter said:

We as an industry, do not spend anywhere near enough time interrogating our own
behaviors and our own our own role in the loss of trust. So, I think if you're going to have
a publicly facing set of journalistic standards and ethics, you have to consider how you
operate internally: the ethics with which you treat your staff or your freelancers, the
environment within which you ask them to work, the justice—elements of all of that. You
have got to get your own house in order before you can start holding yourself up as some sort of paragon of ethics and trust.

While beyond the scope of this thesis, there is merit in exploring the intersection of labour, technology, and media ethics in further research.

According to Winter, the use of stock photography at Canadian media outlets is an ethical concern, which is a result of a labour market that does not value the work of photojournalists and, by extension, multimedia journalists. Plainly, Winter said that the use of stock photography was a less journalistically apt way to use multimedia without paying for the labour of photojournalists to the same degree. Drolet, Winter, McLachlan and Linnit raised the issue of whether guidelines should not only be a commitment to audiences but also operate as a moral contract with contributors. Their views differed about the practicality of such an application of media ethics guidelines, ranging from advocacy for a reconsideration of the function of guidelines to a general interest in how media ethics guidelines can be applied to different elements of journalism. While this is outside of the scope of this thesis, there is a consideration worth examining in separate research, especially as it may provide a valuable ESG measure.

**The AI Issue**

There was also a consensus amongst reporters and editors about the impending issues with generative artificial intelligence. Linnit referred specifically to the Narwhal’s use of the generative artificial intelligence tool Midjourney to create illustrations to accompany an article (Meyer, 2023). While the concerns of generative artificial intelligence, especially in the context of Midjourney and image generation tools, are relevant to this study, the widespread use of artificial intelligence was only an emerging technology at the time this study was conducted.
Over the course of the thesis, OpenAI’s Chat GPT-3 was released, followed by version four, which impacted the discourse of journalism and technology, making artificial intelligence top of mind during any discussion of concerns related to multimedia. While it’s not yet clear what multimedia applications will arise from Chat GPT, how it is regulated in the profession could have an impact on the industry’s approach to artificial intelligence generally.

Drolet noted that AI systems are often trained on the works of artists who are not compensated. DALL·E, for example, can generate images in the style of artists upon whose work the systems have been trained. This raises a host of ethical issues, which were not fully considered in this study due to the very recent developments. However, these recent developments underscore the importance of organizations having updated guidance.

**Ethical theories: limits and possibilities**

As outlined in the literature review, journalism ethics tends to draw in some degree from three different traditions: deontology; virtue ethics; and Utilitarianism. The ethos of a media organization cannot be determined through an analysis of its ethics guidelines, nor can it be explained simply by quantifying the frequency of specific word or phrase. However, the frameworks are identifiable to varying degrees within the guidelines and interviews. Table 2 indicates that there are relatively few outlets that include mention of specific multimedia technology beyond photography and videography. The exception to this is the CBC, which embraces a broader range of technologies. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s ethical guidelines most closely relate to the rule-based, deontological approach. This approach is arguably the easiest for journalists to follow since they provide specific guidance on what decisions ought to be made. For example, CBC has specific policies on using drones and data-scraping tools, both of which have multimedia outputs (Table 2):
Images captured by cameras attached to drones may violate the principle of respect for privacy. Any capture or dissemination of material involving this principle should be assessed against the public interest in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy standards elsewhere in this document.

Where appropriate, we may also refer to provisions for Clandestine Methods.

We should be aware of legal regulations concerning the use of drones. (CBC, JSP)

In this example, there is a premise in rule-based ethics. Underlying the first point is a general rule forbidding journalist to violate privacy. Underlying the third point is a directive to follow administrative rules while operating a drone, though a directive to appeal to public interest could also be interpreted as Utilitarian. Presumably a violation of privacy could be justified when weighted against significant public interest.

Other media ethics guidelines, such as the Toronto Star and Globe and Mail express ethical ideas in a more virtue-oriented way. This is observed in the frequent occurrence of words such as fairness, accountability, accuracy, and transparency in their guides (Table 3). Expressing a code of ethics in a more virtue-oriented way may provide more flexibility as technology develops, since virtues can be practiced in a variety of ways while a rule tends to be articulated more specifically. Vallor (2016) argues that the way forward is not to re-invent a new set of rules for every technology or new application thereof, but rather to embrace the virtues that are believed to best address technology. Because of the flexibility of Vallor’s technomoral virtues, they offer the specificity required to adapt to developing technologies while not being so broad that they serve no function. Vallor 2016 outlines that the virtues she highlights must be flexible and changing (p. 120).
Examples of Utilitarian thinking were not as common. That being said, the public-interest mandate of journalists and their associated works are closely related to principles of Utilitarianism, such as minimizing harm. Elliot and Ozar (2010) also note that the function of journalism is with respect to maximizing value or benefits (such as informing the public), which is certainly a valuable framework in making ethical decisions as it helps to advance the public interest (p.23). Harm calculations and determining if the deleterious impact reporting information through multimedia tools could have on a source is worth the societal good certainly has a root in a Utilitarian ethic (Elliott & Ozar, 2010). Abstractly, this connection was made in interviews with McLachlan and Winter, with respect to the care necessary to protect sources, especially those who may be perceived as vulnerable. The caution that Winter, Colby and McLachlan share in protecting sources who may be vulnerable to the publication of multimedia that could cause harm is not necessarily reducible to just a Utilitarian approach. This practice is also connected to Kant’s principle of respect for persons. However, there is Utilitarian consideration in determining if there is a public good that outweighs the harm caused.

One result of using a more rules-based approach is that the rules themselves may have to be re-worked or abandoned. As noted in the results section, Kathy English, former public editor for the Toronto Star, noted that she changed her view on the newspaper’s rule about deleting stories, or “unpublishing” them. She said that the basis for her original stance that images should remain published was premised on the conventions of print. She said that she has since changed her perspective on this matter and believes that there are some instances in which it would be appropriate. In the past, a published image could not be withdrawn because in print it would involve recalling all of the physical newspapers after they had been released into the world. Now, journalists can more easily remove an image from an online story. The technology has also
changed in that now, everyone has access to an archive of news articles through the internet. These two developments have dramatically changed what it means to publish an image. In her example, English says:

We did not unpublish, as I dealt with, the weekly requests from people who wanted articles taken down, and largely those were reports of criminal charges that have either been, they've been acquitted, or they've been charges dropped, I really began to question the policy. And, you know, we put in more gray area there where you could request it, I could take it to a committee of the editor and the managing editor and the lawyer to discuss.

Having a black-and-white policy does not always work, according to English. In this, there is merit to having ethical guidelines informed by multiple frameworks. Now, the policy of the Toronto Star is that while the bar for considering unpublishing is high, there is a provision in their guidelines that outline how and when they would go about removing content (Toronto Star, 2018, p. 17). This policy is significant in that it maintains the public record function of journalism, but it also acknowledges that technology has changed the information landscape and the conventions of print are not necessarily the most practical in addressing current needs.

Conclusions
As outlined previously, this thesis seeks to answer the following question:

- How have media organizations’ ethical guidelines adapted to the developing landscape of multimedia journalism and the unique concerns these developments raise?

Most media organizations in this sample have not adapted their ethics guidelines to specifically address changes in multimedia technology. CBC has included language to address
some of the multimedia concerns raised by practitioners, but most of the references to multimedia technology do not reference anything beyond photography and videography.

Based on the interviews, two reasons are evident for the lack of multimedia specific language: a belief shared by editors that the current ethics guidelines are comprehensive enough to form the ethical foundation for journalism regardless of multimedia advancements; and that the technologies that do raise new concerns have not been adopted in a way that is giving rise to major ethical challenges at this point in time.

The subsidiary questions are as follows:

- **Has advancement in multimedia outpaced the ethical guidelines that govern their use?**

The multimedia tools available to practitioners have in some ways outpaced ethics guidelines at a conceptual level. But practically speaking, most media outlets included in this thesis appear not to have fully embraced more cutting-edge technologies. However, with the increase in use of artificial intelligence generated images, media outlets will likely need to make decisions on the ethics of their use and institute policies on how they intend to proceed.

- **What ethical problems or concerns remain unanswered by current media guidelines?**

There are four main concerns identified in this thesis that pertain to issues unanswered by media ethics guidelines: artificial intelligence; privacy concerns; crowdsource data; and speed of publication.

Artificial intelligence and its many concerns remain largely unaddressed by media ethics guidelines. As previously mentioned, artificial intelligence in a multimedia context could refer to how an image is edited, captured, created, or otherwise used as well as text generation. Some
cameras use a level of AI from the moment a shutter is released (Chanka, 2022). There is also the issue of the ethical impact artificial intelligence could have on the labour market for multimedia reporters. Media outlets would be irresponsible to not consider that the decision to use generative artificial intelligence can impact the livelihood of a reporter.

Another key concern is how the developments in data representation can possibly pose new privacy concerns, as per the example Cain shared. Current media ethics guidelines do not specifically reference how a practitioner should go about addressing competing interests, such as the accuracy versus harm-reduction ethics. This fundamentally isn’t addressed in media ethics guidelines, which leaves it up to practitioners to weigh them on their own. This is in line with a virtue-oriented approach, but there needs to be some way to determine how these virtues should be practiced when there are competing interests.

How the profession should regulate user-submitted and crowdsourced data is a new issue that arises in the interview with Brackley. In an interview, he said:

Generally, crowd-sourced data raises an interesting audience engagement/participatory angle and opens up a litany of new data sources, but ultimately there are concerns of the accuracy of that data.

This issue is significant in that the data provides tools for the public to engage in a participatory media but there are questions that must be asked about how comfortable a publication is with posting unverified information. Even with disclaimers stating that the data is crowdsourced, is it still ethical to share information that may be false? Are disclaimers sufficient to alleviate those concerns? These are important considerations that are not presently addressed in the codes, though commitments to “transparency” may be helpful.
One of the key technological shifts that causes new issues is potentially how quickly journalists can file images. This issue does not stem from two principles being in competition, but rather a lack of time to reflect on ethical practice. Engrained in the process of analog and comparatively slow photography is time to process images. If wire services are able to have images published within seconds of when they’re captured, it is important for outlets to give direction as to who is responsible for making the ethical considerations. Is it assumed that the editor will make the ethical judgements from the desk, or are they treating every image live-filed as ready to publish? Codes of ethics also outline for the public and other journalists what the expectation is for responsible journalism, and it would be necessary to communicate the decisions outward to instill a sense of thoroughness of process. As discussed previously with reference to the social contract theory and its relationship with professional codes of ethics, communicating what the beliefs and standards of a certain publication may be a useful tool in giving audiences confidence in the profession, or at least the actions of a particular organization.

- **What are the core values underlying decisions about harnessing new and emerging technologies?**

As per the literature review, there are threads of deontological, utilitarian, and virtue-based approaches in the ethics guides used in Canadian media. Ethics guides generally tend to be rule-based, though reference to some virtues appear (Table 3). Some guides also express a belief that ethical practice is broad and timeless enough that they don’t need to change with every new technological development. This is best expressed through the previously mentioned statement in the Canadian Association of Journalists’ code of ethics: “Ethical practice does not change with the medium. We are bound by the above principles no matter where our stories are published or broadcast” (CAJ, 2011, p. 8). The decision to not change the core values or ethics based on the
medium in part neglects the possibility that the ethical challenges of new technology may in fact require a different approach, as is the issue with responding to artificial intelligence. A rules-based approach that specifically addresses the concerns and lays out a set of directives to address drone photography and data presentation may not be necessary, but there should be an evaluation of what virtues may be important to lead practitioners towards making ethical decisions.

What, if any, differences emerge between different kinds of news organizations (broadcast, print, digital startup, etc.)?

Based on the information from this sample, there are no significant distinctions between the regulation of multimedia technology from outlet to outlet, nor are there obvious trends based on the age of the outlet. Digital media outlets do not address the technological concerns in any more detail than their legacy counterparts. Legacy media outlets do generally have more frequent mentions of both specific technologies and virtues (Table 2 and Table 3), but this does not necessarily indicate their guidelines provide a better basis for ethical decision making. A larger sample size would be required to discern how the length of a guide impacts the quality of its ethical guidance.

Where to go from here?

Deontological, utilitarian and virtue ethics create unique tension by binding practitioners to a code that may be narrowly focussed to apply to emerging technologies (rule-based approach) or that perhaps are too broad to offer practical guidance (virtue-based). Utilitarianism is not without critics (Christians, 2007). But Vallor’s (2016) characterization of the virtue of justice could be a valuable tool for managing the ethical dilemmas that face journalists as multimedia technology advances.
Vallor breaks this conception of justice down into two distinguishable parts: “A reliable disposition to seek a fair and equitable distribution of the benefits and risks of emerging technologies,” and a “concern for how emerging technologies impact the basic rights, dignity, or welfare of individuals and groups” (p. 128). This breakdown provides an efficient and robust framework to ensure that technologies are being used in a capacity that is fair. While all of the virtues Vallor outlines provide some level of “futureproofing” and are certainly aspirational, justice stands to be an effective solution to some of the emerging issues in journalism in Canada. Callison and Young (2020) position journalism in a series of reckonings related to technology, economic downturn, structural changes, and power dynamics with a particular focus on the role of settler-colonialism in Canadian media. Justice as a virtue does not promise to address all of these issues, but it does have broad applications to many of the changes in journalism, especially in the context of digital media outlets that are challenging the conventions of media norms (Ibid.).

Noting that in Table 3, none of the media outlets mentioned justice in their codes outside of the context of the justice system. The lack of mentions of justice illustrates that in this sample, justice isn’t explicitly a virtue that is referenced by outlets. This presents a unique opportunity to consider how justice could work within the context of each outlet and provide a new basis for the ethical practice of journalism.

Elliot and Ozar’s (2010) systematic moral analysis also offer a framework for journalists to make ethical decisions. Using only seven primary questions and a handful of subsidiary questions, Elliot and Ozar (2010) provide journalists with a tool to determine the ethical suitability of a decision based on the three main philosophical approaches outlined previously (pp. 23–24). By implementing their approach broadly in their ethics guidelines media outlets could formalize their commitment to taking an approach that combines the three philosophies in
what they refer to as “mixed formalism” (Ibid., p. 20). If we accept that the results and discussion indicate that the codes of ethics and the needs of practitioners vary across the ethical frameworks provided, it stands to reason that there would be value in incorporating this finding into how media ethics guidelines are written in a way that is considered.
Conclusion

In the previous chapter this thesis attempts to answer the research questions given the background formed by the literature review, semi-structured interviews, and quantitative content analysis. This chapter will summarize the findings of this thesis, discuss its limitations, identify opportunities for further research, and offer forward-looking recommendations to create a more ethically responsive journalism.

Summary of research findings

The primary research question asked: how have media organizations’ ethical guidelines adapted to the developing landscape of multimedia journalism and the unique concerns these developments raise? In summary most media organizations in this sample have not adapted their ethics guidelines to specifically address changes in multimedia technology. There have been a few notable exceptions, including the CBC’s approach, but largely they have not revised their ethical codes to reflect changes in technology.

The first subsidiary question asked if advancement in multimedia outpaced the ethical guidelines that govern their use? In summary, this research finds that in general, the technology is advancing more quickly than ethical guidelines are adapting. It is also noteworthy that this sample suggests that not only has multimedia technology have outpaced media ethics guidelines, but it has also outpaced the adoption of technologies by journalists.

The second subsidiary question asked what ethical problems or concerns remain unanswered by current media guidelines. While it is challenging to offer a fulsome response to this question because of the universality, this thesis, in summary, suggests that the main considerations that arose from interviews were related to the following topics: artificial intelligence; privacy concerns; crowdsourced data; and the speed of publication.
The third subsidiary question asked what the core values are underlying decisions about harnessing new and emerging technologies. In summary, this thesis presents that Utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and deontology are all ethics embedded in media ethics guidelines and are relied on by journalists to make ethical decisions and/or to signal to the public the nature of an organization’s core values and how they grapple with ethical challenges. Perhaps because of the nature of a document designed to provide journalists with specific direction, many appear to be rule-based, though there are many instances of virtue-oriented languages appearing in the sampled media ethics guidelines.

Finally, the fourth subsidiary question asked: what, if any, differences emerge between different kinds of news organizations. Due to the size of this sample, the answer to this question remains uncertain, however there are no significant distinctions between the regulation of multimedia technology from outlet to outlet, nor are there obvious trends based on the age of the outlet. Through this, four out of the five research questions were answered fulsomely in the context of this sample and the fifth remains partially answered.

Limitations of this study

One general limitation of this study is that it is heavily focussed on the ethics guidelines as an indicator of the ethical stance of a media outlet. While, in a perfect world, journalistic outfits would transparently publish their beliefs and lay them out clearly on their websites, it would be reductionistic to suggest that a whole organization and the people who work for it are all adherents to a single ethical framework. Instead, according to Elliot and Ozar (2010) there is an empirical nature to how journalists share their ethics:

But it is the rare professional who learns their ethical duties in this top-down fashion.

Rather, they learn from members of the profession in regular communication with one
another about their practice, in their interaction with the people to whom they provide their services, and in the relationships that emerge from all these interactions. New practitioners observe how the members of the profession judge one another’s conduct, how the people whom the profession serves judge their conduct, and how the larger society judges and reacts to all of this. And they imitate or avoid the behavior of professional role models, both positive and negative (pp. 9–10).

This came up frequently in interviews with multimedia journalists. Conversations with editors and colleagues were a large part of how journalists make sense of ethical dilemmas, according to the interview participants. This is acknowledged in the question list (Appendix B) as a way ethics are communicated, but there is more room to research this topic and determine how journalists most frequently receive ethics advice and support.

The methodological approach of this thesis is an interpretive phenomenological analysis, which “[aims] to do a good analysis of a reasonably small sample rather than a superficial analysis of a large number” (Smith and Fieldsend, 2021, p.150). Be that as it may, a larger sample size would provide interesting insights with respect to how frequently multimedia technologies are used and what other ethical issues journalist face.

Another limitation of this study is that there is a bias in the data that was introduced as part of the research method. As part of the research ethics protocol, it was decided that participants that weigh in on this topic should be attributed, by name and outlet, to the comments that they make. This lack of anonymity is in keeping with journalistic practice and also provides the audience better context for what is informing each interview participants views. There is tremendous value in that, but the results may be skewed to have attract participants that are less likely to be employed as a staff reporter for fear of retribution for candidly speaking about the
state of media ethics within the context of their organization. If the research was conducted anonymously, there is a possibility that it would attract a different group of interview participants with different experiences. This does not invalidate this research, but it does suggest that it would be valuable to determine how a similar but anonymous study would compare.

**Opportunities for further research**

Throughout this research, I identified a number of intersecting topics that fell outside of the scope of this research that would be worthy of further investigation. The first topic would be a deeper exploration on how artificial intelligence applications are being used in practice. With tools such as Chat GPT dominating the artificial intelligence discourse as per the experience of the interview participants, there would be value in an in-depth analysis about how journalists are using other tools, such as Otter.AI or the writing aide Grammarly, or some of the AI features already built into smartphone cameras. If as a discipline we accept that artificial intelligence can contains biases or can raise other ethical issues, there should be an analysis of the technologies that have been introduced to make the work of reporters easier. Howard and Borenstein (2017) write that some artificial intelligence applications have implicit biases. Again, it is important to approach these criticisms while bearing in mind Watson’s (2016) constructive technology criticism and acknowledge the errors of technologies in a constructive way. While there appear to be tremendous issues with the implicit bias related to these technologies, there are also a number of ways that journalists are implementing artificial intelligence into their work in a productive way, according to one report (Bullard, 2023). For these reasons, the ethical concerns related to artificial intelligence should be explored in the context of the tools that are used in the practice of journalism.
On a number of occasions in interviews, the discussion about the ethical treatment of freelance journalists naturally arose. Given that technology and the ethics of the practice of journalism is the primary concern of this thesis, it fell outside of the scope of this study for pragmatic reasons. However, there is relevant and connected research related to reforming media ethics guidelines and there could be a valuable consideration as to if and how ethics guidelines deal with the ethical treatment of their own staff and freelancers.

This research topic will be valuable to revisit as the technologies that were framed as new during this research period will soon be dated and replaced by more up and coming multimedia technologies. These changes are to be expected as they are a result of the progression of technology. Beyond this, research that provided a cross jurisdictional scan of how journalists in other countries are using multimedia technologies. This could provide an insight for Canadian journalists and ethicists to consider what issues may arise from technologies that are not yet being used by practitioners. This ultimately means that Canadian journalists could take a proactive approach to managing and regulating how they think they should use new technology.

From a practice standpoint, there would be value in analyzing how Vallor’s (2016) virtue of justice would be compatible in media ethics guidelines and how integrating it may impact how journalists view their responsibility towards being just in their reporting. Additionally, the considered integration of Elliot and Ozar’s (2010) systematic moral analysis into current media ethics guidelines as a ready-to-use tool to determine how ethically permissible their use of multimedia tools is could be an additional way of providing guidance amid changes in technologies that bring new ethical questions.

Because this sample size is not very large, it would be both manageable and valuable to follow-up with journalists to determine how their opinions on technologies change. As English
discussed, her mind was changed over time on how the Toronto Star should respond to requests to remove published information from their website. As artificial intelligence becomes either more significant or receives regulatory oversight, it would be valuable to determine if practitioners believe that it is a tool that should or should not be used in the context of journalism as time progresses. Because this research is situated in the relatively early days of useable artificial intelligence, it would be valuable to follow-up annually to determine how this technology is changing and how it is being regulated in practice.

Conclusion

This research makes two recommendations for further actions: i) continue researching emerging technologies with Canada and internationally to determine what ethical issues may be emerging to proactively engage with practitioners and determine how they should be addressed; and ii) meaningfully implement Vallor’s (2016) virtue of justice and Elliot and Ozar’s systematic moral analysis to provide journalists with more tools that integrate different threads of philosophical thought. The former offers a research-oriented approach to scan the horizons of emerging technologies and the latter provides practical recommendations for outlets to respond to the issues identified in this study. By acting in both a research and practical capacity, journalists and their outlets would be well-equipped to manage the many challenges presented by multimedia technology.
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Appendix A: Source List

Name: Jack Nagler  
**Position:** Ombud  
**Outlet(s):** CBC

Name: Phillip McLachlan  
**Position:** Freelance Photographer and Journalist  

Name: Kathy English  
**Position:** Public Editor (retired)  
**Outlet(s):** Toronto Star

Name: Spencer Colby  
**Position:** Freelance Photojournalist  
**Outlet(s):** Canadian Press, Globe and Mail

Name: Meral Jamal  
**Position:** Multiplatform Journalist  
**Outlet(s):** Formerly CBC, Freelance

Name: Jesse Winter  
**Position:** Freelance Visual Journalist  

Name: Graeme Roy  
**Position:** Visual Content Curator  
**Outlet(s):** Canadian Press

Name: Gabrielle Drolet  
**Position:** Journalist and Illustrator (Freelance)  
**Outlet(s):** The New Yorker, Globe and Mail, The Walrus, CBC,

Name: Carol Linnitt  
**Position:** Founder/Managing Editor  
**Outlet(s):** The Narwhal

Name: Patrick Cain  
**Position:** Data Journalist  
**Outlet(s):** Toronto Star, Global News
Name: Christopher Brackley  
**Position:** Cartographer  
**Outlet(s):** Canadian Geographic

Name: Mackenzie Lad  
**Position:** Weekend Visuals Editor  
**Outlet(s):** Globe and Mail
Appendix B: Question Lists

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Ethical Storytelling: How ethical guidelines across Canada are responding to advancements in multimedia tools
John MacGillis

Question Set 1: Reporters

- Can you describe some of the reporting methods or tools you use that you would describe as multimedia?
- Are there any others that would you describe as multimedia?
- Can you describe a story or two where some of these methods or tools were used and how the story came together?
- How often do you use multimedia methods or tools at work?
- Can you describe some of the ways in which you think these tools are important for journalists?
- What are some of the ethical challenges that you think are unique to multimedia reporting?
- Can you give some examples?
- Do your colleagues use multimedia technologies that in your opinion could raise ethical concerns?
- Have you had conversations with your editor or producer about multimedia technology and ethics as it relates to your work?
- Can you broadly describe the issues that arose in those conversations?
- Do you think the ethics guidelines in place at your organization are robust enough to accommodate the recent technological advancements in multimedia journalism?
- If not, what kinds of things do you think might be missing in the guidelines?
- Looking ahead to the next five or ten years, what kinds of ethical challenges do you think might arise that are related to multimedia in journalism?
Question Set 2: Ombuds and Public Editors

• Can you describe some of the reporting methods or tools you use that you would describe as multimedia?
• Are there any others that would you describe as multimedia?
• Can you describe a story or two produced by your organization where some of these methods or tools were used and how the story came together?
• How often do you observe reporters at your organization using multimedia methods or tools at work?
• Can you describe some of the ways in which you think these tools are important for journalists?
• What are some of the ethical challenges that you think are unique to multimedia reporting?
• Can you give some examples?
• What are some ethical challenges that you think multimedia reporting shares with journalism more broadly?
• Can you give some examples?
• Have you received complaints related to the use of multimedia technology by your organization?
  If yes:
    o What specific multimedia technologies have you received complaints about?
    o How did you address these concerns?
    o How many complaints do you receive in a month related to the use of advanced multimedia tools?
• Does your organization’s ethics guidelines provide journalists enough guidelines related to the use of multimedia technology?
• Do you anticipate that ethical dilemmas related to multimedia tools will lessen or become greater in the next 10 years?
• How prepared do you think your organization is to deal with recently created multimedia technologies?
Appendix C: Ethics Clearance

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS CLEARANCE

The following research has been granted clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A). CUREB-A is constituted and operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2).

Ethics Clearance ID: Project # 118246

Project Team Members: John MacGillis (Primary Investigator)
Aneurin Bosley (Academic Supervisor)

Study Title: Ethical Storytelling: How ethical guidelines across Canada are responding to advancements in multimedia tools

Funding Source: (If applicable):

Effective: October 07, 2022 Expires: October 31, 2023

This certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Clearance is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.

2. Any modification to the approved research must be submitted to CUREB-A via a Change to Protocol Form. All changes must be cleared prior to the continuance of the research.

3. An Annual Status Report for the renewal or closure of ethics clearance must be submitted and cleared by the renewal date listed above. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the closure of the file. If funding is associated, funds will be frozen.

4. During the course of the study, if you encounter an adverse event, material incidental finding, protocol deviation or other unanticipated problem, you must complete and submit a Report of Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems Form.

5. It is the responsibility of the student to notify their supervisor of any adverse events, changes to their application, or requests to renew/close the protocol.
6. Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Upon reasonable request, it is the policy of CUREB, for cleared protocols, to release the name of the PI, the title of the project, and the date of clearance and any renewal(s).

Please email the Research Compliance Coordinators at ethics@carleton.ca if you have any questions.

CLEARED BY:  Date: October 07, 2022

Natasha Artemeva, PhD, Chair, CUREB-A

Bernadette Campbell, PhD, Vice-Chair, CUREB-A