



# JOURNALISM ETHICS AND FAKE NEWS

## IMPLICATIONS FOR REPORTING AGRICULTURAL ISSUES IN MALAWI

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MALAWI



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# ETHICAL AND EVIDENCE-BASED REPORTING

## ❖ Ethics of anonymous sources

- When is it okay to publish news based on anonymous sources?
- Should reporters/journalists verify information from anonymous sources, how?

## ❖ What about leaked information and confidential or classified information/data

- How does the period of classification/confidentiality affect publishing decisions?
- How does trust of the source and reputation play out in decision making?

# EVIDENCE-BASED REPORTING

- ❖ Objectivity of news headlines and buzz words
  - Sensational tabloid news
- ❖ Do the headlines and catch phrases always match up with the content and facts?
- ❖ Allegations versus verified facts
- ❖ Public opinions, Position-rooted Activism and Advocacy
- ❖ Expert Opinions and Scientific Evidence
- ❖ What about editing? Does it end up misconstruing the facts or people's statements?
- ❖ What about Newsjacking and sharing other people's work?
  - Using other reporters stories. How can we be sure it is factual material or fake news?

# ETHICAL AGRICULTURAL REPORTING

## ❖ Use of multimedia content

- Consent of subjects and privacy considerations
  - Verbatim quoting, audio recording and video recording
- Secondary photographs, audio and video content and credits/citation
- Editing and selecting what to publish – sometimes important news does not make it
- Adapting/Modifying secondary multimedia
- Dangers of putting multimedia products out of context; mismatch

## ❖ How do we deal with changes of mind/position

- Refutation of previous statements/positions
- Information and data updates
- Inconsistent statements/positions at different time points and/or locations

## ❖ Claims of lack of knowledge/awareness

## ❖ Refusal to comment/respond – “No comment”; Unreachable phones, etc.



# EXERCISES

1: Ethics of News Sharing and Risk of Fake News in Agriculture

2: Separating the Fake from the Real: Agricultural News in Malawi's Media

NATURE OF INFORMATION	STORY
OBJECTIVE/EVIDENCE-BASED	STORY A
UNSURE, UNCLEAR/ ALLEGATION/OPINION	STORY B
FAKE, FALSE “ALTERNATIVE FACTS”	STORY C