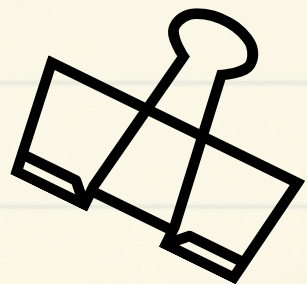
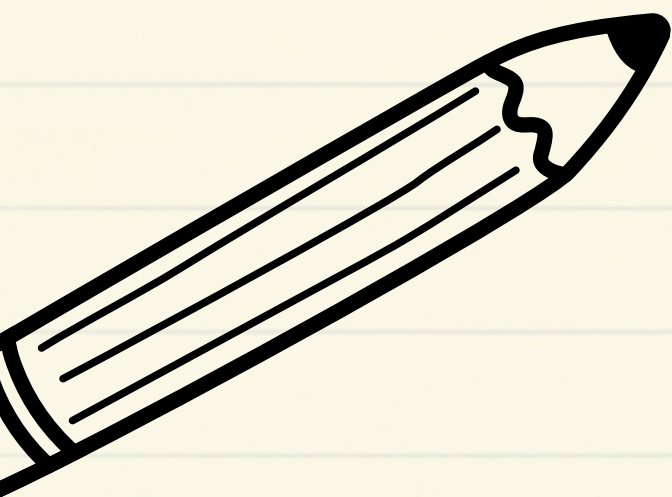




GUIDING PRINCIPLES

How it all started...



WFSJ JOINT PROJECT

“Establishing the Boundaries of Ethics in Science Journalism”

Funded by The Kavli Foundation

Included:

1. House of Commons-style debates
2. Guiding Principles Surveys
3. Workshops

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE 1

Moderators:

Kai Kupferschmidt, a contributing correspondent for Science magazine
Peter Vermij, a communications advisor, based in Amsterdam

“When politics and science collide, scientists and journalists may also collide”, 22 November 2019

- Scientists don't want to be exposed
- Scientists ask journalists to pick a side – the science side

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE 2

Conflicts of interest in science journalism, 2020 Annual Meeting of the AAAS, in Seattle (USA)

- Journalists are never fully shielded from having conflicts of interest. Full disclosure is the best way to go

OR

- Disclosure is risky, since it may draw attention to conflicts and invite suspicion where there had been none

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE 2

- Most participants said they would follow guidelines if they agreed with them.
- They don't commit to abiding upfront: they could disagree or the wider community might not back it up

- Boundaries between journalists and non-journalists
- Definition of science journalist
- What would properly define 'non-conflicting kinds or work'

20 JOURNALISTS IN A ROOM

WFSJ Brainstorming Session on Ethics and Science Journalists
23 November 2019, WSF, Hungary

- Who can be called a science journalist and who is entitled to dive into science journalism?
- Should we be cheerleaders and get closer to the science side or act as watchdogs and get closer to the journalism side?
- To be worried about the quality of science journalism or reporting of science by non-science journalists too?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SCIENCE JOURNALISM - SURVEY

Luisa Massarani, coordinator of Brazil's National Institute of Public Communication of Science and Technology and coordinator for Latin America of SciDev.Net

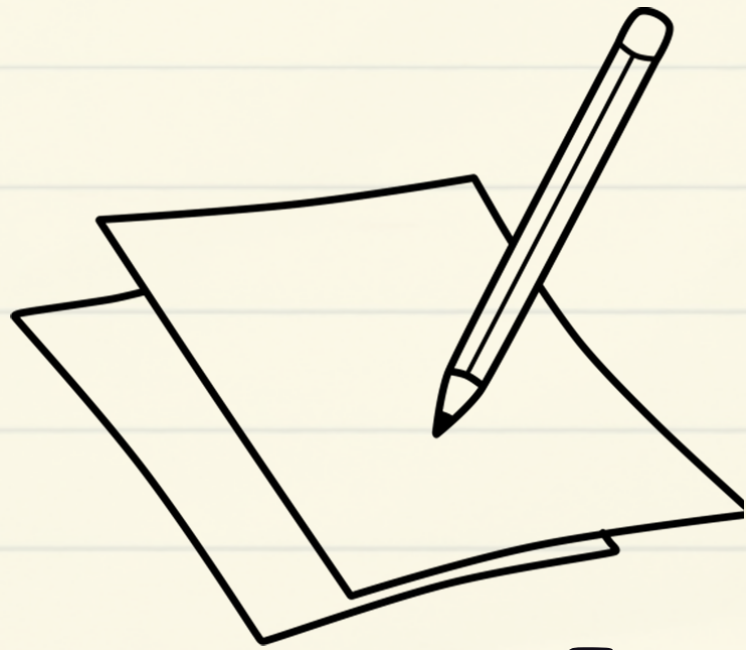
Science Journalism in Latin America and the Caribbean: the perspective of science journalists

»»» 179 professionals from 18 countries

Guiding Principles for Science Journalism – A global perspective

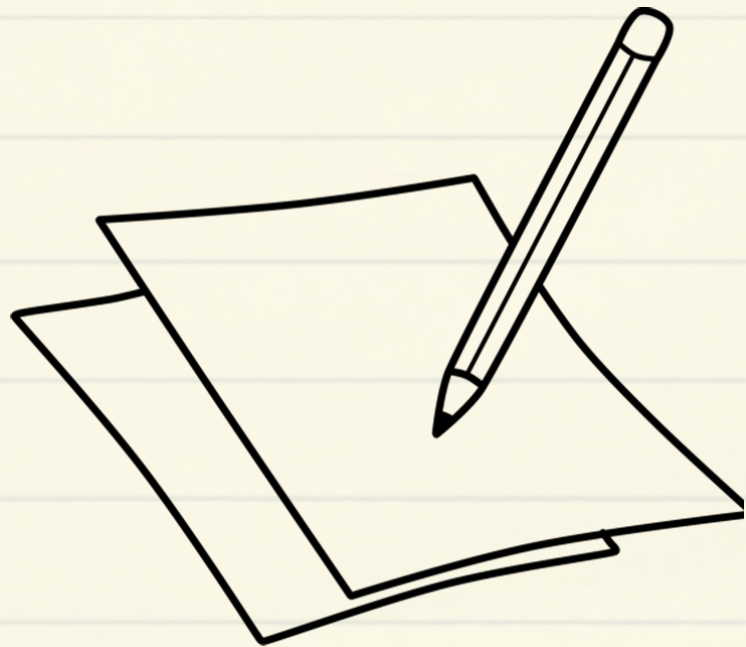
»»» 500 science journalists from 82 countries

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



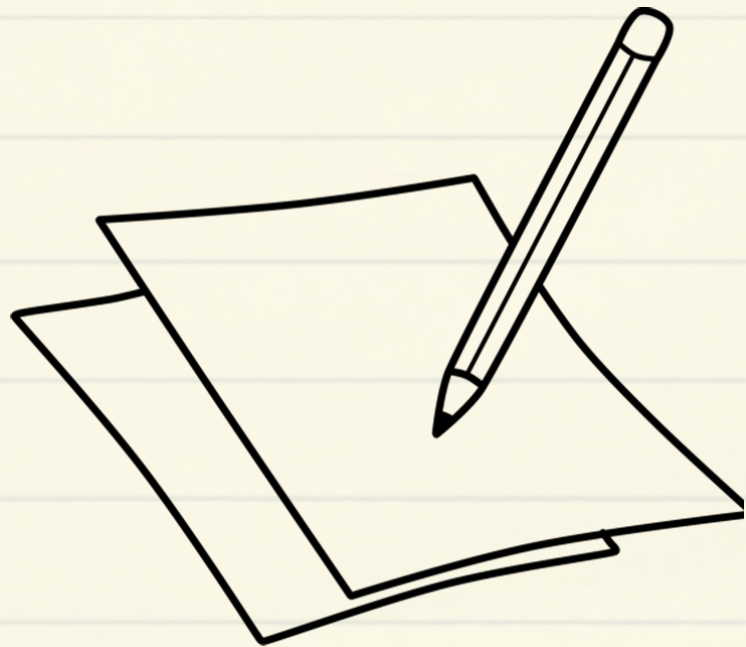
- Gifts, invitations, or paid trips to cover conferences: 37% acceptable in some circumstances, 36% acceptable if journalists can maintain independence, and 27% unacceptable.
- For 55%, it is not acceptable that science journalists cover organizations that have paid for their work.
- Low pay was cited as the main issue affecting ethical science reporting by 63% of respondents, followed by pressure to provide news that attracts an audience (58%), fake news (56%), and political or corporate spin (52%).

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



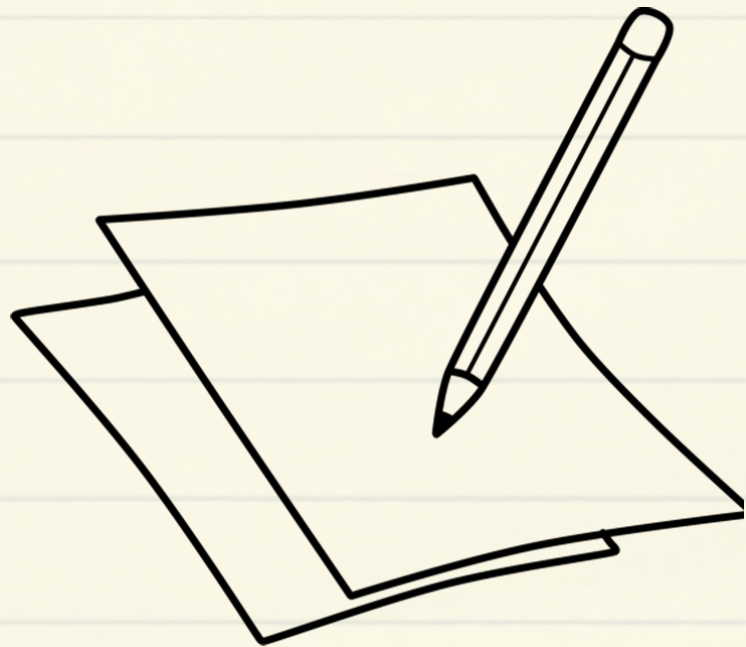
- About 80% of journalists responded that journalists should cover the follow-up if a scientist accused of fraud was later found innocent.
- If a journal retracted a scientific paper reported by the journalist, 65% of participants answered that they would report the retraction.
- Across all regions, 76% of professionals said they would correct errors detected after publishing coverage of a specific science topic.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



- Role of science journalists: “to inform” (38%), “to explain science” (28%), “to promote science” (15%)
- 32% of the USA and Canada respondents said they never send material prior to publication
- Half of the participants think that professionals from areas other than journalists should not be allowed to shape the ethical priorities of science journalism.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



- About 80% of journalists responded that journalists should cover the follow-up if a scientist accused of fraud was later found innocent.
- If a journal retracted a scientific paper reported by the journalist, 65% of participants answered that they would report the retraction.
- Across all regions, 76% of professionals said they would correct errors detected after publishing coverage of a specific science topic.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOPS... 2020

“Have you ever discussed the ethics in science journalism inside your association? What were the main conclusions?”

- “No, but we are considering it.”
- “Your form just inspired us to do so.”
- “Yes, many times. Main conclusion: it's complicated. After a lot of research and a committee, the members voted against the proposed code of conduct.”
- “Yes, A code of ethics was adopted and members trained!”

WCSJ2023 WORKSHOPS

- Starting point: a list of ethical principles collected from science journalism codes of ethics and other journalists' deontological codes.
- 3 workshops
- a new draft after each workshop
- 60 participants
- 20 principles

2024 ONLINE WORKSHOPS

- Starting point: 20 principles
- 4 workshops: 2 English, 1 French, 1 Spanish
- Total: 50 members, from 20 member associations

“End point”: 32 paragraphs and still lots of questions

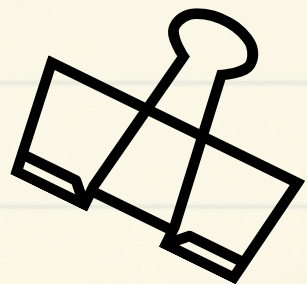
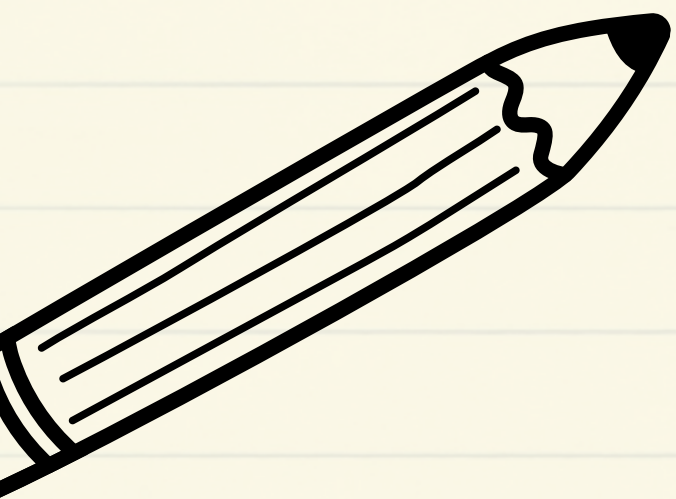
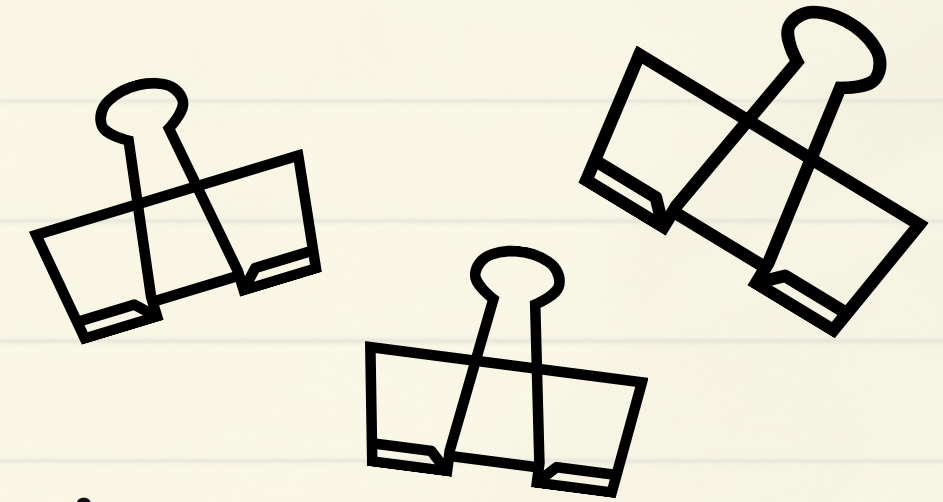
NOW AND THE FUTURE

- Mixture of ethical principles and best practices
 - »»» Create more than one document
- Increases the burden on science journalists
 - »»» Create guidelines for commissioning editors
- The non-science journalists
 - »»» Training for generalist journalists and editors

NOW AND THE FUTURE

- WFSJ documents should be seen as resources, toolkits, or recommendations. They are not mandatory.
- WFSJ can help and encourage member associations to have discussions about ethics with their members.
- Create a forum to share difficulties and solutions.
- Create pages with resources for members.

A very special thank you to everyone who engaged in the discussions about the guiding principles for their valuable inputs.



Vera Novais