

ASJMC

# INSIGHTS

*Winter 2012*

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*From the Editor*  
**Emerging Technologies  
Demand Closer Examination  
by the Academies**

By James L. Stewart

ASJMC **INSIGHTS**

*ASJMC Insights*

Editor: James L. Stewart, Nicholls State University

Layout/design and production: Lillian Coleman, AEJMC/ASJMC

### **Submissions**

Submit queries and manuscripts to Dr. James L. Stewart, *Insights* Editor, Department of Mass Communication, Nicholls State University, P.O. Box 2031, Thibodaux, LA 70310. E-mail: james.stewart@nicholls.edu. Phone: 985-448-4586. *Academic citations must be in APA or MLA styles.*

### **The Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC)**

234 Outlet Pointe Boulevard, Suite A

Columbia, SC 29210-5667

803-798-0271 (phone) • 803-772-3509 (fax)

ASJMC on the Web: [www.asjmc.org](http://www.asjmc.org)

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*From the Editor*

## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES DEMAND CLOSER EXAMINATION BY THE ACADEMIES

*By James L. Stewart, Nicholls State University*

In his chapter of the 1988 book *Media in Society: Readings in Mass Communication*, Eric Barnouw posed the following questions regarding the changes in mass media forms that were starting to appear over the horizon:

Who will be the gatekeepers of the evolving systems? Will authority be dispersed, or concentrated? Will the multiplicity of channels provide a rich diversity of choice, or only seem to? Who will decide what treasures are to be stored in the electronic archives available to your push button? [...] Will the right of privacy survive the telecommunications revolution and its network of data banks?

As he noted in that same paragraph, "Our whole history teaches us that these are crucial questions."

It is clear that people around the globe have voraciously adopted the new communication technologies. The January riots in Beijing sparked by public demand for new iPhones offer convincing evidence that the desire for access to these technologies has reached epic proportions.

Yet, Barnouw's questions remain largely unanswered.

On one level it would appear that these new forms of communication have democratized communication to a mass audience. We are all very aware of a host of instances where cell phones and social media have allowed small groups or individuals to bypass traditional gatekeepers. In today's world, a 13-year-old blogging from the Midwest technically has the same potential audience as the *New York Times* or any of the national television newscasts.

In some instances this shift has led to positive change, such as with the Arab Spring (examined in an article in this issue).

But, this sword has two edges, as illustrated by the Philadelphia flash-mob violence of the summer or the extensive list of cyber attacks resulting in the exposure of private information.

More traditional forms of mass media continue to struggle with the changes. Most are still searching for a business model that will lead to profit margins comparable to those of old. Their competition, often playing by a different set of rules, continues to grow, as does the struggle for advertisers who are faced with a vast range of choices of outlets for investing their money.

As it relates to journalism specifically, his query "Will the multiplicity of channels provide a rich diversity of choice, or only seem to?" appears particularly prophetic.

Despite all the new print and electronic news outlets, stories such as the Casey Anthony saga or the trial of Michael Jackson's physician still dominate the national consciousness because so much of media content tells us that these are the most significant stories of the day.

Journalists report on the stories released by other outlets, which in turn base their reportage on a recent Tweet, much like a snake eating its own tail.

Obviously this has profound implications for the academies.

We are expected to prepare our students for this new media world.

This is no small task, as this world can evolve dramatically with the release of some new App (that wasn't even a word 12 years ago; now it's a significant part of our working vocabulary) or device. It feels as though we are constantly playing catch-up.

Perhaps the answer lies in focusing less on the how of using these new technologies and placing more emphasis on the why and the implications of their use. Clearly we have the responsibility to provide our students with the skills necessary for the practical application of these technologies; but do we not have an equal obligation to conduct a philosophic examination of the social and economic impact of their use?

# WHEN THE SWEET “ARAB SPRING” TURNS SOUR: THE TIES THAT BIND

*By Ibrahim Saleh, University of Cape Town, South Africa*

The “Arab Spring” is a great moment of history in our lifetimes. However, the uprisings and the related profound political transformation in the Arab world have aggravated many of the suppressed problems. A situation has clearly built up and escalated destabilization in the region, which has stained the desperate attempts toward freedom and democracy. The disorientation that has shaped the “Arab Spring” is unlikely to change for a long time to come and will reap bitter fruits. No one really knows when or if these fruits can ever sweeten.

Many Arabs could never think that the regional situation could ever bring about the exile of Ben Ali, the falling of Mubarak, the death of Gaddafi, the Bahraini recruiting of the Saudi military and many other examples of police states in the Middle East and North Africa collapsing.

The success of the first stages of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt caused euphoria in the West, which talked about a “fourth wave of democratization” that swept the Arab world and new opportunities for democratic transition of the Arab countries. Many inside and outside the region perceived these events as similar to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signaling the end of the Cold War.

Arab publics remained bitter for a long time because they felt that the western media discriminated against them or looked down at them, but since 2011 the situation has been reversed. As media experts and politicians started to change their positions after the persistent sit-ins at the *Tabrir Square* (Liberation Square), it was defined as a “People Revolution.” These mediated events created theatrical scenes that nurtured an inspiring story line of an emerging “Arab Spring,” which started in Tunisia and provided the spark that set off fires elsewhere in the region, especially in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> It was thus rational to have an escalation effect in Lebanon; joint rallies of Egyptian Islamists and liberals against

the Mubarak regime; and elections in Iraq, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Egypt and even Saudi Arabia.

One has to give credit to the movement for workers’ rights in *Al-Mabla al-Kobrah* and the movement against police brutality and torture. The justification is related to how the civil society activists have built up constructive change when the mainstream media all too often lost their vital elements of balance, context, and primarily portrayed the negative side of the story.

In centre stage of the mediatization of events, the savvy young Arabs are seen as models for a new kind of freedom, and the regional happenings have become a coverage priority by international media in an unprecedented way. The success of these movements, at least in the early stages, meant that citizens and journalists seized the opportunity and used accessible media, such as cell phone videos and Tweets about protests journalists followed their leads.

The main motivation behind this “rally around the flag” phenomenon was the shared frustrations; public deliberations were finally discussed in the open; and creating a better future was a hope of a real democratic revolution.

The fact remains that the discontented public, in particular the youth, resorted to every possible communication tool.<sup>2</sup> For example, orange T-shirts in Lebanon and the single word *Kifaya* (“enough”) in Egypt suggested the Arab equivalent of the Berlin Wall seemed at hand. However, there is a general trend in the media to limit the actors behind the uprisings to only the youth. There was much less interest in providing in-depth coverage of the related dramatic clash of cultures between the old and the new, of violence and peace, of the past and future, and the generational gap.

To understand the broader phenomenon of protests in MENA, one must consider the causality between the two key questions: What is the role of media in uprisings? How profound is the political change?

The departure point here is to contextualize the recurrent failure of the Arab states to conduct democratic reforms. Economic and social stagnation, the poor performance of political parties, the absence of an agreement of principle between the majority and the opposition regarding the rules of the political game led to the failure of democratic reforms.

Arab citizens gradually became motivated in spite of all the challenges to access information through alternative ways, depending on the availability of sources, economic background and level of digital literacy. Sadly, only very few had the privilege to become systematically exposed to competing perspectives of domestic and international events.<sup>3</sup> Besides, the country cases vary significantly because the press in Morocco and Egypt has grown highly diverse, but pluralism is more limited in Syria and some of the Gulf countries.

One explanation for the misreading of events is that journalists and media scholars not residing in the region, especially with regard to language and cultural differences, have missed the gradual and systematic escalation of events over the last few decades.<sup>4</sup>

The political culture in the Arab world has traditionally been of an authoritarian and patriarchal nature which explains the long time that most Arab leaders have been in their posts. Moreover, top officials used media narratives to maintain the correlation between the identification of the West with the concept of “colonization.”<sup>5</sup> However, there is an interesting generational difference in the social fabric of MENA, where the older generations were brought up in a rather tamed culture that resulted from the 1952 coup d’état against the status quo. They learned to be silent and passive, as described in Arabic: walk “near the wall” [meaning the walls of fear], and some of them have been living inside these shadows of fear.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the younger generations are still poor, and had neither hope nor anything to lose further.

As Magdy el-Galad, the editor-in-chief of the largest independent Egyptian newspaper, *Al-Masry al-Youm (The Egyptian Today)*, said in an interview in Al-Jazeera, “A new generation walks in the streets of Egypt. A generation that did not marry or have kids when everything was cheap. They cannot even find jobs that can pay

**TABLE 1: INTERNET PENETRATION AND FACEBOOK PENETRATION IN MENA<sup>9</sup>**

Middle East - June 30, 2011		Penetration Rate
Population Estimate	216,258,843	
Internet Users of the Population	72,497,466	33.5%
Facebook Users	16,125,180	7.5%

them 30 pounds in public or private sectors. They use the internet to go beyond Egypt and open up the whole world. They have nothing to worry about, no kids, no wife, no home, and no money.”

Though the word “revolution” has become very popular, ethical questions related to the accuracy, reliability and credibility of information and sources are also present. “A lot of the tweets were not verified,” said Andy Carvin, who heads NPR’s social media efforts.<sup>7</sup>

MENA states have hundreds of millions of people, where many are under the age of 30 (almost 30 percent); they share a hunger for change and progress, and a desire to achieve their aspirations, which made them advocate a new way to deliver progressive change, equality and rights.

It is thus not surprising that the younger generations have played a significant role in the uprisings, motivated by their better levels of access to media (particularly the new media), the opportunities they were entitled to have and the assets they have accumulated.<sup>8</sup>

Only 33.5 percent of the population in the Middle East and North Africa have internet access, but the number who use Facebook is even lower, reaching 7 percent. As such, the Internet cannot be the main source of information to the citizens before and during the uprisings.

Many Arabs have no internet access at all. For example, less than 9 percent of Egyptians have internet access at home, and in Yemen only 3 percent have internet access at home, according to a 2009 survey conducted by The Gallup Organization. In Tunisia the figure climbs to 21 percent and in Bahrain to 80 percent, according to the same survey. No one has described events in these countries as a Facebook or Twitter revolutions.

MENA countries generally have highly regulated internet providers, especially MENA states that have in-

vested heavily in blocking and filtering software, according to Ahmed Al Hujairy, the president of the Bahrain Internet Society.<sup>10</sup> Besides, the internet itself does not produce political revolutions, but allows elite dissidents to quickly contact other elite dissidents and build a tiny virtual community. Mass revolt, as seen across the Arab world, requires something more.<sup>11</sup>

The financial burden of using the internet becomes another hurdle facing many poor Arabs, who might be lucky to be literate and luckier to have digital literacy. Internet cafes in major Arab cities charge by the minute and that makes it impossible to motivate users to keep online time for long even if they have the motivation, the skills and the access because they simply cannot afford it.

In contrast, one could refer to cell phones as the main source of communication that was clearly used to convey messages and capture photos. And even when correspondents were banned, young Arab activists were able to bypass constraints by sending video shots to satellite stations like *Al-Jazeera*.

Table 2 shows that cell-phone penetration is extremely high in the countries that have experienced political change. For example, Egypt has the largest number in the Arab world, while Bahrain, Tunisia and Yemen have almost as many mobile phones as they have people.

Also important is the role played by person-to-person calls, because on many occasions word-of-mouth was very important in mobilizing the public. This might explain how the young protestors decided to take matters into their own hands, and go into other neighbourhoods and convince people to gather at the square. As stated by Tawfik Gamal,<sup>13</sup> “We’re going to go out on the streets and start screaming ‘Down with Mubarak’ and asking people to join us. Once we get about 1,000 or 2,000, we will move toward downtown.”

This current picture is dim for many reasons that included policy brutality against civilians and the emergence of Islamists, and attacks against Egyptian Christians (Copts).

First, Egypt experienced in October what is now known as the “Bloody Sunday” protests; at least 27 civilians were killed and 300 wounded.<sup>14</sup> This bloody violence has left Egypt on the brink of a potential disaster. The military, the only stable institution left from the Mubarak era, lost its credibility after unleashing a deadly attack against civilian protesters. While many concluded that

**TABLE 2: CELL-PHONE PENETRATION IN THE UPRISING AREAS<sup>12</sup>**

Country	2000	2010
Bahrain	205,727	1,567,000
Egypt	1,359,900	70,661,005
Libya	40,000	10,900,000
Syria	30,000	11,696,212
Tunisia	119,165	11,114,206
Yemen	32,042	11,085,000

the violence was rooted in a sectarian conflict between the army and Egyptian Copts, that situation still impacts the authority of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) in the eyes of Egyptians of all religions.

Second, among many incidents a peaceful march<sup>15</sup> by Copts against religious persecution gave way to a night of violence after the protesters were attacked. The army used tear gas to disperse protesters at Maspero (a TV building in downtown Cairo), where rocks were thrown down from the 6 October Bridge by police and armed forces. Security forces chased any protesters who had congregated on the bridge away from Maspero with tear-gas canisters hailing down throughout.

Third, Islamists are ready to jump into the front stage offering a redefined Arab model of Islamic democracy, which makes the Arab society not ready for democratic transitions. Tunisia can serve as an example where in recent parliamentary elections, the Islamic *Ennahda Party*, which stands ready to cooperate with secular parties and for further democratization, won over 40 percent of the vote. Egypt is no different with the increasing role of *Muslim Brotherhood* and where Islamic parties are winning elections in various academic institutions and socialist guilds. For example, the *Freedom and Justice Party* created by the *Muslim Brotherhood*, which will pursue an “Islamic democracy” formula, has the best chance of winning the parliamentary elections this November.

The “Arab Spring” has ended a system of political management that existed for decades. It is almost impossible for MENA countries to return to their pre-revolutionary state. The new Arab mind has brought about irreversible transformation, which will alter the situation within the Arab states and at regional and global levels. The Arab street is in a chaotic phase and the public is at a loss as to the future course.

This new political environment has signalled a collapse of the state-owned media, which used to define news. But no one is certain about the time it will take to realize the change in values and public engagement. In addition, one must realize that the real transformation has barely begun even though the despots are gone. The events of 2011 demonstrate more clearly than anything else the heterogeneous nature of MENA, where the monarchies, republics, and jamahiriyya alike have all faced popular protest to one degree or another, yet some have stood and some have crumbled.

Many of the countries have to various degrees some of the prerequisites for a constitutional government; among them are a mature democracy, economic progress and social justice with a strong civil society, a history of labour organization, many highly educated people and some strong institutions.<sup>16</sup> The region was not ready for this quick move to democracy, which associated the radical changes to radical results, especially in the current economic and civil anarchy. One of the deepest social

cleavages is the high rates of illiteracy in addition to the poverty and unemployment that remain a hurdle for any constructive development.

The dim reality is that in the near future conditions could turn sour, whether through civil war in Libya or Yemen, paralysis in Tunisia and Egypt, or endless fruitless contestation with those in power in Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Iraq and elsewhere including Egypt and Tunisia.

The words of Khalil Gibran, Arab poet and essayist, "And my heart bled within me; for you can only be free when even the desire of seeking freedom becomes a harness to you, and when you cease to speak of freedom as a goal and a fulfilment. You shall be free indeed when your days are neither without a care nor your nights without a want and a grief."

*Ibrahim Saleh is Convenor of Political Communication at University of Cape Town, South Africa*

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# J-SCHOOLS GO GLOBAL TO OFFER STUDENTS BROADER EXPERIENCES

*By Raul Reis, Florida International University*

Journalism and mass communication programs across the country have shown renewed interest in international education initiatives in the past 10 or 15 years. As digital technologies radically change how messages are produced and delivered, an increased globalized economy breaks down geographical barriers, making it almost essential for new media professionals to add international experiences to their portfolios.

One of the most obvious benefits of offering students international opportunities in journalism, public relations, advertising and other mass communication fields is the chance to broaden their personal, educational and professional horizons. The intercultural learning and exchange that happen when J-students live, work or study abroad is always enriching and eye-opening.

For almost 10 years, starting in 2002, I have been taking students from California to Brazil as part of a summer program that has included classes in media globalization, advanced digital media, and science and environmental reporting. Along the years, students have been overwhelmingly positive about their study-abroad experience, with expressions such as “eye-opening,” “mind-blowing,” and even “life-changing” often coming into the post-study-abroad conversation.

Despite—or perhaps because of—difficulties such as language barriers, cultural differences, and culinary challenges (no decent Mexican food in Brazil!), my J-students, many of them minority, first-generation, and/or non-native English speakers, come back feeling much more self-sufficient, worldly, and self-assured about their own professional and academic skills.

By keeping a daily blog, for example, where they post stories and pictures, chronicle their personal adventures, and reflect on their learning experience, students

grow as writers, reporters, photographers, observers and storytellers. After the initial cultural shock, they realize in a few days that they will be OK, and are proud to survive and thrive in a completely different environment.

The opportunity to study (and intern) abroad has also become a great recruiting tool for schools.

At Marshall University, for example, the J-school initiated an exchange program in Australia in 2009 that has already become a big hit with students. The university itself had popular programs in Madrid, Florence, and Lyon, France, but the J-school’s goal was to establish a study-abroad program in an English-speaking country, where students would also be able to get valuable internship opportunities.

“The internship program in Australia has already developed a great reputation in only two years, with students getting internships in places like the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and Greenpeace, to name just a few,” said Corley Dennison, dean of Marshall’s journalism school.

Offering students opportunities to study or intern abroad, however, is not the only way J-schools are pursuing global education initiatives. At Florida International University, the drive for internationalizing the students’ experience begins with the university’s own name, but goes much beyond that. At the J-school, the goal is to make global initiatives part of the students’ daily lives.

“We receive undergraduate and graduate students from more than 70 countries, and that international atmosphere provides great experiences for our home-grown students,” said Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver, former dean of FIU’s J-school.

“A lot of cultural exchange happens in and out of the classroom. It’s very enriching for our local students to interact with students who are coming from Thailand, France or Finland. It makes the learning process much broader and truly global,” Kopenhaver said. She mentioned that, because of this global approach, FIU has also seen more local students interested in (and comfortable with the idea of) studying abroad.

No matter if they are a West Virginian traveling half the globe to intern in Australia, a Cuban-American

from Florida flying to Berlin for a semester abroad, or a Mexican-American from California experiencing the summer heat of the Amazon jungle, journalism, public relations and advertising students can profit immensely from international learning experiences. It’s our job to make sure they’ll get the global communication opportunities they crave and deserve.

*Raul Reis is dean of Florida International University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication.*

# SPJ ETHICS BOOKS AIM TO HELP DEFINE AND RESOLVE MORAL ISSUES

By Fred Brown, University of Denver

Good ethical behavior is more a product of instinct than of education. It derives from a person's experiences — parents, peers, good and bad examples, religion and other beliefs — that together produce a gut feeling for what's right and what's wrong.

What can be taught, though, is how to identify ethical dilemmas — as differentiated from legal questions or simply matters of taste — and ways to resolve those dilemmas.

That is the idea behind “doing ethics,” the title of the first three editions of the Society of Professional Journalists' ethics book and the major premise behind the fourth edition, too.

Ethical, responsible journalism has been a key mission of the Society of Professional Journalists since its founding in 1909. But the mission was not always as prominent as it is today. It has grown in importance over the years, just as the need for ethical journalism has grown.

It took time. The organization's first code of ethics was not adopted until 17 years after Sigma Delta Chi was founded as a fraternity on the campus of DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. The 1926 version of the code was not original but was adopted, with full credit and few if any changes, from a code developed over the previous two years by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Another 47 years passed, until 1973 — when SPJ carried the unwieldy name of Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi — before the association finally adopted its own code, written by Casey Bukro of the *Chicago Tribune*. It was after yet another 14 years, in 1987, that SPJ finally set out to provide more detailed, tangible ethical guidance by publishing a journalism ethics book. The project was the brainchild of

Carolyn Carlson, then the national president of SPJ and former chair of its ethics committee. The committee's vice chair, Dan Bolton, coordinated fund-raising and publishing efforts. The book first appeared six years later, in 1993, as a Society of Professional Journalists publication.

At first it was intended primarily as a handbook for newsrooms, but it was revised for publication as a textbook by Allyn & Bacon in 1995. The third edition was published in 1996 but became the subject of litigation — it unfortunately had a factual error — and a decade passed before an update was even considered. SPJ reclaimed the copyright in 2006, and soon thereafter, officers of the Society and its supporting Sigma Delta Chi Foundation proposed that it was time to come out with a new version.

*Journalism Ethics: A Casebook of Professional Conduct for News Media* (Marion Street Press, Portland, Ore., \$49.95) is the fourth edition of what is intended to be a combination textbook for journalism students and handbook for practicing journalists. It also is more closely organized than were its predecessors around the principles of the SPJ Code of Ethics.

The changes to the code adopted at SPJ's 1996 national convention included new language intended to encourage more media responsiveness and awareness about how reporting can affect people's lives. Two of the four sections — Minimize Harm and Be Accountable — reflect this new sensitivity. The other two sections — Seek Truth and Report It and Act Independently — are more in the traditional, assertive, unimpeded, influence-free ideal of a free press.

The first three principles are borrowed from guidelines used in teaching ethics by the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla. The 1995-96 SPJ ethics committee added

Be Accountable as a sort of enforcement clause. Unlike licensed professions, such as law and medicine, journalism cannot impose sanctions or penalties on those who violate its principles. It must rely on disclosure, a free exchange of viewpoints on what some consider to be unethical behaviors.

The code is intended to survive constant changes in delivery systems. If any further revision is needed, I would argue that it should focus on removing references to specific media. Delivery systems change constantly, and rapidly. Who can say when the next pound sign will become a hash tag?

Until the 2011 edition was published in March, SPJ's ethics book was titled *Doing Ethics*, based on a teaching concept used by the three authors in their classrooms and at Poynter, where they also taught ethics to professionals.

The authors of the first three editions were Jay Black, professor emeritus at the University of South Florida; Bob Steele, currently at DePauw University; and Ralph Barney, professor emeritus at Brigham Young University. "Doing ethics," as Black explained in previous editions, is based on "a belief that good ethical decision-making in journalism is a craft and a skill comparable to good writing, good photography and good editing." That philosophy of practicality is at the heart of the new edition and remains as a tribute to the original authors' years of hard work.

The new edition has a new name to reflect its broader scope. The book has an advantage over others in the field in that all of its case studies are from real life, and most of its contributors are or have been practicing journalists. Members of the SPJ ethics committee, with financial support from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, wrote the new material. About half of the case studies are from the past three or four years. Others are classics from earlier editions, but still relevant for the lessons they offer.

Those with a philosophical bent may be disappointed that the book contains only a six-page primer on the history of ethical thinking, mainly as an introduction to the lexicon of moral reasoning. Still, those definitions are new to the book, as is a new chapter explaining how ethical obligations may differ from legal requirements. That discussion is intended to be useful for instructors who may find themselves teaching law and ethics at the same time to the same students.

This fourth edition also contains a new template for analyzing ethical problems. It is both a teaching tool and a practical way for professional journalists to discuss and decide ethical problems on deadline. Some of the new cases are presented in that format. Others are left for students and their instructors to rearrange into the various elements of the new format, if they choose.

The book and the case studies are organized in the same order as the four sections of the SPJ code, with additional chapters dealing with related issues such as deception, visual images and diversity. Fifty case studies are the heart of the book and are its primary teaching tool. Two different analytical templates are suggested, but each contains the same key elements:

- (1) Describe the situation as thoroughly as possible, including all relevant bits of information (and maybe some that turn out not to be so relevant).
- (2) Put the issue in the form of a question. Write it down.
- (3) Identify the person who has to decide what to do. Another name for that person is the moral agent.
- (4) List all of the people who will be affected by the decision. And remember that some of them will be affected more than others.
- (5) Identify the issues at stake. This is where the six pages on moral philosophy can be handy, although most problems come down finally to the conflict between telling the truth and minimizing the harm.
- (6) Arrive at a decision that you can justify and explain with confidence. Write down your decision, too, to make sure it makes sense. Seriously consider making your reasoning part of your published, broadcast or posted report.

Here, directly from the book, is one proposed analytical technique. The process is based on several models, including those developed by Bernard Gert of Dartmouth College and Louis Alvin Day of Louisiana State University. The example comes from a decision made by a Danish newspaper, *Jylland-Posten*, in 2006, to conduct a contest seeking cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, and the international disruption that ensued.

**WHAT:** *Describe the situation. Assemble all relevant facts, list all the angles. In other words, do the reporting. Put the ethical dilemma in the form of a question; write it down, to be sure it makes sense.*

For example, if you were considering the furor over publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, you'd want to assemble all pertinent facts about:

- The original motivation for publication
- Why it took so long after their initial appearance for the images to cause such a violent reaction
- Differences of opinion in the Islamic community, including over whether any depiction of the Prophet is considered blasphemy

Think of all the questions you can, and try to answer them. Boil it down to one basic question. Perhaps this one: **Question:** Do we publish the cartoons or not?

**WHO:** *The principals (people) who will make the decision and those who will be affected by it. First, decide who is responsible for the decision. The managing editor? News director? Does this go all the way to the top? Then list the major stakeholders, ranging from the subjects of the story to the general public. Remember that not everyone will be affected to the same degree by what you decide to do.*

The decision-maker here most likely would be at least at the managing editor level at a newspaper, perhaps the news director at a television station.

The stakeholders include the local Islamic community, Muslims around the world, people in places that might be targeted by riots, your newspaper or TV station and its reputation for truth-telling and fairness, and readers and viewers—who have an interest in seeing what is driving such outrage. You may be able to think of others whose interest in the outcome of your decision should be considered.

**WHY:** *These are principles (standards) you will use in deciding what to do. In most cases, it comes down to a balance between telling the truth and minimizing possible harms. Identify these and other moral responsibilities. The best decision is the one that does the greatest good for the greatest number of stakeholders.*

There are several principles at issue in the case of the caricatures. Is it freedom of expression? Or is it unnecessary provocation? Is there an acceptable middle ground between showing the blunt truth and minimizing the harm of insult?

Consider the principles that may have motivated the principals and then consider your options. At the extremes, they could range from publishing all 12 cartoons on the front page, or to show them with riot scenes on your newscast, to the other extreme of simply describing a couple of them. Or you could provide a link to a Web site where they could be viewed.

**HOW:** *This is your decision: How do you achieve the outcome you've identified as the best? How do you answer the question you raised in the first step? Again, if you write it down, you will have a better idea of whether it makes sense. Also, write down your rationale, and consider making your decision-making part of your coverage. Articulating your reasoning will help you answer the questions you're bound to get.*

For example, you might begin simply by saying, "We decided to publish only one cartoon because, ..." In this case, different media made different decisions. Whatever the decision, it's important to have a serious discussion and a good reason for it.

The book argues that, when the moral agents are arriving at a decision, not all stakeholders have equal status or merit equal consideration. While it's important to identify as many individuals, groups, businesses and institutions that may be affected by the decision, it's also important to realize that not all of them will be affected to the same degree. That concept may run counter to the ideal of Egalitarianism, which holds that all individuals deserve equal treatment, but it is closer to reality.

The consequences of reporting a story about official misfeasance, for example, will be the most severe for the official implicated. Others in that official's department, as well as contractors, clients, etc., would not be quite as impacted by the report, but still might fall just a notch below "severe" on the impact scale.

In most news stories, the general public's stake in the outcome is not at the highest levels. If the official's misconduct affected a public project or misused large amounts of tax dollars, the public impact would be greater. If the unsavory activity were instead an interoffice exchange of suggestive e-mails, say, the public's investment in the outcome would be very low.

The publisher or broadcaster of the story has a stake, too. The messenger's reputation will be bolstered if the story has a major impact on improving public policy. If it strikes the public as unfair, poorly researched and insufficiently supported by the facts, the reporting medium's reputation can suffer. So the messenger's "stake" in the story is a comparatively important one.

Thus, the ethical principle of Utilitarianism, that the best decision is one which produces the greatest good for the greatest number, should have a major role in the decision-making process.

The What-Who-Why-How format, borrowing from the journalistic cliché of the key elements of a news story, is new in this book. Other cases are written in a Situation-Analysis-Decision format that is a carryover from the third edition. I would suggest that instructors using this as a text introduce their students to these analytical templates and then ask that students choose from among the case studies provided, or (for extra credit) come up with new case studies, to do their own analyses. If a case study in the book is presented in the Situation-Analysis-Decision format, ask students to convert it to the new What-Who-Why-How method—and vice versa. Or students can write their analyses in their own narrative style. The key elements are the same no matter which format is used.

SPJ is a journalism organization. But this book includes a number of cases—at least 10, by my count—that involve interactions between public relations professionals and journalists. That means that it can be used by those who are teaching strategic communication majors together with journalism majors, applying the same analytical techniques from the other side of the reporter-source relationship.

One of the case studies, for example, concerns ethical questions facing a reporter who is embedded with a combat military unit. The situation also can be analyzed from the point of view of a military public affairs officer. What rules should the PAO recommend to govern reporters accompanying combat troops? What can the PAO do if a reporter writes embarrassing stories? Even better, the instructor can ask students to find their own cases from real life and analyze them using the methods described in the book.

An appendix, written by members of the SPJ ethics committee, is intended to explain how the code of ethics relates to emerging trends in journalism. The code has held up remarkably well over the years, because it's a set of guiding principles, not a rule book of particulars. It is not possible, in any event, to anticipate what specific ethical dilemmas may arise in a changing media environment. Only birds were tweeting when the third edition was published in 1996. But it is possible to apply the code's general principles to a broad range of issues. The technology changes; the principles don't. Responsible journalists still owe the highest allegiance to being as reliably accurate as humanly possible. They should strive to be fair, even when delivering opinions, should be independent of undue or undisclosed influences, and must be accountable for what they put forward for public consumption.

Most ethical questions do not have a single, simple answer. Different people evaluating the same situation may very well arrive at different decisions. The key is to discuss the options and to ask the right questions. Imparting that lesson is a major part of the educator's role.

The ethics committee is one of SPJ's largest and most active committees. It is constantly discussing, e-mailing and blogging about ethical questions, and considering the application of ethical principles to a seemingly inexhaustible stream of new ethical issues. There's a Web site, too, where users of the book may join the discussion. Members of the committee don't always agree on everything, but that's the nature of ethics—there are few, if any, hard and fast answers.

The ethical journalist's duty is to provide accurate, reliable and fair information that helps people make sound decisions—information that may challenge assumptions rather than simply affirm prejudices. *Journalism Ethics: A Casebook of Professional Conduct for News Media* is intended to help professional journalists reinforce that sense of responsibility and students to develop that instinct.

*Fred Brown led the team of editors and writers that produced Journalism Ethics: A Casebook of Professional Conduct for News Media. He is an adjunct instructor in communication ethics at the University of Denver and worked almost 40 years as a reporter, editor and columnist at The Denver Post.*

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*The Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication* promotes excellence in journalism and mass communication education. A valuable resource for chairs, deans and directors, ASJMC is a non-profit, educational association composed of some 190 JMC programs at the college level. The majority of the association's members are in the United States and Canada.

Eight international journalism and communication schools have joined the association in recent years.

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