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## LE TRENTE



[Le magazine du journalisme]

## PUBLICITÉ



## DÉONTOLOGIE

### Professional Code of Ethics for Quebec Journalists

**This is the first professional Code of Ethics created for all Quebec journalists. Discussed at the 1994-96 annual meetings of the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec (FPJQ), the Code was formally adopted at the FPJQ's general assembly on November 24, 1996.**

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#### Preamble

The role of journalists is to accurately report, analyze, and in some cases, comment on the facts that help their fellow citizens understand the world in which they live.

Complete, exact and diverse information is one of the most important guarantees of freedom and democracy.

When information is of public interest, it must always circulate freely. Facts and ideas must be communicated without constraint or obstacle. Knowing that a free press acts as an indispensable watchdog over authority and institutions, journalists must defend the freedom of the press and the public's right to information; they must fight any restrictions, pressures and threats that aim to limit the gathering and dissemination of information. Journalists serve the public interest - not personal or specific interests. As such, they have a responsibility to publish everything that is of public interest. This obligation must override any desire to serve information sources or to favour the financial and competitive needs of news organizations.

Journalists must take their role very seriously. They must demand of themselves the same ethical qualities they demand of newsmakers; in other words, they cannot denounce other people's conflicts of interest, and at the same time, accept their own.

This Code establishes the ethical rules that should guide journalistic work. These rules lay the foundation for a journalist's most precious asset: credibility.

Since it takes into account the specific nature of the journalistic environment, this is not a Code in the strictest sense of the word. There is no professional body in Quebec to which journalists must belong. Neither the title of journalist nor the journalistic act are reserved for a particular group of people. The journalistic world is open, and that is the way journalists want it to be. Since there is no disciplinary board with the necessary legal authority to sanction breaches of ethics, journalists are subject to the body of laws that govern the lives of all citizens.

In its current form, this Code has no disciplinary powers. Yet it remains indispensable for journalists, news organizations and the public. Journalism is increasingly practised outside of large newsrooms; as a result, it is becoming more difficult to transmit journalistic culture - ethical norms - from one generation to the next. As some journalists work in isolation throughout their entire careers, they do not benefit from a newsroom environment. This Code can thus serve as a pertinent reference point. It will also serve as a useful reminder for journalists, editors and managers who work in newsrooms and who may sacrifice ethics to the demands of

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- Les stratégies pour tirer le maximum de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information
- Introduction au journalisme de données
- [tout le calendrier]

competition. Without the support of management, the application of these ethical norms would be difficult. This Code must serve as an inspiration as much for large national media as for regional and smaller media. The review board of the Conseil de presse du Québec can also use this Code to support its decisions when it investigates complaints. Finally, both the public and information sources would benefit from a more precise knowledge of the ethical norms that should guide journalistic work. This Code will help them better judge journalistic behaviour. It will also demonstrate journalists' desire to better serve the public.

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### 1. Definition

The term "journalist" in this Code refers to all people who exercise a journalistic function for a news organization. In the context of publicly disseminating information or opinions, this includes one or several of the following tasks: researching, reporting, interviewing; writing or preparing reports, analyses, commentaries, or specialized columns; translating or adapting texts; press photography, filmed or electronic reports; assignment, the desk (headlines, lay-out...), editing; caricatures; information drawing and graphics; animation, producing and supervising current affairs programs and films; managing news, public affairs or other comparable departments.

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### 2. Fundamental journalistic values

The fundamental values of journalists include: a critical viewpoint, so they methodically doubt everything; impartiality, so they research and expose the diverse aspects of a given situation; fairness, so they view all citizens as equal before the press as they are before the law; independence, so they maintain their distance from authority and lobby groups; public respect and compassion, so they demonstrate moderation; honesty, so they display a scrupulous respect for facts and are openminded. This in turn demonstrates a receptiveness to unfamiliar realities, and an ability to report on these realities without prejudice.

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### 3. Truth and rigour

#### 3a) Accuracy

Journalists must rigorously gather and verify information to ensure their facts are accurate. They must correct their mistakes diligently and appropriately with regard to the harm they have caused.

#### 3b) Context

Journalists must put their facts and opinions in their proper context so they are understandable, without exaggerating or diminishing their scope.

#### 3c) Headlines

Headlines and introductions of articles and news reports should not exaggerate or lead to misinterpretation.

#### 3d) Personal opinions

So as not to confuse the public, journalists must carefully distinguish between personal opinions, analysis and factual information. Above all, they must give a precise account of the facts. In the case of editorials, columns

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**TEXTES DE RÉFÉRENCE**

É-U - Le déclin de l'empire  
 (médiatique) américain

Rapport «A free and  
 pluralistic media to sustain  
 European democracy» -  
 Janvier 2013

[suggérer des références]

[toutes les références]