Public faith in the media

Guidelines for transparency and clarity regarding news and opinion

Public faith in the media is one of Utgivarna's focus areas.

That's why the Board of Directors conducted a development project in this area last autumn. One of the project's findings is that we must be clearer in our digital publications

Is it an opinion piece, a news article or a column? To the average person, everything looks the same - when it's published online.

That's why we've developed recommendations and guidelines for easy ways for our members to clarify elements of their publications. We hope our proposals will contribute to an understanding of what type of text the reader encounters in the digital landscape.

Why are we doing this?

Public faith in the media is one of our most important issues of the day.

Public perceptions that the media are covering things up are growing increasingly common. In addition, many people are unaware of journalistic considerations, news value and media ethics.

Historically, news journalism and opinion pieces were clearly separated.

Leaders, letters to the editor and various types of opinion pieces were printed on separate pages from the news. And in news reporting, the comments and analyses were separate from the facts.

The same applies to radio and television news, where transitions and graphics clarify the difference between opinion and news.

But in the digital world, this packaging has been broken up. Individual publications or clips are shared out of context and spread on social media. The public no longer has the benefit of the careful consideration of the editorial staff in publishing. This can make it seem as if the majority of all journalism is opinion-driven, that journalists emphasise and pursue their own personal opinions.

At the same time, sharing material helps individuals to spread the specific attitudes they wish to convey. Old publications can begin circulating again in a new context.

What can we do?

We have found that transparency is crucial in our work. Therefore, we have arrived at these guidelines:

- Inform readers of when an article was published (publication date).
- Emphasise the publication date if the article begins spreading on social media at a later date.
- Clarify what type of publication it is.
- In special cases, describe your methods.
- In special cases, describe the publication decisions.
- Inform the readers of the media ethics systems.
- Make it easy to report publications.

Based on these points, we've created a simple toolbox that will enhance transparency and give support to Sweden's serious publicists when a publication is shared or questioned. If you follow these rules, the answers will be there when the article is read.

The toolbox - the recommendations - were developed by a workgroup in Utgivarna's Board of Directors and can freely be used in their entirety or in part. You can also use the material as input for your own work at your own media outlet.

If you have any thoughts or questions about Utgivarna's work, send us an email at info@utgivarna.se

Stockholm, 20 February 2017



■ TOOLBOX

News

Recommendations for clarity and transparency

Publication date

Clarify the publication date.

New shares on social media

Sometimes a publication begins spreading again on social media several years later. When this happens, it is vital to update and clarify that the publication is old.

A simple formulation is sufficient:

This material is currently being spread on social media. Note that the article/segment is from 2010.

When is it a news article?

Most publications are news. For such articles you can add a line at the end – and also link to a page on how you conduct your journalistic work.

Example:

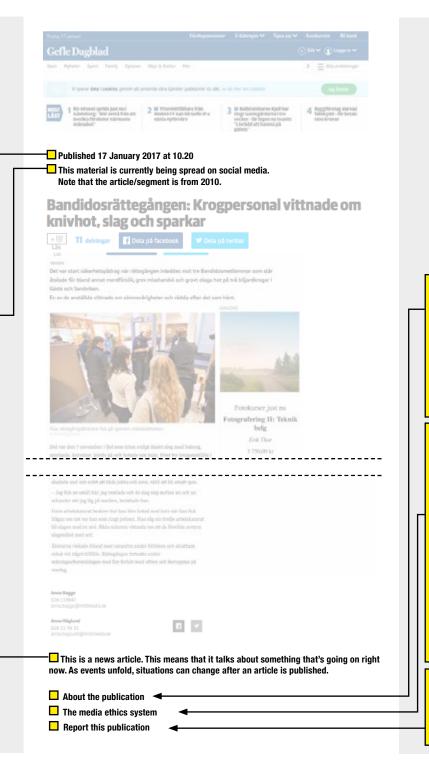
This is a news article. This means that it talks about something that's going on right now. As events unfold, situations can change after an article is published.

More about our news work >

Public service:

XX's news reporting is to be factual and unbiased.

The data we publish are to be true and relevant. In breaking news, it can be difficult to get all facts confirmed from first-hand sources. In such situations we must state what we know – and what we don't know. We must be open about what information is uncertain.



About the publication

Sometimes you need to explain the work that went into a publication or what considerations were made when deciding to publish. This can include explaining working methods regarding in-depth reports or the background of a publication decision, for example why the news source decided to publish or not publish the name and photo of a suspect or convicted criminal.

The media ethics system

XX is subject to the press ethics system. The Public Press Ombudsman (PO) is tasked with helping individuals who feel that they have been defamed in publications. The PO answers to the Swedish Press Council (PON). The PON decides whether a news source is guilty or not for a given publication.

More about the PO/PON >

or

XX is subject to review by the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority, which is tasked with ensuring that XX follows the regulations in the Radio and Television Act and in its broadcasting charter. This is monitored by the Swedish Broadcasting Commission.

Mer om Granskningsnämnden >

Report this publication

Here, you can link to the PO/PON's or Swedish Broadcasting Commission's page for reporting a publication.

■ TOOLBOX

Comments & analysis

Recommendations for clarity and transparency

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A simple formulation is sufficient:

This material is currently being spread on social media. Note that the article/segment is from 2010.

What type of publication is it?

A straightforward, objective news article? An analysis based on facts and knowledge? An opinion piece?

What type of article it is – and what that means – contributes to how we should read the material and what we should expect of it. Describing the material clearly and logically can help to avoid misunderstandings and help the reader understand the publication.

Example

This is a comment text. This means that the conclusions are the writer's own.

This is an analytical text. This means that the conclusions are the writer's own.

Public service:

This is an analysis in which the conclusions are the journalist's own. XX's staff are not acting in the interests of any political party, business or special interest organisation. It is compatible with XX's broadcasting charter to "comment and illustrate events" (section 8).



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Opinion

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Example:

This is an opinion piece. This means that the content is the writer's own opinion.

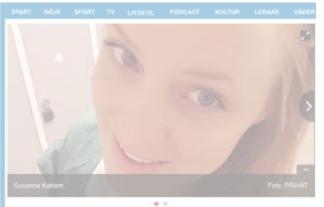
This is a letter to the editor. This means that a reader has submitted the material for publication. The content is the author's own opinion.

This is a leader. This means that the material is the opinion of the editorial page.

Public service:

This is an opinion piece. The content is the sender's own opinion.





Orkar jag komma tillbaka i morgon?

- Dublished 17 January 2017 at 10.20
- This material is currently being spread on social media. Note that the article/segment is from 2010.
- This is an opinion piece. This means that the content is the writer's own opinion.

Det är en känsla av lättnad blandad med ångest att lämna. Jag har inte läget under kontroll och vet inte hur mina patienter mår, skriver sluksköterskan Susanne Kattem.

Jag jobbar som sjuksköterska på en akutmedicinsk värdavdelning på Danderyds sjukhus. Jag kan säga att den här hösten och vintern har varit den absolut värsta jag har varit med

takhöjning. Jag skyndar mig ut från avdelningen med en klump i magen. Ska jag orka komma tillbaka till detta i morgon igen?

Susanne Kattem,

Debatt

debatt@expressen

- About the publication
- ☐ The media ethics system
- Report this publication







≧ Mejla

About the publication

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