

# IMPLICATIONS FOR JOURNALISTS FOR PUBLISHING FALSE CONTENT



UNESCO notes that as a result of reporters being increasingly required to sub-edit and publish their own content without appropriate review; social-first publishing, in which reporters post stories to their individual social media accounts to meet audience demand of real-time news; and digital-first deadlines that do not allow for sufficient time.[1] This has the potential to lead to negative consequences for journalism,[2] such as:

## 1 EROSION OF TRUST

Erosion of trust in news brands, journalism and individual journalists who share inaccurate, fabricated or misleading information.

## 2 CONFLATION OF QUALITY

Conflation of quality reporting with disinformation and poorly labelled native (paid) advertising content designed to mimic news, increasing general distrust.

## 3 STRESS ON THE BUSINESS MODEL

Further stress on the journalism business model, as audiences may no longer turn to news media in times of crisis and disaster.

## 4 WEAKENING JOURNALISM

Weakening of the role of journalists as agents for accountability with flow-on effects for broader society.

## 5 CRACKDOWNS

Crackdowns (sometimes justified as necessary to eradicate 'fake news') that undermine press freedom and freedom of expression rights, including censorship.

## 6 MALICIOUS TARGETING

Malicious targeting of journalists – in particular female journalists – by disinformation purveyors leveraging online harassment to discredit critical reporting, along with deliberate attempts to entrap journalists in distribution of disinformation and misinformation.

VISIT [SANEF.ORG.ZA/ELECTIONS-2019](http://SANEF.ORG.ZA/ELECTIONS-2019)

[1] UNESCO, 'Journalism, 'fake news' and disinformation': Handbook for journalism education and training', (2018) at p 61.

[2] Id at pp 64-65.