

Governance Review

From: Tim Ireland [bloggerheads.com@googlemail.com]
Sent: 25 January 2010 08:53
To: Governance Review
Subject: Independent Governance Review

Dear Chairman,

Below are the suggestions we have drawn up and agreed on as a group. The sixth is my own. I look forward to your response to these and other suggestions in the coming weeks.

SUGGESTION ONE: Like-for-like placement of retractions, corrections and apologies in print and online (as standard).

Retractions, corrections, and apologies should normally be at least equally prominent to the original article, in both print and online editions. Any departure from this rule should only be in exceptional circumstances, and the onus on showing such circumstances should be on the publication.

SUGGESTION TWO: Original or redirected URLs for retractions, corrections & apologies online (as standard).

Retractions, corrections, and apologies in respect of online articles should always be displayed either at the original URL or at a URL to which the reader is redirected.

SUGGESTION THREE: The current Code contains no reference to headlines, and this loophole should be closed immediately.

Headlines should be covered by the same rules as the rest of a story. Further, headlines and titles for links should never be misleading in what they imply or offer and should always be substantiated by the article/contents.

SUGGESTION FOUR: Sources to be credited unless they do not wish to be credited or require anonymity/protection.

Sources should normally be credited. Any departure from this rule should only be when the source does not wish to be credited or if the source requires anonymity/protection.

SUGGESTION FIVE: A longer and more interactive consultation period for open discussion of more fundamental issues.

I submit all of the above without implying support for the PCC, the remainder of Code as it stands, or even the concept of self-regulation, and request that the 20th year of the PCC be marked with an open debate about its progress to date, and its future direction.

SUGGESTION SIX: Consumers should be able to immediately identify a magazine that follows the PCC Editor's Code of Practice at point of purchase

All PCC members should be encouraged to put a 'PCC member' badge/symbol on their front page - next to the price, so it's easy to find and people know what they're paying for. If you repeatedly reject the PCC's authority (see: Desmond), you should no longer be permitted to carry the badge/symbol. This badge will only be effective if members back it, stick by it, and give it value, but let's face it; the same applies to the PCC and self-regulation in general.

Yours, etc.

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PS - This year, an editor of a tabloid newspaper attacked my good name in a private letter to the PCC in a quite deliberate attempt to undermine evidence presented on my site without actually discussing that evidence (that turned out to be completely reliable, and right on the money). This letter attacking me was full of glaring errors if not outright lies. There were no consequences for this act of bad faith, only a threat from the PCC that my going public about it could derail any complaint in progress. Said complaint eventually petered out with a pathetic Page 12 apology to one of the victims, at which point, the matter was considered closed. This is just one of the reasons why I have NO faith in the PCC as it stands; in many ways it deserves its reputation as a cartel of scoundrels.

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