

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



Contents

Contents

Introduction

What's New?

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Viewing Grief

Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

Index

Canadians have enjoyed the luxury of space and democracy for a long time and as a result privacy has been a fundamental part of our culture. But as technology grew exponentially and information databases expanded enormously, our governments began to focus more and more on issues related to access to information and the preservation and protection of citizens' privacy. At the same time, Canadians have always supported and respected the civil safeguards of freedom of the press and the role and responsibility of the media to act as the public's agent in providing information. As media in particular television news cameras became more omnipresent in our society, Canadian media consumers gained access to more information, faster, and in much greater detail. However, the public's right to know and citizens' right to privacy are rights that can collide. Media organizations have been accused by critics for subscribing to the rule of "if it bleeds it leads," and some say that the thirst for pictures an essential element of television news coverage and the commercial needs of television news production can drive news coverage. Furthermore, some observers suggest that in a culture of "reality" television, consumers are in fact asking for more of the kind of coverage that those directly involved in the news event might consider television that is excessively "in your face." Balancing these rights and responsibilities is an issue for both news producers and news consumers.

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



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Canada's Water Supply (series)

Watershed

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



Introduction

Contents

Introduction

What's New?

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Viewing Grief

Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

Index

The multichannel universe, like the Internet, needs an increasing amount of material, or programming. Some media observers predict some say it is occurring already that sooner or later the cameras will turn on the viewer. In the 1960s, American pop artist Andy Warhol claimed that in the new celebrity-crazed world everyone would experience 15 minutes of fame within their lifetimes. This statement seems even truer now, especially when stated in terms of 15 minutes of media exposure. In the summer of 2000, record numbers of television consumers watched the ultimate (to date) reality-based programs Survivor and Big Brother: ordinary people becoming instant celebrities. Wherever the viewers gathered, at work or in social situations, they discussed the subjects' fates which survivor would or should be eliminated next. Internet users can watch the moment-by-moment happenings taking place in the Big Brother house. Talk show hosts interview those who have been voted off. As a society we have granted these people, if perhaps only briefly, celebrity status, and by watching we participate vicariously in their personal destinies. And ordinary people line up for their chance to sign on in the role of the "watched." At recent casting calls for the next Survivor show, thousands of people showed up in major cities across the United States. This is not only a U.S. phenomenon, however; this summer thousands of teenaged girls from all over Canada descended on Toronto for a chance to be part of the Canadian reality TV show Pop Stars. The chance to be on camera in what some call a world of information and sensory overload is very tempting for many people. However, consumers' taste for reality can also lead to a significant conflict of principles, what Alan Borovoy refers to in his book *When Freedoms Collide*.

The media spotlight is now focused intensely on ordinary people as well as on well-known public figures during very personal and trying times. The same public appetite that creates a demand for shows such as Survivor and Big Brother, and the historic role of the press to inform the public and to fulfill the role of societal watchdog, may result in mixed signals and dubious results, creating a demand and consequently television programming to meet the consumer demand that may in fact not be information nor in the public interest but may simply be voyeurism. When an accident occurs on the road, many people slow down to look, others slow down for safety or to assess whether they can or need to assist the victims. When disasters or major traumatic incidents occur, our first reaction today is to turn on the news to learn the details or is it just to watch?

On the anniversary of the Littleton, Colorado, shootings, students in an Ottawa-area high school reportedly had been stabbed by another, knife-wielding student. Within minutes the media had arrived to cover the story. They were asked to leave, to allow the students time to deal with their shock and grief in their own private ways. Many television stations complied with this request, some did not. News cameras, the need to inform the public, and what some saw as gratuitous coverage and an invasion of privacy collided. News producers, as you will see, struggled with the decision to cover or not to cover

the event. Do we, the general public, undergo the same process of critical thinking? Do we have the right to watch?

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



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Howe Sound: Poisoned Waters

Canada's Water Supply (series)

Watershed

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



What's New?

Contents

Introduction

What's New?

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Viewing Grief

Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

Index

The Consumer

Before watching this special and generic News in Review report, discuss answers to the following questions:

1. Do you watch television news? If so, why?
2. What station's newscast do you watch most often? Why?
3. What news stories do you find most interesting?
4. In what situations do you think television news cameras would have the right to photograph you?

Rights and Responsibilities

In the video report you are about to see, the issues summarized below are raised by various people interviewed. Read through the comments individually before viewing. Then, after viewing, have someone read each statement aloud and as a class discuss which statements defend the media's presence at the Ottawa area high school where the stabbing incident took place and which statements present the case for news cameras not covering the event.

1. "If a tragedy befalls you, you become for the life of the story a public figure, unfortunately with an unhappy role to play."
2. "When it's good news they welcome you with open arms to a school, but if it's bad news you are quickly told by someone from the board or principal you're not allowed on the property."
3. "People don't like having a mirror put up to them."
4. "The media [do themselves] a disservice when they take their role as one of comforting audiences rather than informing audiences."
5. "When a student under the age of 18 is in a school, the parent has the expectation that the school is taking care of them. They shouldn't be asked to speak to the media without parental permission."
6. "Hostility should not be a reason to back off a story. There is a difference between being told not to go to the school and not to cover the story."
7. "It's much better to miss the pictures and be responsible than to have the pictures for sensationalism alone."
8. "We will not have a free press or free speech in this country if we kowtow to every request not to cover this or that story. We will only be able to cover charity events where people are giving cheques to the United Way."
9. "Stop for a second and take a breath. Think about those kids that are in crisis; think about the impact of having all the words that they have said in the heat of the moment being in print forever."

Further Critical Thinking

The following questions were raised or implied in the video. Working individually initially write down a personal response to each and then, as a class, discuss answers to each of them.

1. What might some of the implications or ramifications be if the media had to get your permission to photograph you in a public place?
2. What is the Afghanistan Syndrome? Why do you think it occurs? How could it affect the quality of the coverage of local stories?
3. In a situation like the one that occurred in the school in Ottawa, do you think there is a "best time" to get a response from students? Should it be right after the incident has occurred? Should it be at a later date when students, teachers, parents, officials, and the community have had time to process emotionally and rationally the events? Do students' initial reactions help or hinder a news organization in fully informing the public?
4. A common expression in the vernacular today is "Don't go there." This expression may mean, don't talk about something, don't think about it, don't experience it because it is too difficult, too painful, an inappropriate time to do so, or that you may not be prepared or equipped to deal with what you will see and hear. One of the people interviewed said "We won't go there." What conditions should be in place before the media "go there"? In your opinion, should the television viewer have been allowed or invited to "go there" in the news event at the core of this report?

Follow-up Discussion

To the theorist Marshall McLuhan the issue of loss of privacy is an inevitable result of the new global village created by instant electronic information. In an interview in 1966 he said, "The global village is at once as wide as the planet and as small as the little town where everybody is maliciously engaged in poking his nose into everybody else's business. . . . We now share too much about each other to be strangers to each other. . . . People suddenly have to adjust themselves to this new proximity, this new interrelationship, and merely to tell them that this has happened isn't very helpful. What they need to know is, if it is happening, what does it mean to me?"

What does McLuhan's statement have to do with this News in Review report?

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



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A Media Cultural Conflict?

"Unlike previous environmental changes, the electronic media constitutes a total and near instantaneous transformation of culture, values, and attitudes."
Marshall McLuhan, 1974

As you study the following material, consider how culture, values, and attitudes play important roles in this News in Review report.

As Marshall McLuhan pointed out almost three decades ago, the advent of instantaneous electronic media such as television and now the Internet have had a radical impact on cultures, values, and attitudes around the world. As he stated in 1965, "There are no remote places. Under instant circuitry, nothing is remote in time or in space. It's now." In this new world of instantaneous information, television news has taken on an increasing role of immediacy. In the last several decades, the U.S. news giant, CNN, has been at the forefront of this global transition. The Gulf War, in the early 1990s, seemed to be fought entirely on television, although the coverage was censored, unlike the Vietnam War. The United States and many of its NATO allies used television news conferences to disclose information (and perhaps misinformation) about strategic hits and battle successes. Global television viewers were able to watch Scud missiles fly through the night skies at the very moment they were fired. CNN had round-the-clock live coverage of the war, and people from around the world tuned in. It was even reported that Saddam Hussein and his top advisors watched CNN in order to keep informed of events.

The power that now lies in the hands of giant news organizations, increasingly owned by huge multinational corporations, worries many pundits. This increased skepticism can be seen in several films that have been released in the past several years. Movies such as Wag the Dog and Primary Colors deal with the ways truth can be shaped and even manipulated in the media in order to divert people's attention away from what is really occurring. The more recent film The Insider investigates the many ways that powerful business interests can dictate what will or will not be shown on television. Informed and critical television viewers now question the assumption that news programming is always objective, neutral, or without bias. In order to understand the television news medium and the impact that it has on our lives, it is important to have an understanding of some of the key concepts of media literacy. The word literacy itself refers to the ability to read; students who study media literacy are learning how to read, or some say decode, decipher, or deconstruct, media messages. When you first learn how to read a book, you must master the various elements and forms on which language is built: vowels, consonants, vocabulary, inherent meaning, punctuation, sentences and so forth. Likewise, knowledge of some basic conventions is necessary to master a thorough understanding of media literacy. Examine the following key media concepts and consider how they apply to television news stories, especially those in which visual images have a high emotional content.

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or
No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and
Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer
Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay
Questions](#)

[Index](#)

Media messages reconstruct or reflect realities as opposed to being those realities.

Good journalists, to the best of their abilities, report actual events; they tell the story of the events. While watching a serious scene in the recent movie *Autumn in New York*, several audience members started snickering when they noticed the boom microphone dipping in and out of the scene at the top of the screen. Soon no one in the audience was listening to the dialogue; they were too busy watching for the editing blunder. Movies are a billion-dollar business, and it is not often that glaring errors are noted in their careful construction. In this film, the appearance of the boom mic pulled the audience away from the reality of universal themes represented through the plot, character, and dialogue. Instead that little slip made the viewers aware of the technical aspects of the film. The suggestion of reality was destroyed when the boom mic entered the frame. Although most people realize that movies are not reality they may feel real to them. People often don't consider how a news report is also composed of various elements and therefore constructed or edited to convey as accurately as possible the facts of an event but also a sense of what it was like to be an actual witness to the events. Time and budgetary constraints especially require that news reports be carefully and tightly edited. Difficult decisions have to be made as to what essential facts to insert, and what information there is not enough time to communicate; but still give a true summary of the actual events. Difficult editorial decisions must also be made as to what stories are high priority and the order in which to present them. This too can influence the viewer's perception of news events.

Viewers must negotiate or interpret media messages in order to fully understand the meaning of reported events as producers strive to convey it.

Two people might watch the same news broadcast and see a completely different story. For example, the May 2000 issue of *News in Review* covered the story "Hockey Injuries: What Price Glory?" Would someone who plays hockey respond to this story in a different manner from someone who doesn't? Could cultural or gender differences affect the way in which someone viewed this story? Although the story is the same, each person who watches it brings his or her own life experiences, points of view, and attitudes to the news item, and therefore people may perceive the event and its inherent issues differently.

Media have commercial implications, require audiences in order to do what they do, and must receive funding from either public and/or private sources to pay the bills.

The dramatic (as opposed to documentary) film *The Insider*, based upon real-life events, follows the decision made by CBS television not to run a segment on the current affairs show *60 Minutes*. The controversial segment included the testimony against the tobacco industry of Jeffrey Wigand, a top executive and whistle-blower. As the situation was depicted in the film, CBS allegedly was afraid of potential lawsuits that might have resulted from the testimony and the effect those lawsuits would have on the company's (CBS's) share prices. Management felt that it was critical to keep share prices high since they were considering selling the station to a multinational corporation. The segment was considered too risky. Although not all television stations have to worry about corporate buyouts when making editorial decisions, every station has to worry about ratings. Private commercial television stations pay the bills through advertising revenue, and advertisers will only be interested in running commercials if they know that enough viewers are watching. Public television networks are less dependent on advertising revenues they receive state funding but part of their production costs are also derived from commercial revenues. Even *News in Review* must cover its production costs through subscription sales.

[Contents](#)
[Introduction](#)
[What's New?](#)
[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)
[Viewing Grief](#)
[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)
[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)
[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)
[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)
[Index](#)



Comprehensive News in Review Study Modules

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News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Questions](#)

[Index](#)



Part 2

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Television executives, using commercial ratings services, are continuously monitoring the number of viewers a station's programs are attracting. If ratings are low, advertisers are not pleased, and a show may be cancelled or reshaped in order to enhance what is called "audience share." The news is not exempt in this regard.

The media communicate social values, and media messages have political implications.

Try this experiment. Watch three different newscasts on three different channels on the same night. Did each of them lead with the same story? When covering a political issue did the three different newscasts emphasize the same points, or equally as important, spend the same amount of time on a story? Although professional television journalists try to be vigilant about remaining neutral in their reporting, any story reflects the culture in which it is based. All of us have biases. Bias, per se, is normal and not necessarily a bad thing. What we attempt to identify and eliminate are negative biases that distort information or pervert the telling of the truth. A competent editorial staff along with the journalists strive to tell the story as accurately and completely as possible. Since many Canadians turn to television news to keep them informed about what is happening in their communities and around the world, it is equally important for them to understand that they must interact with a news program by assessing and evaluating the quality and validity of the information presented. They must be active, critical viewers. For example, the crime rate in Canada has dropped 28 per cent since 1994, yet many news stations will spend a disproportionate amount of time covering crime stories. As a result, many Canadians perceive that crime, and especially youth crime, has gone up. As Tony Doob, a criminologist at University of Toronto, points out, "We always hear people saying youth crime is going up and trying to explain why; failure of society, violence on television, and so on. Let's not talk about violence on television, let's talk about the fact it's not going up. Why are we trying to explain why it's going up when it's not going up?" Yet even if there isn't an increase in the crime rate, the perception that there is an increase could lead to political changes. This was the case in Canada when in 1999, the federal government proposed the new Youth Criminal Justice Act to replace the Young Offenders Act in a response to the public perception that crime is on the increase. In our intense media society in North America, we also must be able to differentiate between a factual report and a fictionalized representation of an event. The films *The Insider* and *JFK* are fictional representations of real events but they are not news.

Form and content are closely related in media productions, and form can affect how the content is perceived by the viewer.

Marshall McLuhan once stated that "the medium is the message." Each medium has a specific set of conventions, and these in turn affect the content. Rap music communicates real information, thoughts, feelings, and ideas through a unique form and format. Since television is a visual medium it can show a news story in a way that print or radio media cannot. A television news program is heavily dependent on pictures, and viewers may be attracted to one news story over another because of the nature of the pictures. Print media normally put a greater emphasis on words and therefore cover a news story in a different way from a television newscast. And yet, the old adage that "a picture is worth a thousand words" is very often true. Print journalists, however, also know that human beings also "see" with their minds, and therefore the effective and judicious use of description and qualifiers such as adjectives, adverbs, literary devices, and even some nouns and verbs are essential to presenting a true account. A magazine, like Maclean's, which is published weekly, covers a story differently from a newspaper or a television newscast. A documentary film crew may spend months or years researching and producing a story and can therefore bring a depth of understanding to issues that would not be possible through other news media. In short, all types of news media have different forms and formats and this may influence how we perceive a news event. Ideally, of course, we should be getting our news from a variety of reputable sources in order to experience a variety of forms and hence gain a balanced view on an event. This may be easier said than done and will depend to a great extent on the ability, willingness, and awareness of the news consumer. Each type of news medium, however, has advantages and disadvantages associated with it that are a direct result of that medium's conventions.

Follow-up Discussion and Activities

1. Certain decisions have to be made when reporting a story in different media. Compare the same news story covered on a television newscast to a newspaper article on the same issue. How does the particular medium affect your perception of the event? Note all the similarities and differences. Look specifically for the following: length and depth of coverage, the juxtaposition of news items, the placement of advertisements and the ratio of fact to opinion.
2. What issues are implicit in the two statements below? Do you agree with the speaker? Could both positions be true? If so, how is this possible?
"Television news promotes the status quo by directing our attention toward a daily series of diverting but unrelated events, and away from deeper social problems that might lead us to question or challenge the current system of doing things."
Donna Woolfolk Cross in the book *Media Speak* (page 50)
"Our reporters do not cover stories from their point of view. They are presenting them from nobody's point of view." Richard Salant, NBC vice-chairman
3. Why do you think many news programs show a disproportional amount of crime stories when the crime rate in Canada is actually going down?
4. Sometimes a bias or assumption occurs when a news story first breaks and which is often shared by most news organizations and consequently the public. The September 1996 issue of *News in Review* contained a story titled "TWA Flight 800: Terrorism Hits Home." What assumptions did the title suggest? What were the facts?
5. Obtain and watch the National Film Board of Canada documentary film *Only the News That Fits* (1989). According to this documentary, what factors determine the news stories that a news organization will cover?

[<<< Back to Part 1](#)

[Contents](#)
[Introduction](#)
[What's New?](#)
[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)
[Viewing Grief](#)
[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)
[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)
[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)
[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)
[Index](#)



Comprehensive News in Review Study Modules

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Does Your Resource Collection Include These CBC Videos?

Water: To The Last Drop
Howe Sound: Poisoned Waters
Canada's Water Supply (series)
Watershed

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



Viewing Grief

Contents

Introduction

What's New?

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Viewing Grief

Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

Index

In many Western cultures, grief is one of the most personal and private emotions; rather than reaching out to the extended community with our pain and suffering we tend to keep our suffering private. Although public rituals help individuals and witnesses to grief come to terms with personal loss, public displays of grief are sometimes considered embarrassing in the West, and for many, too painful to watch. Janna Malamud, a psychotherapist, explores the discomfort of watching private grief over a very public medium such as television in her book *Private Matters: In Defense of the Personal Life*.

One evening as she was watching news coverage of a large Los Angeles earthquake, she became aware of the visual elements of the disaster: the twisted freeway filmed from a helicopter, the piles of rubble, buildings destroyed, fires, and broken water mains. She also began to focus on the first-person accounts of victims. When the news coverage shifted to the site of an attempted rescue, she saw a scene of a collapsed apartment building from which the body of a woman's only child, a girl, was being recovered. The news report then showed the woman, who previously was off camera, coming into the camera frame. She was screaming. According to Malamud, "I expect the camera to offer us one look at her and then cut away. But it does not. She is wearing a gray pantsuit and sunglasses, and she cannot stop running and screaming. Her husband tries to grab her and pull her into his arms, but her grief is so intense, her body cannot allow itself to be held still." Malamud notices a man at the scene who is looking away from the grieving woman, is in essence, affording her the private grief that the television camera does not. Malamud suggests that this is an intuitive reaction on the man's part. She too looks away from the television set the grieving woman and wishes that the news cameras would stop filming. Finally, the somber faces of the local news anchors reappear. Later, she reflects on the "profound trauma of a woman I have never met" and questions whether the television news editor really felt that she (Malamud, the viewer) must see the grieving woman in order to understand the effect of the earthquake. Malamud offers the opinion that the television news camera has violated the woman's privacy and in addition has allowed the television viewers to "violate a collective standard of honoring life and death by shielding people when their suffering is extreme."

Follow-up Discussion

1. If you had been the news director of the television station mentioned above and had been asked by someone to justify the decision to use this footage, how would you have answered?
2. In many Western cultures people have been taught to have a very personal and private response to grief. This is not necessarily the same response that other cultures have in times of great suffering. Many cultures have professional mourners; the expression of grief becomes something very public and communal. Could there be something cathartic in sharing other people's suffering? Could this be a role television news coverage of traumatic events

fulfill? Explain your point of view carefully

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



Comprehensive News in Review Study Modules

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Does Your Resource Collection Include These CBC Videos?

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Canada's Water Supply (series)

Watershed

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

Many Americans were shocked when, in the summer of 1999, the plane John F. Kennedy Jr. was piloting crashed off the shores of Massachusetts. Kennedy, his wife Carolyn Bissette, and her sister Lauren, were all killed. News crews quickly went into action, staking out the Kennedy compound for brief glimpses of mourning, something this particular family has experienced many times. A day after the memorial service for John F. Kennedy Jr., several photographers camped out in front of his sister Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's Manhattan apartment building snapped pictures of a saddened Caroline, her husband, and two of her children as they left the building. These pictures, along with the camera shots through the hedges of Kennedy Schlossberg's backyard on her Long Island estate, caused the editors of the journalism magazine Brill's Content to question how far journalistic integrity has been compromised in its coverage of trauma, especially that involving famous people whom viewers feel they know. "Neither of these intrusions," the magazine wrote, "qualify as great media atrocities of our time. They don't compare with the harm that comes from someone's reputation being unfairly maligned or with a completely private and defenseless person having his or her life turned inside out by a press swarm. But they are hauntingly emblematic in the now routine way they dragged us all down a notch, as hordes of journalists, working under the banner of the public's right to know, helped us leer at another family in grief. Sure we were all curious to see the grieving family. But by any news standard other than curiosity was it necessary?"

With this in mind the magazine asked 130 members of the print and television news media if they would or should follow voluntary restrictions related to the protection of an individual's privacy. The questions asked related specifically to protecting the privacy of children under the age of 14 and the privacy of grieving families. Of the 130 news professionals asked, only 18 agreed with the restrictions, 53 did not agree, three agreed with some, but not all of the restrictions, and 56 refused to give their position. Most news organizations polled did not want to be tied down to a set of written guidelines but rather would like to be able to assess each news item individually. As Tom Johnson, the CEO of CNN, wrote to the editors of Brill's Content regarding the voluntary restrictions, "We act with great caution in showing video images of minors. Generally, we do not show video images of minors in controversial circumstances without permission of their parents or guardian. There are exceptions; for example, a minor being charged as an adult in a criminal case, or students being evacuated from a school. Experience tells us that there are other exceptions that are unpredictable and those decisions are made on a case-by-case basis with senior news management oversight."

Brill's Content then polled the general public using similar questions. The results were very different. The questions asked in the poll, conducted by the American research firm Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc., are listed below along with the public's response. As you read the statements consider

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or
No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and
Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer
Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay
Questions](#)

[Index](#)

the following focus questions:

1. Do you agree that the media should adopt this position as a voluntary restriction?
2. Why do you think so many news agencies were wary about adopting this restriction?
3. Can you think of a news story that would not have been covered, or would have been covered differently if this restriction had been in place?
4. Would the implementation of this policy weaken, strengthen, or have no effect on the ability to report the news in an accurate and unbiased manner?

Policy 1

The news organization would agree not to show the image of any child under 14 years of age without the permission of the child and at least one of the child's parents. This policy would not apply to children who deliberately put themselves on public display because they are the children of a politician and are at a campaign event.

Sixty-seven per cent of those surveyed agreed while 23 per cent did not.

Policy 2

The news organization would agree not to post reporters or photographers outside the home or in any other place to wait to interview or photograph a child without the permission of the child and at least one of the child's parents. This policy would not apply to children who deliberately put themselves on public display because they are in show business or because they are the children of a politician and part of a campaign event.

Eighty per cent of those surveyed agreed while 15 per cent did not.

Policy 3

The news organization would agree not to show a current photograph or image of family members who have lost a loved one within the prior week, and will not post reporters outside the family's home or any other place to wait to interview or photograph the family members without their consent.

Eighty-six per cent of those surveyed agreed while nine per cent did not.

Policy 4

The news organization would agree not to photograph grieving family members at funerals if asked by family members.

Eighty per cent of those surveyed agreed while 15 per cent did not.

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



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Howe Sound: Poisoned Waters

Canada's Water Supply (series)

Watershed

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Questions](#)

[Index](#)

Most reputable news organizations spend a lot of time and effort deciding what stories they will include in their broadcasts or on their front pages. This often includes performing a balancing act where management weighs the public importance of covering an issue against the privacy that the coverage may invade. To help clarify this decision-making process, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has a published list of Journalistic Standards and Practices. (You can download the complete document on the CBC Web site by following the links at www.cbc.ca.) The sections of the document reproduced below deal directly with privacy issues and must be kept in mind when news producers decide what they will or will not broadcast.

In this News in Review report, the reporter gives two scenarios dealing with separate issues and asks you, the viewer, to decide if you would cover the story. After watching the video again, suggest what criteria you would use in making your judgment. What "journalistic standards" would you try to uphold in these two situations?

Now, examine the excerpts below from CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices and suggest to what kind of news events should these standards be applied.

Several provisions in the Criminal Code, as quoted in the Journalistic Standards and Practices, relate to the protection of an individual's privacy.

3.1.2. Criminal Offences

One of these is what is commonly referred to as "wire-tapping." The offence includes the interception of a private communication by means of an electromagnetic, acoustic, mechanical, or other device. If a private conversation is taped or overheard by means of one of these devices, it is unlawful to disclose or broadcast its contents, meaning, or existence, unless one of the parties to the communication consents to such disclosure, or unless the private communication has previously been disclosed in a court proceeding.

Other Criminal Code offences, relating to privacy in a broad sense, are those dealing with certain bans of publication, intimidation, including persistent following, watching and besetting, and harassing or indecent telephone calls.

3.1.5 Rights in Personality

Generally, there are no rights in personality. In other words, an individual cannot prevent others from using his name, image or likeness as long as that use does not harm his economic interests. If there is a publicity value in an individual's personality, that individual can prevent others from commercially exploiting it without his consent.

3.2.1 Privacy versus Public Life

Privacy in this sense means the personal and private life of an individual apart from his public life. Journalists on occasion may appear to breach an individual's privacy. This is warranted only when the individual's private life impinges on or becomes part of his public life or becomes a matter of legitimate public concern. There are a number of situations in which individuals cannot or should not be identified. Identification here means more than just not reporting the individual's name. It also means not using a photograph or reporting any incidental detail that could give hints to the individual's identity.

10.2 Hidden Cameras and Microphones

As a general rule, hidden cameras and microphones must not be used to gather information.

Certainly the use of hidden cameras or microphones raises some serious ethical questions, whether the recording is done by deliberately concealing the equipment or with equipment whose size or technology makes it inconspicuous or invisible to the person being recorded.

Incidentally, recordings made openly in public places are not clandestine recordings, even though some people will not be aware that they are being recorded.

There may be occasions, however, when the use of such concealed recording devices will be in accordance with the law and where they may be regarded as being used in the public interest. Occasions of this sort, for example, could include a report on the selling of drugs on the street.

Authorization may be given only if the information gained serves an important purpose, is indispensable to that purpose and cannot be obtained by more open means. Moreover, it must concern illegal, anti-social, or fraudulent activities or clear and significant abuses of public trust.

Follow-up Discussion

Having considered the question of journalistic standards and having read these excerpts from CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices, do you think that any further regulations should apply in situations such as the one which occurred in the high school in Ottawa?

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



Comprehensive News in Review Study Modules

Using both the print and non-print material from various issues of **News in Review**, teachers and students can create comprehensive, thematic modules that are excellent for research purposes, independent assignments, and small group study. We recommend the stories indicated below for the universal issues they represent and for the archival and historic material they contain.

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Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Over the 10 years that News in Review has been produced, we have covered many stories that have shown public confrontation, violent events, traumatic incidents, and private struggles and grief. Many of the stories have profiled individuals who have shunned the television cameras while others have dealt with people who have welcomed the camera into their lives. Choose two or more of the following News in Review stories and after viewing the video reports prepare an overview analysis for the class using the questions below and then present your findings.

1. What role did the news camera play in each of these stories?
2. Do you think that the privacy of individuals involved in the news stories was violated in any way? Why or why not?
3. Would the reporting on any of these stories have changed if CBC had adopted the guidelines suggested by the editors of the journalism review magazine Brill's Content (see the section "A Case for Regulation")?
4. Do you think that the reporting on these stories was accurate, neutral, and responsible? Why or why not? Do the visual images supplied by the news cameras aid or detract from the reporting?

"Oka," September 1990

"Eric Lindros: Face-off for his Future," October 1991

"Nancy B: The Right to Decide," February 1992

"Last Shift: The Westray Mine Disaster," September 1992

"Royal Family: Common Problems," February 1993

"Davis Inlet: Moving from Misery," March 1993

"Sue Rodrigues: Choosing Death," October 1993

"Death in Somalia: Rules of Engagement," December 1993

"After the Crime: Is Justice Served?" December 1994

"Canada's Airborne: Out of Commission," March 1995

"Cameras in Court: Justice Seen to be Done," April 1995

"The Latimer Case: Mercy or Murder?" September 1995

"The Bernardo Case: The Monsters Among Us," October 1995

"The Dionne Quintuplets: A New Perspective," November 1995

"O.J. Simpson: The Verdict is In," November 1995

"Teen Road Deaths: A Survivor Pays Penance," May 1996

"Victims of Fashion," February 1997

"Diana and Teresa: The Boundaries of Grief," November 1997

"Cole Harbour: A Racial Divide," December 1997

"The Krever Inquiry: Assigning Blame," February 1998

"Algeria: The Reign of Terror." March 1998

"Homelessness: Canada's Mean Streets," December 1998

"Clinton: Impeaching the President," March 1999

"Children in Trouble: Guns in Schools," September 1999

"Glen Clark: Mandate Squandered?" October 1999

Contents

Introduction

What's New?

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Viewing Grief

Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

Index

Follow-up Activity

Research and present a comprehensive definition for one of the following: journalism, big city journalism, new journalism, yellow journalism, tabloid journalism, photographic journalism, journalism on the edge of cyberspace. Explain its relevance to this News in Review story.

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New?](#)

[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)

[Viewing Grief](#)

[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)

[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)

[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)

[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)

[Index](#)



Comprehensive News in Review Study Modules

Using both the print and non-print material from various issues of **News in Review**, teachers and students can create comprehensive, thematic modules that are excellent for research purposes, independent assignments, and small group study. We recommend the stories indicated below for the universal issues they represent and for the archival and historic material they contain.

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Canada's Water Supply (series)

Watershed

News Cameras and Privacy: In Your Face?



Discussion, Research, and Essay Questions

Contents

Introduction

What's New?

A Media Cultural Conflict?

Viewing Grief

Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices

Introspection and Viewer Assessment

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

Index

1. Certain privacy issues are protected under the federal Privacy Act. Using the Web site of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (www.privcom.gc.ca), write a brief report outlining the rights Canadians are guaranteed under this act. How do these rights relate to the media covering an event?
2. Research the role of the CBC Office of the Ombudsman. This information can be found on the CBC Web site at www.cbc.ca. What issues does the Ombudsman deal with? What are the correct channels to go through if you have a complaint about news coverage? Do other stations have similar methods of dealing with complaints?
3. Marshall McLuhan wrote in 1969, "I used to talk about the global village; I now speak of it more properly as the global theatre. Every kid is now concerned with acting. Doing his thing outside and raising a ruckus in a quest for identity. He has lost his identity. Every child on the planet since TV has lost his identity." Do you agree with this statement? Was there any evidence in this News in Review report that would confirm or contradict this view?
4. If your school has a video camera, have various student news teams create two-minute videos covering a school-related event or issue. Your coverage should include clips of interviews with people involved in the event. If you are covering a contentious issue ensure that you have interviews outlining both points of view. Be sure that the video is exactly two minutes long. Watch the videos in class and note the following: (a) Did each video have a similar point of view on the events that occurred or did different biases come into play? (b) What was the percentage of facts to opinions expressed in the video? (c) How did each report arrange the facts differently? (d) What was left out of the videos? Did cuts have to be made in order to meet the strict two-minute time restriction? (e) How did the video images enhance the story? (f) How would you have changed the story sequence if it was a written article rather than a news video? (g) How did the limited time allowed to prepare the video affect the depth of news coverage? (h) How does this parallel the working conditions of news reporters in the real world?
5. Why might privacy in Canada be considered a luxury not available in other cultures? What types of privacy exist? Why do we need to protect individual and personal privacy?
6. What rights may have collided in the situation described in this News in Review story? What responsibilities were or were not fulfilled?

[Contents](#)
[Introduction](#)
[What's New?](#)
[A Media Cultural Conflict?](#)
[Viewing Grief](#)
[Regulation, Self-regulation, or No Regulation?](#)
[CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices](#)
[Introspection and Viewer Assessment](#)
[Discussion, Research and Essay Question](#)
[Index](#)



Comprehensive News in Review Study Modules

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