

NMC Framework for Preserving Opportunities For On-The-Ground News Reporting In An Age of AI-driven Distrust

Reliable news is essential to an informed society. It shapes public understanding through evidence, verification, and accountability. At a time of AI-generated misinformation, and disinformation from malicious actors, distinguishing truth from falsehood is more critical than ever. **Primary Source Journalism (PSJ)** is the foundation of trustworthy reporting – and this needs support from society.

What is Primary Source Journalism? PSJ is the reporting of newsworthy events by trained journalists with the purpose of better informing society. The creation of written reports, photography and video news material relies on journalists being able to witness news events of public interest and to access information about them. PSJ requires distinctive journalistic skills and conforms to industry codes of practice.

We seek adoption of this Framework's principles below. Taken together, they are a tangible means of safeguarding trustworthy news, empowering professional journalism and contributing to attempts to reinforce trust in the wider media ecosystem.

1. Access to Report and Access to Information

In pursuit of the facts, newsgatherers from the professional News Media sector must be given the fullest possible free access to information and to witness events without imposed restrictions on how, when and where the news material is used.

2. Support for News

Public figures, governments and institutions, and society at large, must recognise the importance of trained newsgatherers being able to report on a wide spectrum of interests – and to advocate for quality news journalism. Governmental organisations must give clear commitments to enabling and supporting independent newsgathering, publishing, distribution and evolving forms of sharing news. Understanding the role, work and value of newsgatherers must be part of educative programmes on information literacy.

3. Independence of News

Editorial independence including fair, critical journalism is vital, and no newsgatherer should be subject to censorship – or forced into self-censorship.

4. Positive Newsgathering Environments

Best practice arrangements must be in place for newsgatherers to carry out their work. Press access should be maximised, subject only to genuine security, public health or unavoidable space constraints, and should reflect the practical needs of contemporary newsgathering, including video journalism. Where a news event necessitates a process of accreditation access, 'Press passes' must be granted on an informed, equitable and transparent basis, with recognition of industry 'Press Card' credentials.

5. Engaging with the News Media

Organisations that provide access to information and/or host newsworthy events are encouraged to engage with representative News Media bodies, including on terms and conditions of venue entry, planning for major events, and structured dialogue on future news opportunities and policies, including provision for multi-skilled journalists.

6. Reward for Trustworthy Newsgathering in the Age of AI

Producing trustworthy news requires skill, editorial judgement, investment and economic viability. In an AI era of synthetic content and misinformation, Primary Source Journalism is a vital defence. Without financial stability, the News Media's capacity to verify facts and inform the public will be fatally undermined.

7. PR material is no substitute for Independent News Content

Citizens are best informed through trustworthy news from independent, professional and accountable news sources. 'Handout' content can be helpful to supplement (and not substitute) independent Press content. Such 'official' material should be readily available, free to use, editable, and not subject to restrictions on editorial publication. It must clearly indicate its provenance, and its content must not be manipulated in a way that misrepresents the facts.

8. Availability of News

News content created in venues by the News Media must not be subject to different rules set by news event organisations in relation to the form of editorial use, platform (print, online, mobile or broadcast) or type (mainstream or social media) or territory. As independent news provides the historical record of events, it must not be subject to limits on 'shelf-life', i.e. rules on how long it can be published.

9. Safety of Journalists

Journalists (whether based in the host country or abroad) can be especially vulnerable to physical and online attack. Those that foster hatred towards newsgatherers must be robustly punished under the law. Governments, news event organisations, the News Media itself and the public at large should support measures – promoted by the political, legal and journalism communities – to safeguard newsgatherers.