

# Streamer Journalist Code of Ethics

## Preamble

The act of streaming may be used for journalism, documentation of controversial events or for entertainment purposes. Streaming can provide personal protection when involved in situations that may have legal implications. Those engaged in one or more of these activities may be considered a Streamer or a Citizen Journalist. Due to the many categories of streaming, as well as differing journalistic styles, which may include advocacy journalism and gonzo journalism, the technique is sometimes treated with contempt by law enforcement as well as the traditional journalistic community.

One who is claiming to be a Streamer Journalist needs to operate under the established journalistic framework despite possibly using streaming for other purposes. It would behoove a Streamer Journalist to adhere to a code of ethics to that will establish a recognized credibility.

The rise of Streamer Journalism represent a need for public information in a journalistic landscape that is either unable or refuses to report on relevant events in an unedited way. Complete coverage of under-reported news is needed in order for a free, open, transparent and fair society to exist. Streamer Journalists therefore must hold themselves to the highest journalistic standards when streaming or reporting on events and should do so with the principles of Vigilance, Honesty, Fairness, Courage, Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Accountability and Humility.

This document represents a Code of Ethics that adherents can uniformly adopt to insure journalistic credibility as well as a framework under which one can make ethical decisions.

## Principle of Vigilance

Vigilance keeps the Streamer's news reporting relevant.

Streamers should:

- Be clear about what is verifiable information, and what is speculation. Information moves quickly, but so do rumors.
- State sources of information so that they may be independently verified.

- Give the public open access to governmental and authority conduct.
- Persist in holding those with power accountable for their actions.
- Seek truth no matter where it lies, but do so with respect, and compassion.

## Principle of Honesty

Honesty helps the Streamer build credibility.

Streamers should:

- Represent biases truthfully to give proper context.
- Avoid highlighting, editing, or recording footage in a way that removes proper context, or distorts events.
- Make a clear distinction between advocacy, opinion, and news. This clarifies the context with which such comments should be understood. Do not misrepresent which is being given.
- Properly attribute all broadcasted or mirrored footage. Only use this footage based on the licensing terms of originator.
- Keep all journalistic promises.
- Visibly show when streaming video or audio in all but the most extreme circumstances. If hiding streaming, make sure that the reason for doing so is made clear.
- Cover a diverse set of opinions during an event even if those opinions are not popular.

## Principle of Fairness

Fairness allows a Streamer to protect credibility by acknowledging bias.

Streamers should:

- Recognize differences in values and keep from judging other's values.
- Give equal opportunity to unofficial sources of information to be heard.
- Avoid loaded language and belittling commentary, and let facts stand for themselves.
- Avoid stereotypes, especially in regards to race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, economic or social status, and political or ideological beliefs.

## Principle of Courage

Courage helps keep the Streamer's news noble.

Streamers should:

- Report honestly in the face of coercion.

- Balance a need for personal protection with the need to report on events which may be physically, emotionally, or mentally threatening.
- Stand up for journalistic principles and ethics.
- Protect sources from intimidation.

## Principle of Compassion

Compassion helps keep the Streamer's news reporting viable.

Streamers should:

- Be compassionate to those who may be negatively affected in the course of covering the news. Be even more sensitive to those who may be emotionally compromised in understanding the events in which they are exposed to, especially children and the mentally ill.
- Be aware of the impact that the presence of a stream may have on those grieving or dealing with tragic events.
- Be understanding when reporting on issues that may cause harm or make others feel uncomfortable.
- Avoid getting information that is not news worthy when it's only function is entertainment at the expense of others. In the course of covering news one may capture personal moments that are unrelated to the event. Under these circumstances editing archived coverage may be permissible.

## Principle of Respect

Respect allows a Streamer continued access to communities, organizations, and individuals.

Streamers should:

- Encourage open discourse, even when the views may seem difficult to agree with.
- Respect a source's wishes to be anonymous, but be aware of the source's possible motives.
- Be respectful by not identifying a victim of a crime unless allowed to do so. Especially if this may cause them unwanted attention or trauma.
- Refrain from identifying or accusing someone, by name, who may be involved in illegal activities, especially prior to formal charges being made. Use aliases or identifying characteristics instead.
- Respect the private individual's rights to privacy over those who are in power or act as public representatives.
- Balance an individual's right to a fair treatment and the need to inform the public.

- Respect the right to privacy for those who are receiving medical treatment.

## Principle of Integrity

Integrity allows a Streamer to operate without destroying credibility.

Streamers should:

- Openly and quickly disclose potential or real conflicts of interest. Avoid all unnecessary conflicts of interest.
- Be transparent and reveal biases when involved in actions, activities, and associations which may cause others to question journalistic intentions.
- Disclose all gifts, favors, free travel, donations when contributed by individuals or organizations whenever possible as they could hurt credibility by representing a conflict of interest.
- Be honest about any political involvement, public office, community organizations or activism, as these may be conflicts of interest.
- Disclose all unavoidable conflicts of interest honestly and in a timely manner.
- Refuse all gifts, favors, free travel, donations when contributed by individuals or organizations if there is an expectation of special treatment or influence by those entities.
- Be careful when discussing equipment or services being used. This can appear to be advertising. Be clear if sponsored to use equipment or services, or if preferences exist for one over another. Refrain from saying negative things about another product or service.
- Be transparent about paying or giving favors to sources for information.

## Principle of Accountability

Accountability assures participants, viewers, and sources that a Streamer holds true to all principles.

Streamers should:

- Provide all raw live footage in an open-source manner.
- Give explanations and invite participation on your stream and through other means about journalistic conduct.
- Encourage and listen to public grievances against the news. Try to improve when possible.
- Admit mistakes in a timely, honest, and open manner.
- Reveal any unethical institutional journalistic practices, but also try to hold to the highest standards in all journalistic actions. Do so with an eye toward restorative

justice.

## Principle of Humility

Humility provides a Streamer a continued place in the emerging social media news community.

Streamers should:

- Acknowledge the contributions of sources, participants, viewers, and other journalists.
- Balance the need for competition with the need for cooperation.
- Not overstate accomplishments.
- Help others learn about the streaming medium.